

Deuteronomy 05 - The Great Commands & Warnings

II. Second sermon: What Israel must do for God (Deut 4:41—26:19)

(2) The Law, its essence, and application in light of the impending conquest of Canaan (Deut 5:1—11:32)

(A) Law: the Decalogue (5:1-33)

(a) Setting (5:1-5)

(b) The 10 Commandments (5:6-21)

(c) Israel's response (5:22-27)

(d) God's response (5:28-33)

Deuteronomy 5

(2) The Law, its essence, and application in light of the impending conquest of Canaan (Deut 5:1—11:32)

(A) Law: the Decalogue (5:1-33)

(a) Setting (5:1-5)

1 Now Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: “**Listen, Israel**, to the statutes and ordinances which I am speaking today for you to **hear**, so that you may **learn** them and be careful to **do** them.

1 Then Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: “Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I am speaking today in your hearing, that you may learn them and observe them carefully.

1 Moses called all of Israel together and told them: “Listen, Israel! Today I’m going to announce God’s laws and regulations so that you will learn them and take care to obey them.

1 And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them.

- “...Listen, Israel” indicates that what follows (the decrees and laws) is not incidental but absolutely necessary for the survival of Israel as a nation

- “...Hear...learn...do” - when Moses said that the Lord our God made a covenant with us at Horeb and not with our fathers, he was teaching the Israelites that this covenant was meant to govern the living, not the dead

— Moses had the right to say this for he was the mediator of the covenant

- 2 The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Horeb.
- 2 The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Horeb.
- 2 When the LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb,
- 2 The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.

3 The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, all of us who are alive here today.

3 The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *with* all those of us alive here today.

3 it was not with our ancestors that the LORD made this covenant, but with us—we who are here today—all of us who are now living.

3 The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day.

Suzerain-Vassal Treaty Structure

- Historical Prologue (1:6—3:29): reviewing the relationship which the Ruler has with His subjects
- Basic Stipulations (5:1—11:32): specifying the general principles that are to guide behavior
- Detailed Stipulations (12:1—26:19): expanding on certain rules that are to be followed
- Document Clause (27:1-26): calling for ratification by the subjects themselves
- Blessings (28:1-14): explaining the benefits the Ruler provides for good subjects
- Cursings (28:15-68): explaining the punishments due subjects who violate treaty stipulations
- Recapitulation (29:1—30:10): summarizing the treaty
- Witnesses (30:19; 31:19; 32:1-43)

4 The LORD spoke with you face to face at the mountain from the midst of the fire,

4 The LORD spoke to you face to face at the mountain from the midst of the fire,

4 The LORD spoke to you face to face on the mountain from the fire.

4 The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire,

5 *while* I was standing between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up on the mountain. He said,

5 *while* I was standing between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up the mountain. He

said,

5 I stood at that time as mediator between the LORD and you to declare his message to you, because you were afraid of the fire and would not go up the mountain. He said:

5 (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to shew you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;) saying,

(b) The 10 Commandments (5:6-21)

6 'I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

6 'I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

6 "'I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt—from the house of slavery.

6 I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

- The Lord spoke with Israel face to face from the mountain of Sinai but did so through Moses (Ex 19:9)

- Verse 6 is crucial for understanding not only the first commandment but also the other nine

— The Ten Commandments were given to a people already redeemed (brought out of Egypt), to enable them to express their love for and have fellowship with the holy God

- The Decalogue, being itself not simply a moral code but the text of a covenant, exhibits the treaty pattern as follows:

— Preamble (v6a)

— Historical prologue (v6b)

— Stipulations interspersed with curse and blessing formulae (v7-21)

- The Decalogue was never given to enable them to achieve justification, for that has always been granted freely through faith (Cf. Gen 15:6; Rom 4)

— The Law was never designed to give people salvation

7 'You shall have no other gods besides Me.

7 'You shall have no other gods before Me.

7 You are to have no other gods as a substitute for me.

7 Thou shalt have none other gods before 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.

8 'You shall not make for yourself an idol, *or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.*

8 "'You are not to craft for yourselves an idol resembling what is in the skies above, or on earth beneath, or in the water sources under the earth.

8 Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth:
- Also since the Lord had taken the initiative in Israel's redemption, the people were obligated to acknowledge His right of sovereignty over them and to bow to that sovereignty
- The first commandment, to have no other gods before Me, called for a submission of every area of one's life to the rule of God
— The phrase "other gods" is a technical term for pagan gods which of course existed in the form of idols and in the minds of their worshipers, but were not real

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,

9 You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth *generations* of those who hate Me,

9 You are not to bow down to them in worship or serve them, because I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the guilt of parents on children, to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me,

9 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me,

10 but showing favor to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

10 but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

10 but showing gracious love to the thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

10 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

- The second commandment did not prohibit art in Israel (as the making of the tabernacle demonstrates), but rather the making of an idol to represent the Lord

- The danger in this practice was twofold:

— Since other nations used idolatry to express their devotion to their gods there was always the danger that the worship of the Lord could be contaminated by idolatrous forms of worship

- Any attempt to represent God in any form from the natural world would have called into question the sovereignty of the One who cannot be limited by anything
- As a jealous God, He does not share His sovereign position with any other

11 'You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave unpunished the one who takes His name in vain.

