

# Deuteronomy 32:46-47 Commentary

Deuteronomy 32:46 he said to them, **"Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which you shall command your sons to observe carefully, even all the words of this law. (Deut 6:6,7 Dt 11:18 1Chr 22:19 Pr 3:1-4 Ezek 40:4 Lu 9:44 Heb 2:1)**

- **Click for a list of Deuteronomy Commentaries** including verse by verse comments on every verse in Deuteronomy.
- See Deuteronomy 32 Commentary

## THE WORD IN OUR HEART

Note that the **key word** in these two passage is the **Word** of God which is alluded to some seven times = **'words...which** (refers to words) **you shall command...all the words...(47) it...word...it...this word."**

Here is the English translation of the Septuagint - Deut. 32:46 and he said to them: "Pay heed with your heart to all these words that I am testifying against you today, which things you shall command your sons, to guard and to perform all the words of this law. Deut. 32:47 Because this is not an empty word for you, since it is your very life, and through this word you shall live long in the land into which you are crossing over the Jordan there to inherit." (Septuagint-NETS)

While this exhortation comes at the end of the Song of Moses (Deut 42:1-43) and refers most directly to those words, this warning is clearly applicable to all the words which Moses had spoken to Israel, and by extension is applicable to us regarding all the words of Scripture. (Note last phrase **"even all the words of this law"** and cp Deut 31:26)

**Constable** - Moses addressed the Israelites again after he had taught them his song. He urged them to take to heart not only the words of the song but **all the words of the law**, namely, the entire covenant text of Deuteronomy (cf. Dt 17:19; 27:3, 8, 26; 28:58; 29:29; 31:12, 24). (Expository Notes)

**Jeffrey H Tigay on all the words** - It is clear from the rest of the verse that the words in question include commands, and since the poem contains none, "the words" must be those of the Teaching as a whole. As noted in Excursus 29, the phrase "these words" is a virtual synonym for the Teaching. (JPS Torah Commentary)

**Bernard M Levinson - All the words**, specifically, the laws of Deuteronomy (Dt 31:24); now, following the insertion of the Song, reinterpreted to refer to both. (Jewish Study Bible)

**J A Thompson** - With Dt 32:44 we return to prose narrative. Moses and Joshua recited the words of this poem to the people and then charged them personally to lay to heart all the words which I enjoin upon you and to see to it that their children should observe the law of God. The song and the law seem to be joined together in these final instructions. The most significant feature was the law. Even an important item like the song needed to be brought into conjunction with the law of God. (Tyndale OT Commentaries - Vol 5 - Deuteronomy)

**Peter Craigie** - Words of God which were spoken through Moses. The **words** (Dt 32:46a) may either be the words of the song, or they may be the words of this law (Dt 32:46b). If the former is the case, then the function of the song can be seen once again; it serves not only as a public witness to covenant commitment, but as a warning against the dangers of leaving the covenant faith. Knowing the dangers of falling from the true faith, the Israelites should be diligent in instructing the younger generation in the true faith; the education of the new generation is an important theme running throughout Deuteronomy (cf. Dt 4:9; 6:7; 11:19; 31:13). (NICOT)

**Eugene Merrill** - His charge to them was that they **"take to heart"** all the words of the song, but not only these words. They also were to heed **"all the words of this law"** (v. 46), a technical phrase used consistently to refer to the entire covenant text of Deuteronomy (cf. Dt 17:19; 27:3, 8, 26; 28:58; 29:29; 31:12, 24). (New American Commentary)

**Bratcher** - it is difficult to say whether all the words here means the words of the song that Moses has just recited, or some or all of the earlier part of the book of Deuteronomy. ("A Handbook on Deuteronomy")

**The Moody Bible Commentary** - These lyrics could be preventive medicine if they would only heed its message.

Deut 6:6-9 speaks of the importance of **Memorizing His Word (on our heart)** so that we might teach, talk and walk in light of them all of our lives -

"And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be **on your heart**; 7 and you shall **teach** them diligently to your sons and shall **talk** of them when you sit in your house and when you **walk** by the way and when you **lie down** and when you **rise up** (the ancient version of "24/7"!)." 8 "And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 9 "And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." (Do you get the sense that God considers His Word constantly before our eyes and ever on our mind as important? cp Dt 11:18. See **Primer on Biblical Meditation**)

**THOUGHT:** Are you intentionally memorizing the Word of Truth that you might be sanctified (set apart, made holy) by the Truth, God's Word (as Jesus prayed for us in Jn 17:17)? Here is a list of passages to get you started on the journey of a lifetime. Don't believe the lie that you are too old to begin now. I am 70 and still actively memorizing God's Word of life. See Memory Verses by Topic.

