

December 13, 2020

Shema: Hear O Israel

Deuteronomy 5-6

God of the Bible is not the same as Allah or any other god of man's religions.

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

Dec 6	2 Cor 10-13	Dec 10	Ephesians 4-6
Dec 7	Galatians 1-3	Dec 11	Philippians 1-4
Dec 8	Galatians 4-6	Dec 12	Colossians 1-4
Dec 9	Ephesians 1-3	Dec 13	1 Thess 1-5

Overview of Deuteronomy 5-6

Deuteronomy 5 Ten Commandments Repeated

Key Verses 29, 32-33:

29 If only they had such a heart in them, to fear Me and keep all My commandments always, so that it would go well with them and with their sons forever!

32 So you shall be careful to do just as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right or to the left. 33 You shall walk entirely in the way which the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and that it may be well for you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you will possess.

Deuteronomy 6 Command to Love the Lord

Central Idea of the Passage: Moses tells God's people to love the LORD their God and keep His Words on their hearts and in their speech throughout their generations.

Lesson Idea: We need to love the LORD with everything we are, and we need to keep His commands and teach them to our children.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS:

IMPORTANT TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

- Deut. 6:4 emphasizes monotheism (which means that there is only one God). Israel had come out of Egypt and was going into a land filled with people who believed in multiple gods (called polytheism). Even though we know God in three persons (God the Father, God the Son [whose name is Jesus], and God the Holy Spirit) it is important for us to remember that *the LORD our God is just one God-- the ONLY God.*
- The fact that Moses personalizes God as the LORD who is OUR God rules out associating Yahweh (the God of the Bible) with any other religion's god. The

Background:

In this chapter, Moses is continuing his final instructions to the generation of Israelites who were about to go and conquer the Promised Land. All of the previous chapters have been a part of this speech and contains the heart of the message that drove Moses → **Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and strength.**

Deuteronomy 6:1-9 Hear, O Israel

Questions to Ponder:

- "Commands, decrees and laws" includes all of the instructions that God had given them through Moses. Why does Moses emphasize the people obeying the entirety of God's Word?
- The words translated as "so that" indicate reasons for the people to obey. What are the reasons given in v 2-3 for the people to obey?
- What does it mean to "fear the LORD?"
- V 3 and 4 both begin with the call to "Hear." What is the true emphasis of this charge?
- According to vs 7 whose responsibility is it to teach children the Word of the LORD? When and how should that teaching take place?

Deut. 6:1-9 NASB

1 "Now this is the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded me to teach you, so that you may do them in the land where you are going over to take possession of it, 2 so that you, your son, and your grandson will fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. 3 Now Israel, you shall listen and be careful to do them, so that it may go well for you and that you may increase greatly, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. 4 "Hear, Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!" 5 And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. 7 And you shall repeat them diligently to your sons and speak of them when you sit in your house, when you walk on the road, when you lie down, and when you get up. 8 You shall also tie them as a sign to your hand, and they shall be as frontlets on

your forehead. 9 You shall also write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

NOTES:

After reiterating the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5, Moses now stressed the importance of complete obedience and leaving a legacy of faith. Verses 1-2 emphasize how their compliance with God's commands will affect them, their sons, and their grandsons. Verse 3 shares how this will help them enjoy the blessings that were promised to their forefathers. Generational faith was an important priority within Israel's founding and continued to be stressed throughout their history. **Deuteronomy 5:9-10** reminded them about the effect false or true worship would have on future generations:

*7 'You shall have no other gods besides Me.
8 'You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. 9 You shall not worship them nor serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, inflicting the punishment of the fathers on the children, even on the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 10 but showing favor to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. (Deut. 5:9-10)*

Verses 4-9 may be some of the most well-known and important Scriptures in the Old Testament. These verses were committed to memory by all in the Jewish faith. The passage is entitled "**The Shema**" which is the Hebrew word for the first word found in verse 4, translated in English with the command: "**Hear.**" The word emphasizes the need to listen to what God has to say through Moses. J.A. Thompson in *The Tyndale Commentary on Deuteronomy* comments on this passage:

