

Deuteronomy 06 - The Great Commands & Warnings (Cont'd)

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The Great Commands and Warnings

Having reminded his audience of the basic foundation, the Ten Commandments, which they heard at Horeb, Moses turned to details of the Law which they did not hear because they were afraid of the voice of God (Cf. 5:25-27). Accordingly Deut 6-11, which may be called "the great commands and warnings," deal with the personal nature of the covenant relationship. Here the details relating to the total commitment of individuals to the Lord are discussed.

Deuteronomy 6

(B) Essence: love and obey Yahweh (6:1-25)

(a) Exhortation to obey the law (6:1-3)

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,

1 "Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded *me* to teach you, that you might do *them* in the land where you are going over to possess it,

1 "Now these are the commands, decrees, and ordinances that the LORD commanded me to teach you. Obey them in the land you are entering to possess,

1 Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess 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.

2 so that you and your son and your grandson might 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.

2 so that you, your children, and your grandchildren may fear the LORD your God. Keep all his decrees and commandments that I'm giving you every day of your life, so you may live a long time.

2 That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged.

- The legislation in Deut 6-11 may be viewed as an expression of one great command, namely, to "love the Lord your God with all your heart...soul, and strength" (6:5)

- Therefore obedience on the part of the Israelites demonstrated that they loved God. Jesus laid down a similar principle for Christians (Cf. John 14:21)

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.

3 O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do *it*, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, *in* a land flowing with milk and honey.

3 Listen, Israel! Be careful to obey, so that life may go well for you and that you may increase greatly. Just as the LORD God of your ancestors told you, you'll have a land flowing with milk and honey.

3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.

- The Law was given so that the people could express their reverence for and obedience to the Lord in a concrete manner

— (The need to obey Him is stressed repeatedly in Deuteronomy)

— By fearing and obeying Him they would find prosperity and a long life in their new land (Cf. 4:10; 5:33) which flowed with milk and honey

(b) *Shema* and its implications (6:4-25)

(i) *Shema* (6:4-5)

4 "Hear, Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!

4 "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!

4 "Listen, Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD

5 And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

5 You are to love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.

5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

- These verses are called the *Sh'ma*, from the Hebrew word translated "Hear"

- The statement in this verse is the basic confession of faith in Judaism

- The verse means that the LORD (*Yahweh*) is totally unique. He alone is God.

— The Israelites could therefore have a sense of security that was totally impossible for their polytheistic neighbors

[This confession of monotheism does not preclude the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity. "God" is plural (*'elohim*), implying the Trinity, and one (*'echòad*) may suggest a unity of the Persons in the Godhead (Cf. Gen 2:24, where the same word for "one" is used of Adam and Eve).]

— God's demand of this exclusive devotion to himself Jesus identified as "the first and great commandment" (Matt 22:37,38; Mark 12:29-30; Luke 10:25-28)

(ii) Implications (6:6-25)

(a) Parental responsibility (6:6-9)

6 These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.

6 These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.

6 Let these words that I'm commanding you today be always on your heart.

6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine 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.

7 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.

7 Teach them repeatedly to your children. Talk about them while sitting in your house or walking on the road, and as you lie down or get up.

7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

- Moses was not here making ceremonial requirements, but elaborating with concrete figures the demand for a constant focus of concern on the good pleasure of Israel's Lord

- God's people were responsible to meditate on these commandments, to keep them in their hearts. This enabled them to understand the Law and to apply it correctly

— Then the parents were in a position to impress them on their children's hearts also

— The moral and biblical education of the children was accomplished best not in a formal teaching period each day but when the parents, out of concern for their own lives as well as their children's, made God and His Word the natural topic of a conversation which might occur anywhere and anytime during the day

8 You shall also tie them as a sign to your hand, and they shall be as frontlets on your forehead.

8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontlets on your forehead.

8 Tie them as reminders on your forearm, bind them on your forehead,

8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

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

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

9 and write them on the door frames of your house and on your gates."

9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

- The commands to tie them and write them were taken literally by some later Jewish readers

— However, the commands are probably emphasizing symbolically the need for the continual teaching of the Law (Cf. Ex 13:9,16)

— A literal practice of the injunctions of Deut 6:8-9 came into vogue among later Jews in the form of the phylacteries worn on the person (Cf. Matt 23:5) and the *mezuzah* affixed on

the doorpost, an encased parchment scroll attached to the doorposts of Jewish homes; contains parchment inscribed with Deut 6:4-9 (or 11:13-21)

(b) Warnings against pride (6:10-12)

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,

10 "Then it shall come about when the LORD your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build,

10 "When the LORD your God brings you to the land that he promised to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he will give you large and beautiful cities that you didn't build,

10 And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not,

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,

11 and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied,

11 houses filled with every good thing that you didn't supply, wells that you didn't dig, and vineyards and olive groves that you didn't plant. When you eat and are satisfied,

11 And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full;

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.

12 then watch yourself, that you do not forget the LORD who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

12 be careful not to forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and slavery.

12 Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

(c) Warnings against following Canaanite deities (6:13-19)

13 You shall fear *only* the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name.

13 You shall fear *only* the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name.

13 Fear the LORD your God, serve him, and make your oaths in his name.

13 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.