**Take to your heart** - "Set your heart to all the words" (YLT) "Give attention to" (See **prosecho** below).

**Bratcher** writes "Lay to heart: that is, "cherish," "memorize," "remember," "meditate on." BRCL has "Think seriously," and CEV has "Always remember."

**Take** is a **qal imperative** and in the Lxx is in the **present imperative** which calls for this to be their habitual practice!

**Take** (07760)(**sum/sim**) means to put, to set or to place as when God "placed the man" on earth (Ge 2:8) or Samuel "took a stone and set (sum/sim) it...and named it Ebenezer." (1Sa 7:12)

The **Lxx** translates **sum/sim** with the verb **prosecho** which literally means to "hold toward" and thus means to hold ones' mind to something (the Word) and thus to pay close attention to it, to give heed to it, to devote oneself to it (1Ti 4:13). **Prosecho** is used by the writer of Hebrews with a somewhat similar sense = "For this reason we must **pay** much closer **attention** (**prosecho**) to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it." (Heb 2:1) And so we see that if fail to pay close attention to God's Word, not only do we not progress spiritually, we will actually regress spiritually.

#### **Related Resources:**

- Backsliding or Drifting
- Quotes on Backsliding

**To your heart** - Not just to your head (mind) alone! Yes, you need to hear with your mind, but all too often when we hear spiritual truth it is in one ear and out the other (cp James 1:22). Or perhaps Satan comes and takes the seed of the Word before it has time to take root and germinate (Mk 4:15, Lk 8:12). And as discussed below the heart in Hebrew usage was considered the seat of the mind.

**Heart** (03824)(**lebab**) (leb - note that this discussion also includes the closely related noun lebab -03824) sometimes refers to a literal heart (Ex 28:29, 1Sa 25:37, 2Ki 9:24), but most often is used figurative to refer to what I term the "control center" of our being. Think of an Air Traffic Controller and how dysfunctional, even destructive it is when the controllers fail to function as they should.

**John MacArthur** - The "**heart**" commonly refers to the **mind** as the center of thinking and reason (Pr 3:3; 6:21; 7:3), but also includes the emotions (Pr 15:15, 30), the will (Pr 11:20; 14:14), and thus, the whole inner being (Pr 3:5). The heart is the depository of all wisdom and the source of whatever affects speech (Pr 4:24), sight (Pr 4:25), and conduct (Pr 4:26, 27). (MacArthur, J.: The MacArthur Study Bible Nashville: Word )

Here **Moses** repeats a similar earlier charge...

And these words, which I am commanding you today, **shall be on your heart**; and you shall **teach** them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. (Dt 6:6-7)

**What does taking God's Word into one's heart depict?** This is a clear charge from Moses to the people to **memorize the Word of God** which in turn facilitates **meditating** on the Word of God (Ps 1:2-note, Ps 1:3-note, Joshua 1:8-note). It is very difficult to meditate on that which you have not memorized! Remember the Israelites did not have WiFi or Ipods to look up the Word! They had no written text to which they might refer. Treasuring God's Word in their heart was crucial for their spiritual success (cp Ps 119:9, 11). Are you intentionally, systematically storing up God's precious truth in your heart? This is a once in a lifetime opportunity! Don't miss it! This spiritual discipline will yield dividends not only in this life but in the life to come. As Paul instructed Timothy

But have **nothing to do with** worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, **discipline** (**gumnazo** n the **present imperative** = command to make this one's habitual practice!) yourself for the purpose of godliness; 8 for (**term of explanation**)

bodily discipline is only of little profit, but **godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.** 9 It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. 10 For it is for this we labor **kopiao** = to point of exhaustion = memorizing is not easy!) and strive (**agonizomai** = with agonizing effort. Why? Eternity will prove it was worth it! Strive to memorize God's Word! You won't be disappointed!), because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers. (1Ti 4:7-10+)

**John Gill** - it was not enough to hear them, but they were to lay them up in their hearts, and retain them in their memories; and not only so, but reflect on them in their minds, and closely apply to the consideration of them, and get the true knowledge and sense of them, and put it in practice...(They were) to transmit to their children, and enjoin them the observance of, that so religion might be perpetuated in their posterity.

