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SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 1996

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN THE LAW

Speaker: Bro. Colin Badger

Class #2

Principles from the Burning Bush

Reading: Deuteronomy 4

Good morning brethren and sisters!

We'd like just this morning in our second class, to recap some of the foundational principles and concepts that we were looking at yesterday in our introduction.

We were noticing yesterday, that the New Testament, in some very important contexts, where the apostles are developing principles concerning the New Covenant, that in those contexts quite often there are connections going back into the book of Deuteronomy. We said yesterday, that we weren't going to look at Deuteronomy as a book study as such, but rather as a New Testament resource, designed by the Spirit to be drawn upon, in order to highlight how Christ and the New Covenant principles, or Abrahamic principles, were embedded in the Law. So we said yesterday, that rather than looking at Christ in the Law for the prospectives of types and shadows, we'd be looking at pointers that were embedded in the Law of Moses, that pointed beyond the Law itself, to an understanding of principles that would save them through the New Covenant basis. We were contrasting a number of terms yesterday, that would be associated with Law and works, as opposed to the New Covenant principles that would lead to salvation. We looked at 4 key passages yesterday, beginning with Ephesians 2, to gather concepts, principles and New Testament vocabulary, if we could put it that way, to help us to be sensitive, as we go back into the Old Testament, Deuteronomy especially, and look for and notice when those trigger phrases appear. We therefore, were stressing a number of important connections with the word and concept of 'promise'. We might just say by way of clarification, as regards to promise, there are of course, in the Law of Moses, were contained, what we might call 'small promises', such as 'honour thy father and thy mother, that thy life might be long in the land', which the apostles says in the New Testament, was the first commandment with promise. But these promises, we might say with a small 'p', where not promises that related Israel to salvation as such, for they only promised, brethren and sisters, temporary rewards, 'that your life might be long in the land'. Such a promise, therefore, was not related to salvation or to an eternal inheritance. The apostle, in the book of Hebrews, uses

phrases such as 'eternal promises, better promises, an eternal inheritance', in contrast to the kind of promises we're now highlighting, that were in the Law. Such promises, with a small 'p', as the Law contained, were not based on believing the impossible, that is to say, they were not based on a redemptive faith of a kind that Abraham displayed, when he was willing to offer Isaac, when he was to believe that God could, once again, revive Sarah's womb. The kind of faith that Hebrews 11 talks about, which is able to see the impossible and the invisible. That's not the kind of faith that was predicated on those kind of promises in the Law of Moses. And furthermore, it was always predicated or based on the Israelites having to do something. Faith that saves, of course, is faith that finally sees itself in action, but faith that is a saving faith, first and foremost, is not based on works of Law. If these kind of promises, brethren and sisters, that were embedded in the Law, were of faith, that is, of a saving faith, then of course, the apostle would be wrong to say in Galatians 2 and verse 12, 'that the Law is not of faith'; it is not its focus; it is not the operating principle of the Law.

Now yesterday, just to review again, we surveyed these quotations for a few moments, in order to generate questions about Christ in the Law, as Deuteronomy is constantly being drawn upon by the writers of the New Testament. And as we looked at these and searched out some of the contexts, just by way of sampling yesterday, we noticed that a pattern emerges, that these quotations here on the left side from Deuteronomy, (from the overhead entitled, New Covenant Allusions in Deuteronomy) are interestingly enough, all from chapters 29 of Deuteronomy and forward. Everyone of these quotations that appears in either Hebrews 12 or Romans 10 or Hebrews 10 or Romans 15, are using these quotations from Deuteronomy 29 forward, to expound New Testament or New Covenant principles. Many of them very practical in terms of the impact they're to have on our way of life. Then if you remember yesterday, we stood back and took a look at a kind of time-line or chart that would portray a sequence through Deuteronomy. Chapter 27 and chapter 28 is drawn upon numerous in the Old Testament and certainly in the New Testament occasionally; of significance, when 27 and 28 is quoted either in the Old Testament itself, or in the New, it's always in reference to the curses of the Law, or to the temporal blessings of the Law. But, as we've shaded this section here from 29 on, we have a transition. There are things said from Deuteronomy 29 to the end, that are and do provide a spiritual resource for quotations in the New Testament, as that list that we just had up testifies.