4. Hear, O Israel. Israel is invited to respond to Yahweh with the same fullness of love that Yahweh displayed towards his people. In the New Testament verse 5 is described by Jesus as the first and great commandment (Matt. 22:36-38. Cf. Mark 12:29-34; Luke 10:27, 28). This small section (4-9) has been known to the Jews for many centuries as the *Shema* (Heb., *Hear*) and has been recited along with 11:13-21 and Numbers 15:37-41 as a daily prayer. The reference to the binding of God's laws on one's forehead is discussed under 6:8. The prescription of verse 4 has sometimes been regarded as the positive way of expressing the negative commands of the first two commandments of the decalogue (5:7-

10). This central confession of faith consists of only four words, *Yahweh, our God, Yahweh, One*. The expression has been variously understood. Possible translations are 'Yahweh our God, Yahweh is one', 'Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one'. 'Yahweh is our God, Yahweh alone'. Whatever translation is chosen the essential meaning is clear. Yahweh was to be the sole object of Israel's worship, allegiance and affection. (*Tyndale*)

The people were called to obey not just to avoid punishment and receive blessings; they were called to obey God out of love. The call to love God with all of one's being was supposed to be constantly "**on your heart**" (v 6). They were to continually meditate on the love and laws of God. Psalm 119:11 reminds us to *hide God's Word in our hearts, so that we will not sin against Him*. Psalm 119:105 tells us that *His Word is a lamp unto our paths and a light for our way*.

But it did not stop just with the individual, though; nor was it supposed to stay just **in their hearts**. The person of faith had a responsibility to teach it to the next generation. God's Word and their witness was to be constantly **on their lips** as they shared it with their children "**when you sit in your house, when you walk on the road, when you lie down, and when you get up**" (v 7). That covers just about every aspect of family life—the word of faith should be on parents' lips no matter what activities they are involved in.

Too often parents think that the church is responsible for teaching their children about Christ, but God always expect parents to be the first and foremost disciple makers at home. Moses will repeat this command in Deut 11:19 and Paul seems to echo it in Ephesians 6:4: "*Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*" Notice that both Deuteronomy and Ephesians places the responsibility first on the fathers. We are all thankful for godly mothers and wives who have helped to teach generations about Christ; but dads need to see this as a crucial call on their lives to be a driving force for the spiritual formation of their children as well. Verses 7-8 instructs the parents to put the Scriptures in places on their bodies and houses where they would constantly see them and be reminded to obey them.

- **APPLICATION:** The phrase "**with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind**" refers to the totality of a person. How much does your life reflect a total love of God?

Deuteronomy 6:10-19 Don't Forget

Questions to Ponder:

- **Moses emphasized that the LORD was who would bring them into the land. What benefits would be in the land for them already?**
- **What would be the danger for the people according to vs 12?**
- **Is it easier to forsake the LORD when things are going well or when things are bad, and why?**
- **Usually we think of jealousy as a bad trait. What is the difference between our kind of jealousy and God's righteous jealousy?**
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Deut. 6:10-19

10 *"Then it shall come about when the LORD your God brings you into the land that He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, 11 and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and carved cisterns which you did not carve out, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied, 12 be careful that you do not forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 13 You shall fear only the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name. 14 **You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you,** 15 for the LORD your God who is in the midst of you is a jealous God; so follow Him, or else the anger of the LORD your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth.*

16 ***"You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah.** 17 You shall **diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God,** and His provisions and His statutes which He has commanded you. 18 You shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, so **that it may go well for you** and that you may go in and take possession of the good land which the LORD swore to give your fathers, 19 by driving out all your enemies from you, as the LORD has spoken.*

NOTES:

Moses understood how easily people forget God when things are going well. He reminds them that when they are enjoying the good things about the land, that they should remember who provided the land for them. He especially wanted them to remember that they were moving into cities and houses that they did not build and drinking from cisterns that they did not have to dig. God

provided them with a homeland that was already established and built up to be inhabited. They were reminded not to forget His provision throughout all of their generations.

Moses also reminded the people again not to worship other gods. Verse 15 states the reason: *"for the LORD your God who is in the midst of you is a jealous God; so follow Him, or else the anger of the LORD your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth."* We often think of jealousy as a negative or sinful emotion; but when it comes to the Lord, His jealousy is righteous and based on Him not being willing to share His glory with anyone else (Isaiah 42:8). He also knows that any time people follow after false gods, it leads them into sin and degradation. He reminded them of what happened when they complained against God and tested Him at Massah (see Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95:6-11).