**Eugene Merrill** - The seriousness of Israel's obligation can be seen in the emphatic words of the charge in v. 46. "Take to heart" (Heb. *šimû lēbabkem*) is a command of strongest force (cf. Deut 30:1; 2Sa 13:20; Isa 42:25; 46:8; Ezek 3:10), one that leaves no room for equivocation. Moreover, the use of the personal pronoun "I" (*ānōkî*) with the participle of 'ûd (rendered as "I have solemnly declared" in the NIV) intensifies the sense of personal interest on the Lord's part. It was he, the sovereign God, who had laid these mandates on them. (New American Commentary)

Old **John Trapp** nails it writing "Set your hearts = And pray God to fix your quicksilver, to put his holy finger upon the hole that is in the bottom of your memories."

I would add we need to pray for that grace which will enable us to love the Word of the Lord.

**All the words** - Not just your favorite verses! The whole counsel of God's Word for us in the NT era. (cp Acts 20:27). See the **illustration** below.

**I am warning** - The idea is solemnly testifying or bearing witness. The Lxx translates warning (Hebrew = **ud** [05749] = to bear witness) with the verb **diamarturomai** which means to make a solemn declaration about truth e.g., Acts 20:24 - "the Gospel"). In 2Ti 4:1 in Paul's last words, he gave Timothy a solemn charge to preach the Word (2Ti 4:2). Paul knew that spiritual life can only be nurtured by the spiritual Word (God's Word, not man's words, no matter how eloquent or wise sounding)!

## **PASSING ON THE BATON TO THE NEXT GENERATION**

**Which you shall command your sons to observe carefully** (cp Dt 4:9-10; 6:7, 20-25; 11:19; 31:12-13) - Notice the "passing of the baton" so to speak. Surely this is an OT picture of the vital practice of making disciples which was Jesus' last command =

"Go therefore and make disciples (**aurist imperative** = the only command in the "Great Commission" meaning "Do this now! Don't delay!" This command even conveyed a sense of urgency!) of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Mt 28:19-20)

Notice the parallel between Moses charge to the fathers to command their sons to observe all of the laws carefully and Jesus exhortation that they would teach them to "observe all that I commanded you."

In a word, the word will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from the word!

**Even all the words of this law** - "this means all the teachings in the book of Deuteronomy (see this law in Dt 1:5); so CEV has "everything written in The Book of God's Law." (Bratcher)

**ILLUSTRATION** - Researchers studying eye movement during normal conversation have found that sustaining eye contact for any length of time is difficult, if not impossible. Special cameras reveal that what appears to be a steady gaze at someone is actually a series of rapid scans of the face. Eye movement is essential because the nerves in the eye need a constant change of stimulation if we are to see properly. Studies show that if we look at the same spot continuously, the rest of our visual field will go blank. We can experience a similar problem in our study of the Word of God. If we "stare" exclusively at certain biblical truths while excluding other important doctrines, our spiritual vision will begin to blur out. Some people, for instance, tend to look only at the love of God, or the wrath of God, or evangelism, or church growth, or the end times, or the devil, or sin. No matter what particular truth we are interested in, we need to be careful lest we lose our perspective. The Bible tells us that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16) and is profitable for our spiritual development. Only as we see the big picture—how the many biblical doctrines fit together—will we avoid staring at some truths and becoming blind to others. —M R De Haan II

God's Word was given for our good  
And we are to obey;

Not choose the parts that we like best,  
Then live in our own way.  
—Hess

**You can't enjoy the harmony of Scripture  
if you play just one note of truth.**

**Deuteronomy 32:47 "For it is not an idle word for you; indeed it is your life. And by this word you will prolong your days in the land, which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess."**

- Deut 30:19 Lev 18:5 Pr 3:1,2,18,22 4:22 Isa 45:19 Mt 6:33 Ro 10:5,6 1Ti 4:8 1Ti 6:6-8 1Pe 3:10-12 2Pe 1:3,16 Rev 22:14