We also noticed yesterday, just to review some of these points, (referring to the overhead entitled 'The Old and New Covenants in Deuteronomy') that in Galatians chapter 3 and verse 10, Paul quotes Deuteronomy 27 verse 26, on the far side of our shaded portion. When he quotes that he's quoting it in the context of testifying that the Law was based on works, first and foremost, 'the man that doeth them shall live in them', but says the apostle as he continues, in Galatians 3 verse 11, 'but the just shall live by faith' quoting Habakkuk chapter 2 verse 4, and by so doing the apostle has indicated that certainly this chapter in Deuteronomy, chapter 27 and certainly its companion in 28, is a section of Deuteronomy that's reviewing the Mosaic covenant principles, principles based on Law and works. In contrast the apostle quotes in Romans chapter 10 from Deuteronomy 30 verse 14 on the other side of 29, or at least

from 29 beyond, and when he quotes Deuteronomy 30 verse 14, he's quoting it in the context of the 'righteousness which speaketh of faith'; New Testament principles drawn from this side of this last portion of Deuteronomy. When he does so, in verse 5 of Romans 10, he contrasts another quotation from Leviticus 18 verse 5, which when you read it is saying the same thing as 27, the quotation that appeared earlier up here in Galatians 3 verse 10, that is, it's referring to the works of the Law and the fact that if you do not do them, the Law will curse you even if you don't do all of them. So in other words, we have tips from the New Testament, Galatians and Romans, that there is something structured here in this part of Deuteronomy, that on the one side is rooted in Old Testament Mosaic terms and principles based on Law and works, whereas something is embedded in another portion of Deuteronomy from 29 on, that contains a rich resource of New Covenant Abrahamic principles. Christ then, is in the Law, emphatically He is in the Law! And Christ's principles are embedded in the Law, but in Deuteronomy especially, it is in a very important concentrated section.

If you remember yesterday, if we turn now to Deuteronomy chapter 27, there seems to be, in Deuteronomy itself, a flag that indicates this watershed that is a dividing point, between that portion of Deuteronomy that is especially concentrating on a review of the Law given at Horeb or Sinai, and the change to a more concentrated attention to the principles of Christ under the new Law. Deuteronomy 29 we noticed in verse 1, where this 'flag-phrase' occurs, it flags a transition or a change. So we read chapter 29 verse 1, 'These are the words of the covenant which Yahweh commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside or in addition to or apart from or separate from the covenant which He made with them in Horeb'. And there in Deuteronomy chapter 29, (it shouldn't be surprising as we look at the overhead here that we used yesterday), it shouldn't be surprising that in that context, we find embedded principles dealing with Abrahamic faith and righteousness, that is, the gospel that was preached to Abraham, that is, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, brethren and sisters, just by way of review, what we're looking at here is, especially Deuteronomy as the resource for understanding how Christ's principles were embedded in this very important section of the Old Testament, apart from the use of types and shadows.

Now, brethren and sisters, if we just stand back this morning by way of perspective, (and look at your hand-out) this is simply intended to give it a wider framework; we've been looking at that overhead, which shows the movement from chapter 27 to chapter 33 in Deuteronomy; now just by way of the handout, take a look at this from a wider framework.

The book of Deuteronomy has a very intriguing structure to it; we might say that from Deuteronomy chapter 1 to the end of Deuteronomy chapter 28, the main part of that section is (if you look over toward the left on your sheet) is retrospective. That is, that part of Deuteronomy, is especially reflecting on the events that brought Israel to Sinai and where the covenant was ratified and the Ten Commandments and the rest of the Law was given, and then, if you look at the rest of Deuteronomy, we have what we might call, a prospective approach, where we're moving forward from a few hints earlier in the first section in chapter 12 and 16, and a few hints also in 27 and 28, we move

forward to a more future perspective which properly begins to be concentrated starting around chapter 29, in that important transition section that we looked at. Chapter 29 then, to the end of the book is what we might call, a section dealing with, a second covenant, that is to say, it is embedded with Abrahamic principles, New Testament covenant teachings. Of course, we can find as we go back into other parts of Deuteronomy, those principles are definitely there, in different and very important contexts, but in terms of concentration, the concentration begins especially, from 29 on. The whole book of Deuteronomy has in fact, some wonderful and hidden secrets, for a Jew who was discerning and looking for answers, as David was, at one point in his life, that would take him beyond the Law, saving principles contained in very interesting places through Deuteronomy. But what we want to notice is, from this section on, there's a special concentration, and that of course then, explains why it would be that so many of those quotations, that we were just looking at yesterday, are drawn from this section and beyond. So your handout is simply intended to give it a wider framework, in terms of how the book is structured and why the Spirit led the apostles, to draw so heavily from that important section.

