

# Pastoral REFLECTIONS

December 31, 2023

## Great Expectations



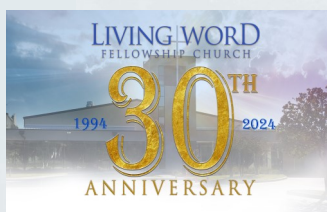
Let us end this year by forgetting what is behind us and beginning the new year with great expectations. What I mean is don't allow anything in the past year to curb your excitement or reduce your expectations for the new year. There are many people who are no longer here at the end of this year, but God chose for us to enter this new year. He must still have a plan for your life. To enter the year with no purpose or not expecting God to do great things is to remove from our remembrance the ability of God to empower us from the inside out (1 John 4:4) and to achieve more than we can imagine. Our expectations in the new year should be based more on our faith rather than what our present circumstances may dictate. "Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen." (Ephesians 3:20-21; NIV) "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (Romans 8:37; NIV) "What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31-32; NIV)

We need to make plans that do not violate the Word of God so that each step depends on it (Proverbs 13:13). With certainty, we can press forward because God's Word does not return void (Isaiah 55:11). "I, the Lord, search the heart and test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds." (Jeremiah 17:10) A writer once said, "No plan is worth the paper it is printed on unless it starts you doing something." The writer supports this with Habakkuk 2:2; "... Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets, that the one who reads it may run." In 2024, make it our year of vision and great expectations of what God can and will do.

Someone once said, "If success humbles you, failure will build you up. If success puffs you up, then failure will destroy you." "For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him." (2 Chronicles 16:9; NIV)

"This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous and then you will have success." (Joshua 1:8) God is great, so let's end the year with thanksgiving and begin a new year expecting great things!

## UPCOMING Events



**30TH ANNIVERSARY**  
Join us as we celebrate 30 Years of God's Faithfulness to Living Word Fellowship Church. The 30th Anniversary Gala will be held Friday, January 12, 2024 at the The Westin Oaks Houston at the Galleria 5011 Westheimer Rd. at Post Oak Houston, TX 77056. Pre-event reception at 6:00 p.m. Gala begins at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are sold out. Celebrate with us Friday and Sunday, January 14, 2024 with two services at 8 a.m. and 11 a.m.

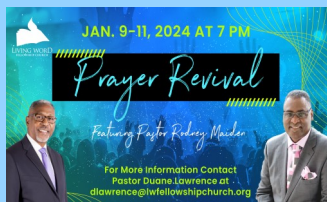


**DRAMA MINISTRY AUDITIONS**  
Join us as we prepare for our annual Good Friday Drama Ministry production. Auditions will be held Sunday, January 7, 2024 from 1:00 p.m.—2:30 in the main sanctuary. For more information contact Melita Washington at [melita290@gmail.com](mailto:melita290@gmail.com)



### The Church Fast

Join us as our church fasts and prays together beginning Jan. 7th through Jan. 12th.



### Prayer Revival

Join us each night at 7PM, Jan. 9th-11th, for our annual Prayer Revival with guest speaker, Pastor Rodney Maiden. This will be 3 evenings of praise and prayer celebrating 30 years of God's faithfulness. See you there!



**MARRIAGE MINISTRY PRAYER BREAKFAST**  
Join us for the Covenant Keepers Marriage Ministry Prayer Breakfast on Saturday, January 27, 2024 from 9:00am – 11:00am in Legacy Sanctuary. We will kick off the year covering families in prayer and filling our bellies with food for the soul. The cost: \$5 per person. Online Registration is required. Register at <https://bit.ly/MarriageBreakfast2024> For more information contact Sherri or Terry Randle at [lwfcmarriagein@gmail.com](mailto:lwfcmarriagein@gmail.com)



## ORDER OF WORSHIP

Announcements

Communion

Visitor's Welcome

Worship In Giving

Offering boxes are located at all perimeters under crosses

Special Music

"Hindsight"  
Deuteronomy 8:1-6  
Dr. Pierre Cannings

Click "Sermon Notes" on the Website

Call to Discipleship  
Please remain seated at this time

Benediction

Children are now required to check-in upon arrival. Please report to the registration desk located in the children's wing.



# Hindsight

## Deuteronomy 8:1-6

### I. Today v. 1

- a. All the Commandment
  - i. It is to be taken in a collective sense, the whole of the law as delivered by Moses on this occasion.
  - ii. Also in line with previous literary and theological pattern, Moses recalled the past—especially from the time of covenant making at Sinai-Horeb—as a means of underscoring both the redeeming and preserving grace of God and the wicked unbelief and insufficiency of his people Israel (vv. 2–5; cf. 4:1–8; 1:6–3:29).
- b. Careful – pay attention
- c. Swore – a covenant guaranteed