## **THE WORD OF GOD: OUR LIFE!**

**For** - (Lxx = **hoti** = a conjunction which can introduce a result or can be causal as in this passage = "because") is a **term of explanation** which should always prompt a pause to ponder the passage before to see what is being explained. Not only will it be a pause that refreshes, but it will be a pause that will often yield fresh insight into the passages as the Spirit illuminates the text. It will not be a waste of time to pause and ponder! Why? Because God's Word God's Word is NEVER VOID (or empty) of producing results (teaching, reproof, correction, training in righteousness - 2Ti 3:16-17).

**It** - The Word of God. Which explains why it is not a vain or worthless Word, for "Every word of God is tested." (Pr 30:5) David adds that "The words of the LORD are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times." (Ps 12:6). These were words spoken by God with the goal to impart life to those who hear and heed them!

**Vine and Hogg** in the preface of their commentary on the letters to the Thessalonians write "The motto chosen at the inception of the work was the charge of Moses to Israel concerning the Law: **"It is no vain thing for you; because it is your life"** (Deut. 32:47). These words are equally applicable to the whole Bible, the completed Revelation of God, and to the Christian of the day now present. We shall be thankful indeed if our readers, with ourselves, are by anything written herein helped the more deeply to reverence, and the more closely to follow, Holy Scripture, and the more steadfastly "to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven."

**Not an idle word** - Amplified = "not an empty and worthless trifle" NAB = "For this is no trivial matter"; NLT = "These instructions are not empty words"; HCSB = they are not meaningless words" - In the Lxx the Greek word for **"not"** is absolutely (not relatively) not! The idea of course is that God's Word was worthy of their attention back then and it remains worthy of our attention today! Are you reading it daily? Are you heeding what you read? Take it not just into your head but into your heart!

**Craigie** writes that "The law did not bind men in a straitjacket of legalism, but pointed toward that life which God purposed for them. In the law lay the secret of Israel's longevity and prosperity in the promised land which they were soon to possess." (NICOT)

**An idle word** is a word which is **not profitable**. But as Paul says "All Scripture is inspired by God and **profitable** for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." (2Ti 3:16-17)

**Bratcher** on **an idle word...your life** - This emphasizes the seriousness of the matter; what Moses has taught the people is not something insignificant that they can take or leave. Their very existence as a people depends on their obedience to the Law.

**Levinson** on **not an idle word** - using the same word as the Laws of Hammurabi: "My laws ... are trifling only to the fool" (Ibid)

**Wayne Grudem** quotes Dt 32:47 in his discussion of the necessity of the Bible writing "The necessity of Scripture means that the Bible is necessary for knowing the gospel, for maintaining spiritual life, and for knowing God's will, but it is not necessary for knowing that God exists or for knowing something about God's character and moral laws." He goes on then in point "B" to note "The Bible is necessary for maintaining spiritual life. (118) (Mt. 4:4; Deut. 32:47; 1 Peter 2:2)" ([The Word of God - The Authority of Scripture - Part 2](#))

The Word of God is the exact opposite of vanity and emptiness. It is what truly gives meaning, purpose and significance to life.

It is interesting that a number of older expositors (including even C H Spurgeon) take the word as picturing "religion" and have titles like "Religion is not a vain thing" (Samuel A King, D.D.) Spurgeon = [Religion a Reality](#)

**Idle** (07386)(**req**) is an adjective that means empty or vain (frivolous, trivial, trifling). **Req** is used to describe an empty pit (Ge 37:24), empty pitchers (Jdg 7:16), vain (worthless) men (Jdg 9:4, 11:3, 2Chr 13:7 = speaking of their character), empty vessels (2Ki 4:3), worthless things (Pr 12:11, Pr 28:19), empty vessel (as a term of comparison - Jer 51:34)