Now, if we just return to Deuteronomy 29 this morning, having noticed that important section that quotes Genesis chapter 17, (we were looking at verse 13 if you remember), want you to just slip down a little further to verse 15. Deut.29:15, (here it really pays to be alert to our bible margin and cross references) For, verse 14 perhaps for the context into verse 15, 'Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; But with him that standeth here with us this day before Yahweh our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day.' Now your bible margin, if you have one, will pick up the fact that in verse 15, you have a connection to Acts chapter 2 verse 39, now let's just follow that link. In terms of showing how this section of Deuteronomy 29 and beyond, is filled with New Testament concentration, just notice this! In Acts 2 let's follow the quotation through; it leads us to read in Peter's speech, verse 39, (and again you'll notice that your Acts' margin beside verse 39, that will take you back, at least mine does, the Oxford A.V., takes me back to Deuteronomy 29 and verse 15). Let's read verse 39 then, 'For the promise is unto you, says Peter, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call', now isn't that fascinating that the language employed by Peter here, in Acts 2 verse 39, is drawn from Deuteronomy 29 verse 15. But what's going on here in terms of Peter's speech? 'The promise is unto you and to your children, to all that are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call' which means either Jew or Gentile. Verse 39 is assuring them that the promise is to all, not only those present, as in the case of Deuteronomy 29, but those that would be afar off, which would include the Gentiles. That phrase 'afar off' is used by Paul in Ephesians, in application to the Gentiles and their calling. So again, Deuteronomy 29 in particular, is being used by the Spirit inspiring Peter, to draw from it as containing principles and promises that are Abrahamic. And of course, think of the Abrahamic encompassment, the promise to Abraham was 'in thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed'. All nations not just the Jew, but all nations; not just those standing here before Peter at Pentecost, but as many as the Lord our God shall call, even those who are afar off. But more than that, brethren and sisters, this promise in verse 39, is what we might call 'promise with a big 'P', that is to say, it is the promise which leads to

salvation. It is a promise that is based on faith, and brings redemption. Look at verse 38 then of Acts chapter 2, 'And Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'. Chapter 29 then, is rich with these important connections which have the principles of Christ embedded in them. It pays therefore, brethren and sisters, doesn't it, to watch carefully, as bro. Stephen (Palmer) was encouraging us yesterday, to watch carefully the links in our margin, to the Old Testament from the New, and back into the Old, from the Old back to the New, it's important that we pay attention to those, and look at the contexts. Here is the New Testament showing us, that Christ and his principles are there in the Old Testament.

I'd like now to return to Deuteronomy; I'd like to go to the beginning of Deuteronomy. We said that although chapter 27 and beyond has a special concentration of these principles, of the mind of Christ and the way of Christ, certainly the rest of Deuteronomy has these links as well, although they're more scattered. I'd like to observe something by way of introduction to the book as a whole, and that's in Deuteronomy chapter 1 verse 1. Again, how important it is to pay attention to every word and phrase. 'These, verse 1 of Deuteronomy 1, 'these be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel'; now just slip over for a moment to Deuteronomy chapter 5 and notice the phrasing in verse 1. 'And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel'; now go over to Deuteronomy chapter 33, if you would, and verse 1, 'And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel', in everyone of those contexts the phrasing is rather unique compared to other books of the Law. The stress is these are the words of Moses, now you might not think that perhaps there's any point to that, but let me just demonstrate the contrast elsewhere in the books of the Law. Just look back for a moment to Exodus chapter 7, where the phrasing is slightly different when introducing words of instruction. Notice this introductory phrasing which is typical of the book of Exodus and elsewhere in the other books of the Law. Exodus 7 verse 1, 'And Yahweh said unto Moses', do you notice that? Yahweh said unto Moses as opposed to Deut.1:1 and similar places in Deuteronomy, these are the words of Moses and what Moses spake. Now the impression is built up a little bit more; if you go to Leviticus chapter 11, take another sample from another book of the Law. Leviticus chapter 11 and verse 1, like that in Exodus but unlike that which we find in Deuteronomy, 'And Yahweh spake unto Moses and Aaron , saying, Speak unto the children of Israel' as opposed to 'these are the words of Moses' or 'these are the words which Moses spake'. There is here a more qualified expression, 'Yahweh spake unto Moses and Aaron' and then He says, 'Speak unto the children of Israel, thus and so'. Take another example, this time let's just go to Numbers 1 and verse 1, and this is particularly pertinent because it's the first chapter and the first verse, compared to the first chapter and the first verse of Deuteronomy. Where Deut.1:1 begins, 'These are the words of Moses' or 'these be the words that Moses spake unto all Israel', Numbers 1:1 begins, 'And Yahweh spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai', and then He tells them, of course, what they are to be instructed concerning, from Moses himself. There is something more direct being said in Deuteronomy with regards to Moses. He is taking a very direct role in a certain sense, and it is the words of Moses, of course, but they are the words of God.