### II. Remember vs. 2-5

- a. Remember
  - i. Remember – Both worship and tradition served this memory. Through the great festivals with their rituals and songs, the people participated in both establishing and remembering the meaningful history of Israel and thus understood themselves better in the light of that meaningful past. Memory provided community and continuity. In the cycles of apostasy, affliction, repentance, and deliverance which the Deuteronomistic Historian used to interpret Israel’s history and to call exiles to return, the failure to remember could be used as the equivalent of apostasy (Judg 8:34). The failure to remember was not mere absentmindedness; it was covenant unfaithfulness, the failure to fulfill the obligations of the covenant. Other texts, too, explained God’s judgment as being due to Israel’s forgetfulness (e.g., Isa 17:10; Jer 3:21; 13:25; 18:15; Ezek 22:12; 23:35; Hos 2:13; 4:6; Pss 78:42; 106:7; Neh 9:17)
- b. Way
  - i. Led- To follow God
    - 1. Ways - to walk in his ways. Compare 5:30; 10:12; 11:22; 19:4; 26:17; 28:9; 30:16. Following law and justice was conceived in the Bible as following God’s ways; cf., for example, Gen 18:19, “they will keep the way (*drk*) of YHWH by doing justice and righteousness
  - ii. Wilderness
    - 1. 40 Years
    - 2. *Led thee forty years in the wilderness*] Am. 2:10.—*To humble thee*] by teaching thee, viz., thy dependence upon Him; cf. v. 3, 16.—To prove thee]
- c. He May
  - i. Humble - to oppress, cause someone to feel dependent:
    - 1. Let you be Hungry
      - a. He did this by allowing them to hunger and then to be fed by the miraculous supply of manna (Exod 16:1–30; Num 11:4–9), an act so clearly supernatural that the people had to recognize that it was all of God and not of themselves (v. 3; cf. Exod 16:32). In fact, the manna symbolized more than mere physical nourishment but the word of God itself (v. 4), for the God who could provide in such a mighty and unexpected way was well worth listening to
    - 2. Fed you Manna
      - a. Which You or Fathers did not Know
        - i. It was a food unknown before. Compare Exod 16:15, “for they did not know what it was,”
        - ii. the manna is pointed to, as illustrating the discipline of the wilderness: Israel’s self-sufficiency was “humbled,” first by its being suffered to feel a want, and afterwards by the manner in which its want was supplied; it was thus taught how, for its very existence, it was daily (Ex. 16:4) dependent on the (creative) word of God. On the manna, see Ex. 16
        - iii. Thus even the name suggests the uniqueness of this event; for this provision was a miracle, designed to teach Israel that “the words [הדברים]of God” to his people, namely all that proceeds from the mouth of YHWH (v 3), are the fundamental source of life itself. When the command of God comes, it must be obeyed. Physical limitations are not sufficient excuse for disobedience on our part; for “God’s commandments are God’s enablements,”
        - iv. The manna functioned as a test for Israel’s disposition regarding God (cf. the rebellious attitude in connection with the manna in Num 21:5) and as a test for the obedience of God’s instructions
    - ii. Test – God test in order to ascertain
      - 1. They derive from the fact that one on a public path becomes known and his goal and purposes are revealed by the road he takes. Most important is the sense of God’s purposes and will, e.g. Ex. 33:13; Jb. 21:14, 31; Ps. 67:2; Pr. 8:22; Ezk. 18:25.

### II. Remember vs. 2-5 continued

- 2. whether or not Israel would accommodate itself, trustfully and contentedly (Nu. 21:5), to this state of continued dependence upon God, and whether therefore it could be trusted to obey properly any other laws which might in future be laid upon it. Thus the manna (1) taught Israel its dependence upon Jehovah, and (2) operated as a test of Israel’s disposition
- 3. but in light of the verbs “humble” and “test” in v. 2, it may be best to see the desert itinerary as a learning experience rather than a punishing one (cf. Exod 16:4; 20:20; Deut 8:16; 13:4 [Eng., 13:3]). Thus this is discipline in the positive sense of education.
- d. To Know
  - i. To Know
    - 1. understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.
      - a. The author rather wants to convey the idea that the existence of man depends not on food alone but on God’s providence
      - b. God is able to guarantee the existence of man even when nature does not. All of this goes well with the idea of the whole chapter that man should not rely on his power and wealth but on God
    - 2. Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.
  - ii. What was in your heart
    - 1. Thus you are to know in your heart that the Lord your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son.
    - 2. “heart,” is often rendered “mind.” Here it refers to the inner attitude of the people.
    - 3. This sentence explains in fact the concept of “testing” in the present context. By causing deprivation and lack of food, God tests man to see whether he really puts his trust in him.
  - iii. Keep Commandments
    - 1. The same attitude is reflected in the story about the testing of Jesus by Satan. After Jesus fasts for forty days, Satan tests him to see whether he will be able to turn stones into bread. Jesus replies by quoting this verse (Matt 4:1–4; Luke 4:3–4). Thus the “testing” in Deut 8:2, 16 is understood as being initiated by Satan,

### III. Will Keep v. 6

- a. Keep- to do something carefully
  - i. Commandment
  - ii. Walk – to follow God
    - 1. In His Ways
  - iii. Fear Him- reverence, awe, honored

## PRAYER REQUESTS

**Grieving:** Joella Howard & family, the family of Eric Picket, Lorraine Tigner & family, and the family of Betty Goode

**Health and Healing:** Lurlean Lane, Florence Wiggins, Retha Amos, Cici Sharpe, Margaret Baptiste, Eunice Johnson, Jeffrey McQueen, Pat Crawford, Eric White, Birdie Williams, Tanisha Collins, Jon Heard, Rutha Patrick, Kevin Carey, Jessie Austin, Sherri Love, Elizabeth Clarke, Clara Williams, Dorothy Price, Kathryn Ford-Cheatham, Anthony Thomas, Beverly Austin, Joshua Williams, Ruby Hunter, Elizabeth Bean, Patsy Gatterson, Joyce Newsome, Arleatha Housley, and Patrina Johnson.

HINDSIGHT

DEUTERONOMY 8:1-6