**Req** - Literal emptiness is indicated in Gen. 37:14; 41:27; Jdg 7:16; 2Ki. 4: 3. Metaphorically, req refers to God's purifying and painful judgment against his people in Ezek 24:11, which describes the prophet's symbolic action of placing the empty cooking pot on the fire, so that all its impurities may be burned off (see also Neh. 5:13). Isa 29:8 refers to the nations that will suffer gnawing pangs of hunger (lit: "... those who awake empty"), again as a direct consequence of God's judgment against them. References to those who are "empty" in the sense of being "vain" or "idle" are found in Dt 32:47; Jdg 9: 4; 2Sa. 6:20; 13:7; Pr 12:11; 28:19. (Stephen Renn)

In Deut 32:47 **req** is translated in the **Lxx** with the adjective **kenos** which literally means empty and figuratively means without truth or power (1Cor 15:14, Eph 5:6-note, Col 2:8-note, James 2:20. Note that God's Word is the antithesis of this figurative description of **kenos**!) The adjective kenos also conveyed the sense of without effect or without reaching its goal (1Cor 15:10note, 1Cor 15:58-note).

**Bishop Trench** writes that "in the NT kenoi logoi (empty words) (Eph 5:6, cf Dt 32:47, Ex 5:9) are words which have no inner substance and kernel of truth, hollow sophistries and apologies for sin." (Synonyms of the NT) - Comment - The words described in Eph 5:6 are the direct antithesis of the Word of God in Dt 32:47 (and in the entire Word of God, the Bible)!

**Req** - 14x in OT. NAS Usage: emptied(1), empty(6), foolish ones(1), idle(1), satisfied(1), worthless(4).

Genesis 37:24 and they took him and threw him into the pit. Now the pit was **empty**, without any water in it.

Deuteronomy 32:47 "For it is not an **idle** word for you; indeed it is your life. And by this word you will prolong your days in the land, which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess."

Judges 7:16 He divided the 300 men into three companies, and he put trumpets and **empty** pitchers into the hands of all of them, with torches inside the pitchers.

Judges 9:4 They gave him seventy pieces of silver from the house of Baal-berith with which Abimelech hired **worthless** and reckless fellows, and they followed him.

Judges 11:3 So Jephthah fled from his brothers and lived in the land of Tob; and worthless fellows gathered themselves about Jephthah, and they went out with him.

2 Samuel 6:20 But when David returned to bless his household, Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David and said, "How the king of Israel distinguished himself today! He uncovered himself today in the eyes of his servants' maids as one of the **foolish ones** shamelessly uncovers himself!"

2 Kings 4:3 Then he said, "Go, borrow vessels at large for yourself from all your neighbors, even **empty** vessels; do not get a few.

2 Chronicles 13:7 and **worthless** men gathered about him, scoundrels, who proved too strong for Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, when he was young and timid and could not hold his own against them.

Nehemiah 5:13 I also shook out the front of my garment and said, "Thus may God shake out every man from his house and from his possessions who does not fulfill this promise; even thus may he be shaken out and **emptied**." And all the assembly said, "Amen!" And they praised the LORD. Then the people did according to this promise.

Proverbs 12:11 He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, But he who pursues **worthless** things lacks sense.

Proverbs 28:19 He who tills his land will have plenty of food, But he who follows empty pursuits will have poverty in plenty.

Isaiah 29:8 It will be as when a hungry man dreams-- And behold, he is eating; But when he awakens, his hunger is **not satisfied** (KJV = "soul is empty"), Or as when a thirsty man dreams-- And behold, he is drinking, But when he awakens, behold, he is faint And his thirst is not quenched. Thus the multitude of all the nations will be Who wage war against Mount Zion.

Jeremiah 51:34 "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has devoured me and crushed me, He has set me down like an **empty** vessel; He has swallowed me like a monster, He has filled his stomach with my delicacies; He has washed me away.

Ezekiel 24:11 "Then set it **empty** on its coals So that it may be hot And its bronze may glow And its filthiness

may be melted in it, its rust consumed.

**Calvin** - Jerome's translation is better — "The precepts are not given you in vain;" for Moses simply intimates that the Law was not given in vain, so as to end in fruitlessness; and consequently they were to beware lest they should frustrate God's purpose, who desired to do them good.

**John Gill** - it was no light and trifling matter, but of great importance and consequence, obedience to it being attended with rewards, and disobedience with punishment... if obeyed, the means of a comfortable and happy **life**, in the enjoyment of all good things, of the preservation and continuance of it to a length of time; and long life was always reckoned a great temporal mercy:

**Geneva Study Bible** on not a vain word - For I will perform my promise to you, (Isaiah 55:10).

**John Trapp** - God's favour is no empty favour, it is not like the winter sun, that casts a goodly countenance when it shines, but gives little comfort and heat.