But why this change? why this more direct emphasis on the role of Moses? Well, let's just go back to Deuteronomy again, explore this a little further. Notice this, Deuteronomy chapter 5, verses 4 and 5, here there seems to be a hint, as to why there is this slight change but perhaps important change in the phrasing of how Moses performs the agency for God. Deut.5:4-5, 'And Yahweh talked with you, says Moses, (this is the part of Deuteronomy that is retrospective; he's reviewing) Yahweh talked with you face to face, says Moses, 'in the mount out of the midst of the fire. I, Moses, stood between Yahweh and you at that time, to show you the word of Yahweh: for you were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount'; now there is a definition of a mediator. There is Moses describing himself as the mediator of the Old Covenant, and he puts it in very graphic, mediatorial terms, 'I stood between Yahweh and you at that time'. For what purpose? 'To show you the word of Yahweh', now this of course, is exactly what the apostle Paul means if we go to Hebrews.

Just turn back there now, this is what the apostle means, describing the role of Moses in Hebrews chapter 5, it gives meaning, of course, to what the apostle is saying. Hebrews chapter 5 and verse 1, 'For every priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins' Now here the apostle is expounding on the role of the priest, that he would be taken from among men, and verse 2, he would have to have compassion on the ignorant. And of course, in chapter 4, if you slip back there, the description of the priest, in verse 15, is that he would be one that would be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. In other words, as the apostle here, in the beginning of Hebrews develops the principle of one who would be a priest, a true high priest, speaking eventually of the Lord Jesus Christ, but drawing from the principles of the Law, he's showing that which was essential was, the priest had to be in sympathy, of course, in sympathy with his people, which demanded that the Lord Jesus have our nature and be, therefore, a sympathetic High Priest. Now what's important that we go now to chapter 8 and verse 6, is that the apostle speaks about the Lord Jesus Christ as a mediator, but of course, He's the mediator of a different covenant. Verse 6, 'But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises'. In other words, the Lord Jesus Christ as the mediator of the New Testament, is a mediator of (notice those phrases) better promises and a better covenant. Deuteronomy presents Moses, as Paul says elsewhere, as one who presented and showed to them, the words of the Old Covenant, and as a mediator, Paul says, it was given by the hand of a mediator. So there, in Deuteronomy, Moses is presented with an emphasis on his role that is very direct, 'these are the words of Moses', 'these are the words that Moses spake'. Moses describes himself as 'standing in between the people and God, and shows them, as a mediator, shows them and teaches them, the ways of the covenant. In other words, Deuteronomy focuses on the role of Moses as a mediator in a very special and more direct way, and that phrasing which is somewhat different than the phrasing in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, is highlighting his role as mediator. But, as Paul shows us in Hebrews 8, it was the mediator through Jesus Christ, it was the mediator only of promises that would be overshadowed, a covenant that would be overshadowed by a mediator to come, who

would administer a better covenant and better promises. So Deuteronomy shows Moses to be the mediator of the Old Covenant, in that very direct and special way. It was at the hand of a mediator, Moses himself, but as we go back to Deuteronomy we notice something about this mediator.