11 'You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.

11 "'You are not to misuse the name of the LORD your God, because the LORD will not leave unpunished the one who misuses his name.

11 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

- To misuse God's name means literally, "to lift it up to or attach it to emptiness"

- This command forbids using God's name in profanity but it includes more

- The 3rd commandment is a directive against using God's name in a manipulative way (e.g., His name is not to be used in magic or to curse someone)

- Today a Christian who uses God's name flippantly or falsely attributes a wrong act to God has broken this commandment

- Furthermore, as His ambassadors, we must seek not to represent Him in our conduct and actions!

12 'Keep the Sabbath day to treat it as holy, as the LORD your God commanded you.

12 'Observe the sabbath day to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you.

12 "'Observe the Sabbath day, maintaining its holiness, just as the LORD your God commanded.

12 Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee.

13 For six days you shall labor and do all your work,

13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

13 Six days you are to labor and do all your work,

13 Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work:

- Not a simple issue

- It was instituted in Eden; observed before the Law

- How did Noah know "clean" and "unclean" animals?

- Manna gathered before the Law was given...

- The Sabbath will be observed in the Millennium (the Temple only open then and new moons)

— This is the only one of the Ten Commandments not repeated in the New Testament, and Paul argued against enforcing it (Cf. Rom 14:5-6; Col 2:16-17)

14 but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the LORD your God; you shall not do any work *that day*, you or your son or your daughter, or your male slave or your female slave, or your ox, your donkey, or any of your cattle, or your resident who stays with you, so that your male slave and your female slave may rest as well as you.

14 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant or your ox or your donkey or any of your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you, so that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you.

14 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. You are not to do any work—neither you, your son, nor your daughter, your male and female servants, your oxen and donkeys, nor any of your livestock, nor any foreigner who lives among you, so that your male and female servants may rest as you do.

14 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou.

15 And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to celebrate the Sabbath day.

15 You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to observe the sabbath day.

15 You are to remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, but the LORD your God brought you out from there with great power and a show of force. Therefore, the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

15 And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

- God works, accomplishes his purpose, and, rejoicing, rests

- Ex 20:11 refers to the exhibition of the consummation pattern in creation for the original model of the Sabbath

- This verse refers to the consummation pattern manifested in redemption, where the divine triumph is such as to bring God's elect to their rest also

16 'Honor your father and your mother, just as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well for you on the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

16 'Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land which the LORD your God gives you.

16 "'Honor your father and your mother, just as the LORD your God commanded you, so that you will live long and things will go well for you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

16 Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

- First commandment "with a promise" (Eph 6:2)

- This commandment was critical for the existence of the nation: that you (plural) may live long (Cf. 6:2; 11:9; 25:15; 32:47) and that it may go well with you in the land

— Parents, especially fathers, rather than the religious leaders, were to pass the covenant values to their children

17 'You shall not **murder**.

17 'You shall not murder.

17 "'You are not to commit murder.

17 Thou shalt not kill.

- "...murder" - *ratsach*, to murder, slay, kill

- Murder means to take someone's life illegally

- Since man was created by God and in His image, man should not take another human's life apart from divine permission

— This commandment, therefore, did not prohibit capital punishment nor engaging in war, both of which were regulated by laws in the Torah

18 'You shall not commit adultery.

18 'You shall not commit adultery.

18 "'You are not to commit adultery.

18 Neither shalt thou commit adultery.

- The marriage relationship should reflect a believer's relationship to God, therefore extramarital sex (adultery) was forbidden

- Though the 7th commandment does not refer explicitly to pre-marital sex, the Pentateuch prohibits it elsewhere (Gen 2:24; Ex 22:16; Deut 22:13-39)

— An Israelite who would be unfaithful to his or her partner would also be unfaithful to the covenant of God and would be inclined to go after other gods

19 'You shall not steal.

19 'You shall not steal.

19 "'You are not to steal.

19 Neither shalt thou steal.

- This can refer to opportunities as well as tangibles

- It also is an endorsement of private ownership, and capitalism (Socialism is the plundering of the productive by the unaccountable)

20 'You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

20 'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

20 "'You are not to give false testimony against your neighbor.

20 Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour.

- The most painful sin could be gossip (Lev 19:16; Prov 11:13; 18:8; 20:19; 26:22; 26:20-21; John 8:7)

- Though this commandment had its primary application in law courts, it could also seem to rule out gossip against one's neighbor

- The sixth through ninth commandments thus acknowledge a person's right to his life, home, property, and reputation

21 'You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor desire your neighbor's house, his field, his male slave or his female slave, his ox, his donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.'

21 'You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field or his male servant or his female servant, his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.'

21 "'You are not to desire your neighbor's wife nor crave your neighbor's house, his fields, his male and female servants, his ox, his donkey, nor anything that pertains to your neighbor.'"

21 Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour's.