**It is your life** - What does Moses (and the Spirit Who inspired him) equate with **'your life'**? The Word of God! (Cp Dt 8:3, Dt 30:15, 19-20) The Word points to life and gives life to those who follow the instruction.

Pr 4:13 Take hold of instruction; do not let go. Guard her, for she is your **life**.

Peter makes a similar statement writing "seeing that His divine power has granted to use **everything pertaining to life** and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence." (2Pe 1:3)

**Life Application Study Bible** - The Bible can sit on your bookshelf and gather dust, or you can make it a vital part of your life by regularly setting aside time to study it. When you discover the wisdom of God's message, you will want to apply it to your life and pass it on to your family and others. The Bible is not merely good reading-it's real help for real life.

If we were fully persuaded of that God's **Word** is our **life**, how different we would be our intake (time in the Word) and our output (Spirit enabled conduct in obedience to the Word)!

This clear association of the Word of God and our life reminds me of the words Jesus used to deflect the verbal attack (temptation) of the devil - " But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'" (Mt 4:4, Lk 4:4)

Compare the teaching in Dt 30:19-20 where Moses ""I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by **loving** the LORD your God, by **obeying** His voice, and by **holding fast** to Him (How do you hold fast to Him? By holding His Word, that it might hold you when trials and temptations come as we know they will); for (another **term of explanation**) **this is your life** and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them." In other words, by obeying the Word, one shows he loves the LORD his God and the result is life and blessing, not only in this life but in that to come! Hold on beloved for Jesus said "I am coming quickly." (Rev 22:12).

**Warren Wiersbe** - Moses closed the song, Joshua standing with him, by appealing to the people to take the message to heart and teach the song to their children, so that future generations would obey the Law and avoid idolatry. (See Deut. 4:9-10; 6:7; 11:19; Ex. 10:2; 12:26.) The Word of God is the life of God's people, just as God is our life (Deut. 30:20); for the Word communicates to us the truth about God and His gracious blessings. To receive and obey the Word is to share in the life of God. "They are not just idle words for you—they are your life" (Deut 32:47NIV). "For the word of God is living and powerful" (Heb. 4:12). (Be Equipped - Deuteronomy).

**By this word you will prolong your days in the land** - "By this Word" conveys the sense of "by means of" this Word. Obedience to the Word is associated with "long" life, fullness of life with bountiful blessings! The reason I place "long" in quotes is that some godly obedient saints have had a short earthly life, but they redeemed the time God had allotted them.

So the Word of God heard and heeded (obeyed) will enable them to possess the land and live in the land which God had promised. For NT believers, the promises include every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Eph 1:3), so the blessing to us is not a promised land but a promised life, indeed, an abundant life (Jn 10:10)!

**Thoralf Gilbrant** - These were "not just idle words" to bind people in a pattern of legalism; they were God-spoken words designed to impart life. Longevity and prosperity in the divinely Promised Land awaited them if they adopted the life-style prescribed in the words God had spoken to them. (Complete Biblical Library Commentary)

**Prolong your days** - see Deut 5:16; 6:2; 11:9; 25:15

**Possess** - See Deut 1:7, cp Dt 4:26, 40. See also Nu 14:24.

**Possess** (03423)(*yarash*) means to take possession, to inherit, to drive out and is usually used in connection with the idea of conquering a land. This is the same verb Jehovah used when He gave this promise to Abram = "And He said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to **possess** it." (Genesis 15:7, also used in Ge 22:17 of the promise to Abram's seed, cp Ge 28:4) As noted below a major theme of the book of Deuteronomy is possession of the land. This theme continued throughout Israel's history and prophetic message. Possession of the land was directly connected to a person's relationship with the Lord; breaking the covenantal relationship led to dispossession. But even in exile, Israelites awaited the day when they would repossess the land (Jer. 30:3 referring to a future fulfillment when the Messiah returns to set up His Millennial Kingdom).