Would you just go back to Deuteronomy again, since these promises were not the same as the promises administered by Jesus, and since this covenant was not the same as the covenant administered by Jesus, and since Paul under inspiration, has affirmed that the mediator of the New Covenant, is administering a better covenant and better promises, look what Deuteronomy shows us about this mediator. Deuteronomy chapter 4 verse 20 and 21, look what it says about this mediator, Moses! 'But Yahweh hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto Him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day'. Now look what Moses says in verse 21, 'Furthermore Yahweh was angry with me for your sakes, and sware that I should not go over Jordan, and that I should not go in unto that good land, which Yahweh thy God giveth thee for an inheritance: But I must die in this land, I must not go over Jordan: but ye shall go over, and possess that good land.' Moses has described himself as mediator; Deuteronomy chapter 1 and verse 1 begins with a very direct phrase, 'that these are the words of Moses', we see it elsewhere in Deuteronomy stressing the very important mediatorial role that Moses was to take, with an inflection on the directness in contrast to some of the other expressions about Moses' role in Numbers, Exodus or Leviticus. BUT, but Deuteronomy shows that Moses (and he explains this in more detail here in verses 20, 21 and 22 than he does in Exodus) records Moses as stressing, almost as part of his speech to Israel, that he will not go into the land, the mediator of the Law, the mediator of the Old Covenant, the mediator of promises and a covenant that was to be superseded by better promises and a better covenant. In other words, this Law by itself, was not able to give Moses life, or at least, inheritance in the Promised Land. Now, look at it at the end of Moses' life, again, Deuteronomy chapter 34 (only Deuteronomy highlights this in the way that it does in chapter 34). Notice this little ending to the book of Deuteronomy, why is it here and why are we receiving this little cameo about how Moses finishes off his life, and recedes from the vision before Israel?

Verse 1 of Deuteronomy 34, 'Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And Yahweh showed him all the land of Gilead unto Dan. And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. And Yahweh said unto him, This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed' (now watch this phrase) I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither'. As important as Moses' role is portrayed to be in the book of Deuteronomy, as the mediator from whose hand the Law was administered as the Old Covenant, he confesses he will not go in, God reaffirms at the end, he will not go in BUT in verse 4, Yahweh in His compassion, focuses Moses' eyes on the Land in terms of Abrahamic promises. He repeats to Moses at the end of his life, the Abrahamic promise that 'in thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed', that a seed would come, who

would be the saviour, and that the nation and many others Gentiles included, would only receive those promises, in so far as they related to the saving seed, who'd possess the 'gates of his enemies'. All of that then, in verse 4 is brought to Moses' mind, and God causes Moses to see it by the eye of faith! It's not just Moses brought up to the mount, so that he can see it simply and purely by his own vision, God says, I will show it to you and then He says, I have caused thee to see it! There's something happening there that is just beyond normal vision; God then, does affirm to Moses that salvation is available to him, but he as the mediator of the Old Covenant under its terms and by its means, will not go into that Land. Joshua will and so will the new generation. Isn't it wonderful then, that in this book which stresses the importance of the Law being administered at the hands of a mediator, we see evidence of what Paul expounds in Hebrews 8. 'These promises (with a small 'p') and this covenant by itself, without faith could not save them', and it could not save Moses. Here are therefore, principles of Christ in the New Covenant contained in the Law itself, and these principles revolve upon the existence of Moses and his life in the Land, in the wilderness that is, and the fact that he did not put his foot across Jordan to inherit the promise on the basis of the Law he was mediating.

CHRIST IN THE LAW, in perhaps the most unexpected way! In Deuteronomy chapter 4, where we've just been, let's go back there again, and verse 24. Having just looked at verse 20, 21, and 22 a few moments ago where Moses, like a biography, discloses the fact that he will not go into the Land, (notice this!) in that same context of Deuteronomy 4, let's read verse 24, 'For Yahweh thy God, says Moses, is a consuming fire, even a jealous God', now do you know, brethren and sisters, where that's quoted in the New Testament? Where is it quoted? Your bible margin will tell you it is cited in Hebrews 12 and verse 29; let's just follow that lead. Let's go forward to Hebrews 12; Deuteronomy has just been talking about Moses not getting into the Land, at least on the basis of the Mosaic covenant, but he then goes on to say, 'For God is a consuming fire' now that quoted by the apostle in Hebrews chapter 12. It's quoted in verse 29, let's just go there, where Paul finishes off the chapter on that note, 'For our God is a consuming fire'. But let's just back up a moment, what is Hebrews 12 talking about? Well, we visited this chapter a little earlier on in our first class, let's go back to verse 21, 'So terrible was the sight that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake' (that's in the context of God displaying Himself as a consuming fire). Let's go back to verse 18 where the apostle assures the Hebrews, 'For ye have not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness and tempest' (No!) Verse 22, 'But ye are come unto Mount Zion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and ecclesia of the firstborn', Verse 24, 'And to Jesus the mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven'. In other words, in the context of Deuteronomy 4 where Moses confesses that he will not get into the Land, in that very context, in reference to the Father being a consuming fire, there is a connection with the