14 You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you,

14 You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you,

14 Do not follow other gods, from the gods of the nations around you.

14 Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you;

- The Lord was about to give the Israelites "instant prosperity" in their new land

— But there is an inherent danger in prosperity, for when a person prospers he tends to forget God (Cf. Prov 30:7-9)

- It was at the height of his own prosperity that David committed his greatest acts of unfaithfulness (2 Sam 11)

The command to swear (take oaths) by the name of the Lord reinforces the instruction to fear Him, for one swears by the God he fears, that is, by the God under whom he is responsible to fulfill his oaths. If they would forget God (v12) they would almost certainly follow other gods, for God created people not only with the capacity to worship but with the need to worship.

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.

15 for the LORD your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise the anger of the LORD your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth.

15 For the LORD your God who is among you is a jealous God. He will turn his anger against you and destroy you from the surface of the land."

15 (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.

16 "You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested *Him* at Massah.

16 "You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested *Him* at Massah.

16 "Don't test the LORD your God like you did in Massah.

16 Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted him in Massah.

- And this act of unfaithfulness would result in judgment since the Lord is a jealous God (Cf. 4:24; 5:9; 32:16,21)

- This means He is zealous to protect what belongs to Him alone
 - Jealousy in this sense is ethically right. Jealousy in the sense of envy for another's possessions or privileges is, of course, wrong.
 - Israel must not, therefore, presume to put God on trial; let Israel rather be faithful, and God would faithfully fulfill his good promises (v17-19; Cf. v10)
- [Exception! Mal 3:10]

17 You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and His provisions and His statutes which He has commanded you.

17 You should diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and His testimonies and His statutes which He has commanded you.

17 Be sure to observe the commands of the LORD your God, his testimonies and his decrees that he gave you.

17 Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee.

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,

18 You shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you and that you may go in and possess the good land which the LORD swore to *give* your fathers,

18 Do what is good and right in the LORD's sight so it may go well with you. Then you'll enter and possess the good land that the LORD your God promised to your ancestors,

18 And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers,

19 by driving out all your enemies from you, as the LORD has spoken.

19 by driving out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has spoken.

19 expelling all your enemies before you, as the LORD said."

19 To cast out all thine enemies from before thee, as the LORD hath spoken.

- Moses envisioned another sin to which the Israelites might be tempted in the new land, that of testing the Lord (6:16)

- This implies that at times the people would face hardship as they did at Massah (Cf. Ex 17:1-7) where they lacked water and thought they would die of thirst

— Rather than trusting God in this trial they tested Him by complaining and quarreling

— In the future the Israelites were to remember this embarrassing incident. They were to know that if they obeyed His commands, stipulations, and decrees (Cf. Deut 4:44; 6:1, 20), doing what is right and good, then no matter what hardship they might encounter it would go well with them (Cf. v3)

(d) Connection to redemption (6:20-23)

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?'

20 "When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What *do* the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments *mean* which the LORD our God commanded you?'

20 "When your son asks you in the future, 'What is the meaning of the instructions, decrees, and ordinances that the LORD our God commanded you?'

20 And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath 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.

21 then you shall say to your son, 'We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us from Egypt with a mighty hand.

21 tell him, 'We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with great power.

21 Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand:

- Seeing generations come and go had lengthened Moses' perspective. His interest was not confined to the present assembly of Israel but took in the long future of God's kingdom (Cf. v2).

22 Moreover, the LORD provided great and terrible signs and wonders before our eyes against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household;

22 Moreover, the LORD showed great and distressing signs and wonders before our eyes against Egypt, Pharaoh and all his household;

22 Before our very eyes, the LORD did great and terrible signs and wonders in Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to his entire household.

22 And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes:

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.'

23 He brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land which He had sworn to our fathers.'

23 But as for us, he brought us out from there to bring us into the land and give it to us, as he promised our ancestors.

23 And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers.

(e) Connection to Israel's survival (6:24-25)

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.

24 So the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God for our good always and for our survival, as *it is* today.

24 Then the LORD commanded us to observe all these decrees and to fear the LORD our God for our own good, so that he may keep us alive as we are today.

24 And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day.

- First, the Israelites were in bondage in Egypt (v21a)

- Second, God miraculously delivered the Israelites (v21b; Cf. 4:20) and judged the Egyptians (6:22)

- Third, this marvelous work was in accord with His ancient promise to the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) to build a nation of their descendants in the land of Canaan (v23; Cf. Gen 15:18-21; 17:7-8; 26:3-5; 28:13-15)

- Fourth, God gave His Word in the form of decrees so that the Israelites might always prosper (Cf. Deut 5:33) by obeying it and fearing God (Cf. 4:10; 6:13)

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.

25 It will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all this commandment before the LORD our God, just as He commanded us.

25 It will be credited as righteousness for us, if we're careful to obey the entire Law in the presence of the LORD our God, as he commanded.'" "

25 And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.

- This verse does not present a works principle of salvation

- The stress falls on the function of law as disclosing the standard of conduct which is righteous in God's sight, a love for which is prerequisite to beatitude but not the meritorious ground of such a state