**Yaras** is a **key word** (key verb) in the book of Deuteronomy, the second giving of the law to Israel as they prepared to go and take possession of the promised land. Of the over 200 uses note that the majority (about 63 verses) are found in the book of Deuteronomy...

Ge 15:3f, 7f; 21:10; 22:17; 24:60; 28:4; 45:11;

Ex 15:9; 34:24;

Lev. 20:24; 25:46;

Nu 13:30; 14:12, 24; 21:24, 32, 35; 24:18; 27:11; 32:21, 39; 33:52f, 55; 36:8;

Deut. 1:8, 21, 39; 2:12, 21f, 24, 31; 3:12, 18, 20; 4:1, 5, 14, 22, 26, 38, 47; 5:31, 33; 6:1, 18; 7:1, 17; 8:1; 9:1, 3ff, 23; 10:11; 11:8, 10f, 23, 29, 31; 12:1f, 29; 15:4; 16:20; 17:14; 18:12, 14; 19:1f, 14; 21:1; 23:20; 25:19; 26:1; 28:21, 42, 63; 30:5, 16, 18; 31:3, 13; 32:47; 33:23;

Jos. 1:11, 15; 3:10; 8:7; 12:1; 13:1, 6, 12f; 14:12; 15:14, 63; 16:10; 17:12f, 18; 18:3; 19:47; 21:43; 23:5, 9, 13; 24:4, 8;

Jdg. 1:19ff, 27ff; 2:6, 21, 23; 3:13; 11:21ff; 14:15; 18:7, 9;

1 Sam. 2:7;

2 Sam. 14:7; 1 Ki. 14:24; 21:15f, 18f, 26;

2 Ki. 16:3; 17:8, 24; 21:2;

2 Chr. 20:7, 11; 28:3; 33:2;

Ezra. 9:11f;

Neh. 9:15, 22ff;

Job 13:26; 20:15;

Ps. 25:13; 37:9, 11, 22, 29, 34; 44:2f; 69:35; 83:12; 105:44;

Pr. 20:13; 23:21; 30:9, 23;

Isa. 14:21; 34:11, 17; 54:3; 57:13; 60:21; 61:7; 63:18; 65:9;

Jer. 8:10; 30:3; 32:23; 49:1f;

Ezek. 7:24; 33:24ff; 35:10; 36:12;

Hos. 9:6;

Amos 2:10; 9:12;

Obad. 1:17, 19f;

Mic. 1:15;

Hab. 1:6;

Zech. 9:4

The **Lxx** uses **kleronomeo** from **kleros** (First a pebble, piece of wood used in casting lots as in Acts 1:26 then the allotted portion or inheritance, and so a lot, heritage) and it means to receive a lot or share of an inheritance, inherit a portion of property or receive a possession as gift from someone who has died.

in thing for you: because it is your life—Deut. 32:47

These words were addressed by Moses to the people after he had repeated the song to them. He referred to the law as it was interpreted by the song. Let us then glance at the song. It opens with a call to attention and a statement concerning its nature. It is a song concerning the name of Jehovah (Dt 31:1-3a). Then, in brief but pregnant sentences, the song sets forth the glories of the name as it celebrates the greatness, the perfection, the justice, the faithfulness of God (Dt 31:3b, 4). Then in sudden contrast, and in short, sharp fashion, it describes the people in their unworthiness (Dt 31:5). It then becomes an appeal, calling upon the people to remember, and merges into a description, full of beauty, of the tender government of God. It is a wonderful revelation of the fact that love is the inspiration of law (Dt 31:6-14). In strange contrast again the song becomes a wail as the unfaithfulness of the people is described, beginning with the words, "But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked" (Dt 31:15-18). Such unfaithfulness had resulted in discipline which the song describes (Dt 31:19-28). Then it breaks out into lament. "Oh, that they were wise," and describes the blessings which follow obedience (Dt 31:29-43). That is merely an analysis. Let the song be studied by its simple aid, and it will be found how wonderfully it was calculated to teach men that the will of God for them is indeed no vain thing, but their very life. (Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible)

### **James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose**

Deuteronomy 32:47

I. What the Word Of God is Not. "It is not a vain thing."

1. Because its QUICKENING power is needed (Psa. 119:5).
2. Because it has ILLUMINATING power (Psa. 119:105).
3. Because of its IRRESISTIBLE power (Jer. 23:29).