New Testament, and Hebrews chapter 12, which is contrasting the two mounts and the two covenants and the difference in character between the two; the one not being able to save, but the New Covenant being able to save, he draws from that warning, 'For God is a consuming fire'. But you notice here in Hebrews chapter 12, he refers the apostle does, in verse 25 to language that also comes from Deuteronomy, where Moses in Deuteronomy 4 and 5 reviewed the fact that people did not want to hear the voice. 'See, he says in verse 25, 'you refuse not him that speaketh, (which Israel did, Moses said so in Deuteronomy), 'for if they escaped not that refused him that spake on earth '.... and so on. The people of Israel, Moses reviewed the fact in Deuteronomy, did not want to hear that voice; they asked for a mediator, for one who would stand between them. The one that did so, did not actually go into the Land, in other words, Deuteronomy chapter 12 in the context of contrasting the two covenants, is once again drawing on a very pertinent context in Deuteronomy, where Moses is shown not to go into the Land. So what's the point to the Hebrews? If they return, brethren and sisters, Paul is saying, to the Old Covenant, if they insist on the works of the Law as the means of their salvation, then they will not inherit the promises, that is the eternal promises. To return to that mount with all of its terrifying associations, and its threat of death, is to return to a way that will not save them. What is needed instead is, of course, an attachment to the living voice. They refused to hear the voice, and he's stressing here in Hebrews 12, there is a voice that must be heard, and it is a saving voice, and although Yahweh is a consuming fire, nevertheless, as a consuming fire, when His people have the right relationship with Him, they will not be consumed! So take your choice, Paul is saying, which do you wish to attach yourself to? and if they were to track his link back to Deuteronomy chapter 4, they would discover there in that context, that Moses confessed he did not go in, not at that time. For we know in Hebrews chapter 11, he will go in! but he'll go in on the basis of the eye of faith which will save him; the same basis for you and I. How significant then, that in this context of Hebrews 12, there is such a link back to that very context in Deuteronomy 4 which proclaims the Father to be a consuming fire, but not One that would consume utterly for those that have the right relationship with Him.

Now, let's just go back again to Deuteronomy chapter 4; we have not exhausted yet, the important links that Deuteronomy chapter 4 has with these New Covenant principles. Deuteronomy chapter 4, come down now if you would, brethren and sisters, to verse 33. Listen to this rhetorical question; it has a connection with what we just read in Hebrews 12. Verse 33, 'Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?' Think about that! Hebrews chapter 12 says, 'Don't refuse as they refused to hear the voice'; they heard the voice and they lived and they still wanted Moses to stand between them, and they still said they didn't want to hear the voice directly anymore. There's a contrast, but what are we to make of what Moses is bringing to their mind? 'Did ever people hear the voice of God, speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard and live?' in other words, God is a consuming fire, but although He's a consuming fire, if we hear the voice, hear it, truly hear it, we will live! When Jesus said, 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear'. Let these words sink down into your hearts, that's the kind of hearing that Jesus is talking about; that's the kind of hearing in verse 33.

Now that's rather interesting! Look at verse 36, 'Out of heaven He made thee to hear His voice, that He might instruct thee: and upon earth (again word connections to Hebrews 12, that we just read) 'and upon earth He showed thee His great fire; and thou heardest His words out of the midst of the fire', and verse 37, 'because He loved thy fathers, therefore He chose their seed after them'. Now the word 'love' is brought in, and the word 'love' is connected to the fathers. The Abrahamic promises are based on God's love for the fathers and their seed. 'Out of heaven you have heard His voice; He was to instruct you upon earth, verse 36, 'you heard His words out of the midst of the fire (the consuming fire) and yet you weren't consumed'.

