

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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“Keep your soul”

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Moses said to Israel, “...only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thy eyes saw, and lest they depart from thy heart, all the days of thy life; but make them known to thy children and thy children’s children” (Deuteronomy 4:9).

The Word of God has been preached. This past week we assembled seven consecutive days to listen attentively for eight sessions to the proclamation of God’s Truth as written in our Bibles. What do we do now?

Moses gives us an answer. He exhorted God’s people of his day to focus singularly upon personal responsibility. “...take heed to thyself and keep thy soul diligently” were to be taken seriously and carried out individually “Diligence” demands enthusiastic interest. “Keeping your own soul” is therefore to be an important priority earnestly sought with our best effort.

Our “soul” is the inward part of man that encompasses many facets of the individual person. The Hebrew word translated soul is “*nepshesh*” used to describe Adam as a “living creature” in *Genesis* 2:7. God breathed into man’s nostrils the “breath of life” and became a “living soul.” Here, “soul” means the whole of Adam’s physical and

spiritual dimensions. So, in *Genesis* 35:18 “soul” points to that part of man which distinguishes life or death in the physical body, while in *Psalms* 63:1, the same word denotes that part of man that spiritually thirsts for God.

In the New Testament the Greek word, “*psuche*” translated “soul” sometimes points to that part of man containing the “feelings” reacting to what is happening in one’s life. Jesus’ “soul” facing his hour of pain and death, was “troubled” (*John* 12:27). But the “soul” that denotes life in the physical body and points to where man feels emotions in a living body is also identified as the part of man that continues beyond the death of the body. Man can kill “the body,” but cannot kill “the soul.” (*Matthew* 10:28).

Moses’ declaration of the soul appeals to the totality of man, that lives in the flesh, being emotionally engaged, and spiritually attuned to God. Therefore, what kind of diligence are we to apply to keep this part of the inward man strong?

Moses’ exhortation is contextually surrounded in the revelation of God’s Law. Moses has just reminded God’s people of their exalted privilege of being a nation “*who has statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law*” (*Deuteronomy* 4:8). Moses exhorted

them to hearken to the Ten Commandment Law he was teaching them, emphasizing the necessity of “doing them” so “they may live” (*Deuteronomy* 4:14).

In verse 9, Moses exhorts God’s people to “keep their soul” so that they will not “forget the things” which they “saw with their eyes.” Moses reminds them of their experience when the Law was delivered to them from Mt. Horeb. Their eyes saw the mountain burning with fire into the heavens, while thick darkness engulfed them below. They heard the voice of God proceeding from fire declaring His covenant.

Moses continuing his exhortation says, “*Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves, for ye saw no manner of form on that day that Jehovah spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of fire*” (*Deuteronomy* 4:15). What they saw struck fear. Hearing God’s majestic voice void of the manifestation of any form should keep them from corrupting themselves from any form of idolatry. The entire experience was to be indexed in the soul, ready for retrieval at the proper time.

Keep your soul diligently this week. Remember the sermons preached this past week and enthusiastically “make them known” to your children and grandchildren!