II. To Whom it is No Vain Thing. "It is no vain thing for you." For you who have heard and believed.

III. Why it is No Vain Thing. "Because it is your life."

1. It is the SOURCE of your life (1 Peter 1:23-25).
2. It is the SUSTENANCE of your life (1 Peter 2:2).
3. It is the STRENGTH of your life (Eph. 6:17).

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### **John Butler - Analytical Bible Expositor...The Recommendation About the Song (Deut. 32:46-47)**

Moses not only repeated the song to the people, but he also gave some recommendations regarding the song.

- **The consecration for the song.** "Set your hearts unto all the words" (Deuteronomy 32:46). The heart must be upon the words of the song if the song is to do them any good. David said, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97). If you do not love the Word of God, you will not meditate upon it, and you will soon forget it. There is not much love for the Scriptures today which explains many of the problems in our land and of our people.

- **The command about the song.** "Command your children to observe... all the words" (Deuteronomy 32:46). Teaching the children the Scriptures is vital. Our day is guilty of teaching the children everything but the Scripture, and this produces a great many problems in the land.

- **The character of the song.** "It is not a vain thing" (Deuteronomy 32:47). The world plays down the value of the Scripture and would have us believe that there is little if any worth in the Word of God. But Moses exhorts otherwise here to the Israelites.

- **The compensation in the song.** "Through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land" (Deuteronomy 32:47). If Israel heeds the words of this song, which is the Word of God, they will prolong their stay in the land. The captivity exposed their failure to abide by the Divine Word. (Analytical Bible Expositor – Leviticus to Deuteronomy)

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**Spurgeon** takes the word as pointing to one's personal religion...

Religion-a reality

The Christian dispensation is one which requires much faith to receive it. We walk not by sight, but by faith alone; and it is little marvel that when ungodly men see the righteous afflicted, and discover that their comfort lies in matters which only faith can apprehend, they should cry out, "It is a vain thing," and should turn aside from the ordinances of God. Besides, to confess the truth, there have been so many counterfeits of true religion, that it is not remarkable that unconverted men should consider even the genuine article to be but a vain thing.

I. The true religion of Christ, which consists in a vital faith in His person, His blood, and His righteousness, and which produces obedience to His commands and a love to God, is not a fiction.

1. The objects of true religion are, to those who believe in Jesus, no fiction.
2. The experience which true religion brings is no fiction.
3. There is a reality in the privileges of religion.
4. The religion of Christ is evidently not a vain thing if you look at its effects.
5. To the man who really possesses it, it is his life. His religion is not like a man's regimentals, which he can take off and go in undress; it is inside of him; it is woven right through and through him.

II. It is no trifle.

1. It deals with your souls.
2. It connects you with God.
3. Those who have ever known anything of it tell you it is no "child's play."
4. Sinners, when they are in their senses, find it no trifle.
5. True ministers of God feel it to be no trifle.

III. It is no folly. If you would accomplish the proudest feat of human intellect, it is to attain to the knowledge of Christ crucified. Here the man whose mind makes him elephantine may find depth in which he may swim. Here the most recondite learning shall find itself exhausted. Here the most brilliant imagination shall find its highest flights exceeded, Here the man who understands history may crown his knowledge by the history of God in the world; here men who would know the secret, the greatest secret which heaven and earth and hell can tell, may find it out, for the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant. All the learning of man is doubtless folly to the angels, but the foolishness of God in the Gospel is wisdom to cherubim and seraphim, and by the Church shall be made known to them in ages to come the manifold wisdom of God,

IV. It is no speculation. People sometimes ask us what we think about the heathen, whether they will be saved or not, Well, sirs, there is room for difference of opinion there; but I should like to know what you think about yourselves--will you be saved or not?--for after, all, that is a question of a deal more importance to you. Now, the religion of Christ is not a thing that puts a man into a salvable state, but it saves him. It is not a religion which offers him something which perhaps may save him; no, it saves him out and out, on the spot. It is not a thing which says to a man, "Now, I have set you a-going, you must keep on yourself." No, it goes the whole way through, and saves him from beginning to end. He that says "Alpha" never stops till He can say "Omega" over every soul.  
(C. H. Spurgeon.)