Now that perhaps generates in our mind some echoes, at least it should, brethren and sisters, because when we reflect on those kind of words, we can't help but be drawn to the burning bush. At the burning bush, Moses was drawn to come forward, and he, it says in Exodus, would see why the bush was not consumed (Exodus 3). That was what really what drew him closer to the bush; it was more that just curiosity; he wished to understand how it was that the bush was not consumed! When he approached to the bush, the Father said, 'remove the shoes from off your feet, for where you now are, is holy ground'. What made that ground holy? The presence of the Father. How was it that the bush was not consumed, for God is a consuming fire? It was not consumed; when the voice spoke, Moses heard. They heard the voice in Exodus, at Sinai, out of the midst of the fire, and they lived. There was a voice that was able to make them live; this voice out of the midst of the consuming fire, did not consume them! And it will never consume His people, who are in the right relationship with Him. Wherever God is, He can make that ground holy! and He can take that which is consumable and unholy by nature, and He can purge it by His own fire. He can make that which would be like the wood of the bush, normally go up in flames and be destroyed in His presence, He can make that and purge that and try that, so that in can be in fact, like the ground, made holy, separate and for His special divine purpose. The burning bush is the secret to understanding what the people were to understand here. 'Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as Moses did, as thou has heard and live?' In Hebrews chapter 12 when Paul quotes, 'for God is a consuming fire', that is not a threat to destroy them, but it is a reminder that if the Jews that he is writing to in Hebrews, were to attach themselves to the Law of Moses, which could not save them, especially through the weakness of their own flesh, and if they were to attach themselves to that order of things, and to try and establish salvation by works, they would not be saved and they would be consumed. But that language, 'God is a consuming fire', has a two-edged sword; it is intended to teach that God can save through that fire, because the voice that comes from that bush, that comes from that mount, was able to be heard and it did not destroy them that heard and were willing to ponder and put into practice its principles!

Now, go to Deuteronomy once again, and consider this! In Deuteronomy chapter 33, there is an incredible comment from the lips of Moses, not long before he dies. In his final blessings, Deut.33 verse 1, 'this is the blessing, the blessing wherewith Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel before his death'. Now he goes through a

number of blessings, but watch this! Verse 13 of Deuteronomy 33, 'And of Joseph he said, Blessed of Yahweh be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills. Verse 16 (the blessing) 'And for the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof, and for the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. His glory is like the firstling of his bullock'. The goodwill of Him that dwelt, brethren and sisters, in the bush', what is Moses driving at when he knelt before that bush, and God's goodwill did not consume him? Later in Moses' life in Exodus 33 and 34, he was to ascend to the mount that had been on fire, and he was to ask Yahweh, 'please' (he was to ask Yahweh) 'show me your glory!' And Yahweh responded by saying, 'I will show you My goodness'. And when He proclaimed His goodness, He proclaimed it in conjunction with the memorial name, Yahweh Elohim, and when Yahweh passed before Moses, he saw the goodwill of Him that he had beheld in the bush, for the bush was not consumed, but the fire was to purge and prepare. What Moses saw in the mount was the goodwill of Him he had beheld earlier in the bush. It was God's redemptive voice that spoke out of the bush; it was God's redemptive voice that was speaking to Moses and associating it with His redemptive name in Exodus 33 and 34, and the concentration of descriptions in Exodus 33 and 34 is on His goodness. Merciful, gracious, long suffering, willing to overcome iniquity, but obviously still a God of truth, Who could not ignore sin! His holiness and His truth are affirmed, but His goodness and His merciful kindness, and His redemptive qualities are what are stacked up by way of emphasis. The voice, 'what people, said Moses, 'have heard the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, and have lived', it was His goodwill to save them through that voice, and you know brethren and sisters, this is a major theme in the book of Deuteronomy, and it is a New Testament theme.

Let me demonstrate this in our last few moments by the following observations:

1. The voice as an expression (track it across the 5 books of Moses)
 - 4 times in Genesis (speaking of God's voice)
 - 9 times in Exodus
 - 0 times in Leviticus
 - 2 times in Numbers
 - 28 times in Deuteronomy (the voice, the voice!)