J. Gordon McConville writes about these verses in the *New Bible Commentary on Deuteronomy*:

6:10-19 Life in the land. Moses did not tire of reminding the people that the land they were about to enjoy was God's gift, promised ages ago to the forefathers of Israel (10; cf. 1:8). Then he paused to show how good this land would be (10-11), full of all the things a desert people longs for. It was not only naturally fruitful (Ex. 3:8), but had been tended and developed by its inhabitants. Moses wanted to stress the fact that the land with its wealth was indeed a gift to Israel. Their well-being must be a cause for gratitude, not self-satisfaction (12). Material prosperity, as modern western society shows, can always lead to spiritual indifference.

In Deuteronomy, the basic promise always keeps close company with the basic command. The gift brings a choice, which is now put in terms very like the first three commandments (13-15; cf. 5:7-11). When God gives the land, then he alone must be worshipped in it; it will be his people in his land. The swearing of oaths in his name (rather than in the names of other gods) is a way of expressing his unique right to their loyalty. His 'jealousy' (see 5:9) is his determination not to permit rivals, which is matched, of course, by total commitment on his part to the relationship with his people. . .

. . . Jesus used the words of vs 13 and 16 in Mt. 4:7, 10 (Lk. 4:8, 12) in response to Satan's attempt to get him to use religious power rather than give God true worship. Jesus saw his own experience of forty days in the wilderness as re-enacting Israel's testing there for forty years. Likewise, his followers should learn from times of difficulty to rely more fully on God.

- **APPLICATION:** Moses emphasized to Israel that their God was “among you” (KJV “in the midst of you”) as opposed to the false “gods” of the peoples “around you” (KJV “surround you”). Who do we follow more-- the God who is “among us” or the people who are “around us?”

Deuteronomy 6:20-24 Tell the Next Generation

Questions to Ponder:

- What main event were the people supposed to share with their children, and why?
- What reasons do verses 24—25 give for following the Lord’s commands?
- How can these verses serve as an outline for how to share your testimony with your children and grandchildren?

Deut. 6:20-25

20 *“When your son asks you in time to come, saying, ‘What do the provisions and the statutes and the judgments mean which the LORD our God commanded you?’ 21 then you shall say to your son, ‘We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 22 Moreover, the LORD provided great and terrible signs and wonders before our eyes against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household; 23 He brought us out of there in order to bring us in, to give us the land which He had sworn to our fathers.’ 24 So the LORD commanded us to follow all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God for our own good always and for our survival, as it is today. 25 And it will be righteousness for us if we are careful to follow all this commandment before the LORD our God, just as He commanded us.*

NOTES:

Moses ends this portion of his instructions by returning to parental responsibility. He assumes that the next generations of Israelites will ask why it is necessary to keep the Lord’s commands and what do they mean. Moses tells them to be ready always to share a history lesson with them. Beginning with their slavery in Egypt, Moses tells them to recount God’s miraculous deliverance of His people from slavery into the Promised Land. So they should obey the Lord, because He commanded them to and because it will work for their own good, for their survival, and for their righteousness (v 24-25).

Parents were told to be ready to answer their children’s spiritual questions about why they worshipped the LORD and obeyed His commands. Verses 21-25 give a good outline for us to follow in sharing a testimony of our faith in the Lord. Consider the following questions, and write out your testimony of faith in Jesus.

In vs 21 he tells what life was like before God rescued them (slavery in Egypt, oppression, etc.). What was your life like before you met Jesus as Lord and Savior?

In vs 22 he tells what God did to reveal Himself (great signs and wonders, etc.). How did Jesus make Himself known to you?

In vs 23 he tells how God brought them into the Promised Land. How did you receive Jesus’ gift of salvation? What is your life like today because Jesus is in it? How did your life change after you met Jesus?

In vs 24-25 he tells of the importance of God’s Lordship over his life, but he also tells of the blessings that God promises if they will remain faithful. Those same blessings are true for us today if we will surrender to the Lordship of Christ and love and obey Him. State those blessings in your own words.

What other blessings does Christ bring to your life?

APPLICATION:

Share your faith story with someone in your family this week. Pray for an opportunity every day to get to share it again and again.