- To covet: "to lust for another's property"

— It was different from the other commandments in that it did not deal with a specific act, but rather with an emotional, psychological sin

— Therefore the breaking of this commandment could not be prosecuted in a law court

- Yet “lust for another’s property” often led to the breaking of the sixth through the ninth commandments
- This was the point Jesus was making in His exposition of commandments six and seven (Matt 5:21-32)
- It may have been possible for someone to keep the first nine commandments but no one could have avoided breaking the 10th at some time
- In this respect the 10th commandment is the most forceful of all, because it made people aware of their inability to keep God’s Law perfectly
- And this awareness threw them back to depend on God’s grace and mercy

[Other notable Deuteronomic variations in the Decalogue are the reversal of the order of wife and house in the tenth commandment, and the addition there of his field. The latter is added because Israel was about to enter upon a settled existence in the land, whereas during the wilderness wanderings such legislation would have been irrelevant.]

(c) Israel's response (5:22-27)

22 “These words the LORD spoke to your whole assembly at the mountain from the midst of the fire, *from* the cloud, and *from* the thick darkness, with a great voice, and He added nothing more. He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.

22 “These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly at the mountain from the midst of the fire, *of* the cloud and *of* the thick gloom, with a great voice, and He added no more. He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.

22 “The LORD declared these commands in a loud voice to your entire assembly on the mountain from out of the fire and dark clouds,¹⁶ and nothing more was added. He inscribed them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.

22 These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And He wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.

- The uniqueness of the revelation of the ten “words” is underscored in this verse
- That revelation alone was spoken directly by God to all Israel; it alone was written by God
- This verse emphasizes the divine origin of the Ten Commandments and the awe-inspiring setting in which they were given - fire, cloud, and deep darkness (Cf. Ex 19:18; 20:21)

23 And when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you approached me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders.

23 And when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders.

23 When you heard the voice from the darkness while the mountain was blazing, all the leaders and elders of your tribes came to me and said:

23 And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders;

24 You said, 'Behold, the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire; we have seen today that God speaks with mankind, yet he lives.

24 You said, 'Behold, the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire; we have seen today that God speaks with man, yet he lives.

24 'The LORD our God truly has displayed his glory and power, for we heard him from out of the fire today. We have witnessed how God spoke to human beings, yet they lived.

24 And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth.

25 Now then, why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any longer, then we will die!

25 Now then why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any longer, then we will die.

25 Now therefore, why should we die? This great fire will consume us. If we continue to listen to the voice of the LORD our God any longer, we'll die.

25 Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die.

26 For who *is there* of humanity who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we *have*, and lived?

26 For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we *have*, and lived?

26 For what mortal man has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the fire like we did, and lived?

26 For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?

27 Go near and listen to everything that the LORD our God says; then speak to us everything that the LORD our God speaks to you, and we will listen and do *it*.'

27 Go near and hear all that the LORD our God says; then speak to us all that the LORD our God speaks to you, and we will hear and do *it*!

27 As for you, go near and listen to everything that the LORD our God will say to you, then repeat it to us, and we'll listen and obey.'

27 Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it.

(d) God's response (5:28-33)

28 "Now the LORD heard the sound of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me, 'I have heard the sound of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They have done well in all that they have spoken.

28 "The LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me, 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They have done well in all that they have spoken.

28 "The LORD heard what you said. He told me: 'I've heard what this people said. Everything they said was good.

28 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken.

- The leaders' request for a mediator grew out of their encounter with their holy and majestic God

- The experience at Horeb impressed on them a sense of their own moral inadequacy and mortality (we will die) and their responsibility to obey God (we will listen and obey)

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!

29 Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!

29 If only they would commit to fear me and keep all my commands, then it will go well with them and their children forever.

29 O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!

30 Go, say to them, "Return to your tents."

30 Go, say to them, "Return to your tents."

30 Go and tell them to return to their tents,

30 Go say to them, Get you into your tents again.

- Though the Lord approved of the people's response, He hinted that they would not carry through with their good intentions

31 But as for you, stand here by Me, that I may speak to you all the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which you shall teach them, so that they may follow *them* in the land which I am giving them to possess.'

31 But as for you, stand here by Me, that I may speak to you all the commandments and the statutes and the judgments which you shall teach them, that they may observe *them* in the land which I give them to possess.'

31 but you stand here with me and I'll speak to you all the commands, decrees, and laws that you must teach them to observe in the land that I'm giving you to possess.

31 But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess it.

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.

32 So you shall observe to do just as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right or to the left.

32 You must be careful to do what the LORD your God commanded you, turning neither to the left nor to the right.

32 Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand 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.

33 You shall walk in all the way which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong *your* days in the land which you will possess.

33 You are to walk in every pathway that the LORD your God commanded you, so that life may go well for you, and so that you will prolong your days in the land that you will possess.'"

33 Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.

- Again the divine origin of the Law is stressed

- The people heard the Ten Commandments and then were dismissed to their tents

- What Moses was about to tell them—all God’s commands, decrees, and laws, beginning with Chapter 6—was also from the Lord just as were the Ten Commandments
— Their obedience to all that Moses was about to teach them was critical, for their prosperity in the land would depend on it (Cf. 6:3,24)