Now as you survey the book of Deuteronomy, look at these expressions across the book of Deuteronomy:

1. The words which Moses spake: we begin with Deuteronomy 1:1, which of course are God's words. Then comes the expression in Deuteronomy chapter 4:12, the voice of the words, or the voice of God. Then chapter 4:36 His voice that He might instruct His words, then Moses called and said, 'Hear O Israel', then 'which I will speak' chapter

5:23, 'the voice'. Now look at this one, chapter 5:24 His voice, God doth talk with man and he liveth. The voice of Yahweh, Deut.5:25, this one which is perhaps one of the most interesting Deut.5:26 the voice of the living God speaking out, the voice of the living God speaking out, which obviously has echoes to the burning bush.

No wonder the Lord Jesus Christ quoted Deuteronomy 8 verse 3 in this context, 'man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Yahweh', the voice of the living God that speaketh out, Deut.5, and now from the Lord's own quotation, Deut.8, it is the voice which causes men and women to live when they are related to it. Deuteronomy 18, speaking of that prophet that will come like Moses, says Yahweh, 'I will put My words in his mouth and he shall speak in My Name'. When the Israelite according to Deuteronomy 26 was to bring the offering of the firstfruits, the Israelite was to speak aloud, words that were given to him by God. At Gerizim and Ebal, which are described in Deuteronomy 27, when they come into the land under Joshua, on the two mounts the twelve tribes were to read aloud from the plastered words, very plainly Yahweh's words. Then we're told in Deuteronomy 31, that the book,(that would be the book of Deuteronomy) was to be read aloud on the seventh year, in the hearing of Israel. Similar expressions that speak of a living voice, a voice that's spoken and heard and to be received in faith. Deuteronomy 31, 'write ye this song; put it in their mouths' or Deuteronomy chapter 33, 'my doctrine shall drop as the rain; my speech shall distil as the dew'. Then in Deuteronomy, two places, Deut.33 and Deut.5, the reference to the Law being a 'fiery law'.

Deuteronomy, brethren and sisters, is stressing to us, that these are the words of the 'living voice'. These are the words that if responded to properly in faith, can save us! Now that one in Deuteronomy 32, is explicit of New Covenant New Testament principles. This is the voice that saves out of the burning bush; the NEB (New English Bible) translates this in the following way, 'My teaching shall fall like drops of rain; my words shall distil like dew; like fine rain upon the grass and like the showers on young plants.' One particular commentator makes this observation, 'The word preached is likely to profit when it comes gently and sweetly insinuates itself into the hearts and affections of the hearers'. That's the living voice! That's like the small voice that spoke to Elijah, not in the thunder, not in the earthquake, not in the fire and lightning, but the saving voice was the still small voice. This is the voice of the Master!

Let's conclude, brethren and sisters, by just reading two passages that speak of the Master's voice. Luke chapter 4, for His voice is that voice; it is the living voice, but it's the gentle voice, thinking especially of bro. Stephen Palmer's exhortation, the gentle voice, the voice that has gentleness and yet has strength. It is the voice that drops like rain, like words that distil like dew, like fine rain upon the grass, the words of the Master like showers on young plants to promote growth and a new creation. Look at His words; look at this description in Luke 4. Verse 18, 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, and hath sent me to heal the broken hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised'. That's the spirit that worked through the Master, the healing work, the preaching of liberation, but now, verse 21 and 22. 'And he

began to say unto them, this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare him witness and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth'. That very expression is an echo of one of those phrases that we were looking at in Deuteronomy; the gracious words that came out or proceeded out of His mouth, Deut.5, 'the voice of the living God speaking out'. The words of the Master, with the living voice, with living words speaking out, and they're gracious words. Gracious words? the words spoken to Moses in Exodus 33 and 34, when Moses said, 'show me your glory', Yahweh showed him His goodness and He said, 'I am Yahweh, gracious, long suffering, full of mercy'. THAT'S THE LIVING VOICE, IT'S THE REDEMPTIVE VOICE!

Finally, John chapter 6, we hear the living voice again; the voice that saves us, brethren and sisters, as we come in relationship to the New Covenant, to the mediator of better promises, of a better covenant, to the One who calls us out of the burning bush, Who'll purge us and yet save us! John 6, think of verse 63 now in this context, a well known verse but think of it in this context. Jesus says in verse 63 of John 6, 'It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words, the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life'. Brethren and sisters, what we need is to have those words working in us and through us. We need to drink them deeply, for they are the words that will purge us and yet not consume us; they are the words that will save us, because they are gracious words!