

Deut. 6:1 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:

Deut. 6:2 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.

Deut. 6:3 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.

When you begin reading this chapter, you almost think you are listening to a broken record. Moses keeps driving home his message. Again, he identifies his message as commands from YHWH, the God of Israel. These aren't just good suggestions; they are commandments. They are to be taught with the focus on producing obedience as they take possession of the Promised Land that God is giving them. Yes, they are going to be the human conquerors, but God is quite clear in that He is the source of their ability to conquer such mighty nations. Not only are the people to learn these commands and live in obedience to them, they are to ensure that their children and grandchildren are taught to live in obedience to them as well. Again, obedience is directly related to length of life and the overall blessing of the nation. Already they know this to be a nation flowing with milk and honey, so God's blessing would only result in increasing their wealth.

Deut. 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

In this statement Moses is declaring the uniqueness of YHWH as compared to the "gods" of heathen nations. "Our God" is again emphasizing the uniqueness of Israel's relationship to YHWH. The Hebrew for the word "God" is the plural Hebrew word *elohiym*. This is the same word used in Genesis 1 record of the creation account. Some of the choices from the Hebrew for one included "united, first and alike."

YHWH is unique among all "gods." He is the self-existent, eternal triune being. He is The One and Only and He is LORD. Others may continue to deny this truth, but the truth won't change. I don't understand it, but I believe it because God said it.

Is. 45:5 ¶ I *am* the LORD, and ***there is none else***, *there is* no God beside me:

Is. 45:18 For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I *am* the LORD; and ***there is none else***.

Is. 45:21 Tell ye, and bring *them* near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? *who* hath told it from that time? *have* not I the LORD? and ***there is no God else beside me***; a just God and a Saviour; *there is* none beside me.

Is. 45:22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and ***there is none else***.

Is. 40:28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that the everlasting God*, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? *there is no searching of his understanding.*

Rom. 11:33 ¶ O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and **his ways past finding out!**

Deut. 6:5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

Considering Who He Is and your unique relationship to Him, Moses commands the people to love YHWH with all their heart, soul and might. The first thing that stands out in this statement is that love is a choice. The *heart* is a reference to your thoughts and feelings, the *soul* to the very breath of your life, and *might* is a reference to passion and diligence in maintaining that relationship. The message is worded so as to convey the thought that YHWH should be the focal point of your life; He should be considered with every decision one makes, every action one takes, every word that is said, etc. This consideration should be based upon whether or not that decision, action, word, etc. will honor God in obedience to His commands and instructions.

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

Deut. 6:7 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.

Deut. 6:8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

Deut. 6:9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

These verses are driving home the point that we should strive to make God's words a part of our very being—a self-implanted influence on our thoughts and feelings. To be diligent in teaching them to our children, they need to see them exemplified in our lives. There is great truth to the adage that actions speak louder than words. Example should be accompanied by making God's word a part of our every day conversation. I would think that the instruction to "bind them for a sign" upon the hands and between the eyes was a word picture of that expectation, rather than the actual wearing of phylacteries that resulted from their interpretation of that instruction. God wants to be THE focal point of our lives. The same is probably also true of the instruction to write them upon the doorposts and gates that resulted in the use of mezuzahs.

Deut. 6:10 And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not,

Deut. 6:11 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;

Deut. 6:12 Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

The first thing I notice from this section of verses is that Moses is speaking of “when” not “if” the people take possession of the Promised Land. Again the emphasis that it is God that is bringing them into the land by His power and authority. Emphasis is also on the fact that this land is a gift to the children of Abraham through Isaac through Jacob. Moses is also pointing out that they will be blessed with an abundance of material wealth as they take the land—ready-made cities, furnished homes, functioning wells, producing vineyards and olive trees—all of which they will enjoy without constructing the first building, digging the first well, or planting the first seed.

Human tendency is to take our blessings for granted—especially the things we don’t have to work for. Ask any parent for confirmation of this truth. I remember scolding my children with that very teaching when they lost or broke something out of carelessness. Moses warns the people to always remember that their blessings are a gift of God, the mighty God of miracles that delivered them from Egypt; and that He can just as easily take them away again.

Deut. 6:13 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.

The first half of this verse is clear and follows directly in context with the thoughts of the previous verses. Such an Almighty God is to be feared, revered and served in obedience.

The last part of the verse is confusing in light of other scriptures.

Matt. 5:34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne:

James 5:12 ¶ But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and *your* nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

Frankly, when I was searching for the above verses, I observed that the command not to swear didn’t appear until the New Testament. I think the key is found when considering the use of swearing in context with the following scripture.

Lev. 19:12 And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I *am* the LORD.

Swearing is an act of affirming a promise or the fact that you are speaking truth. To swear by God’s name is meant to declare by the highest authority that your promise is good and your word is true. The danger of swearing in God’s name is that we humans are prone to sin. If for any reason we fail to keep our promise after swearing in God’s name, we multiply the sin by profaning God’s name.

Deut. 23:21 When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee.

Because God’s honor is at stake when you invoke His name, He will “require it of thee” in some way. The New Testament teaching to avoid vows/swearing and just let your word suffice finds root in the following verse of Deuteronomy 23 I believe.

Deut. 23:22 But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee.

Deut. 6:14 Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which *are* round about you;

Deut. 6:15 (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.

Again, Moses warns the people against going after the false gods of their heathen neighbors. I think God's jealousy is two-pronged—jealousy for His people and of His honor. As LORD He deserves complete submission and obedience from His people. As YHWH He wants to bless His people, but His righteousness demands that He judge sin. If they choose to reject Him as LORD and practice the idolatrous ways of the heathen, they will invoke His righteous anger and judgment.

I think the reference to “destroying them from off the face of the earth” is an expression of what their deserved judgment would be. We know, however, that He is a God of mercy and One who keeps covenant. His covenant with Abraham was unconditional and, therefore, requires that He preserve a remnant through whom all His promises will be fulfilled.

Deut. 6:16 Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted *him* in Massah.

The event to which Moses is making reference is recorded in Exodus 17 and describes the time when the people were in need of water and Moses was instructed to strike the rock and the Lord would provide water. How did they tempt God?

Ex. 17:7 And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because **they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?**

They questioned His presence and His faithfulness based on the circumstances. Instead of approaching the LORD in humility and trusting Him to provide, they questioned His character with disrespect.

As I read through that incident in Exodus 17 again, I was reminded of how it pictures Christ, our solid rock of salvation that was beaten with rods in the sacrificial act of giving His life to provide us with living water.

Deut. 6:17 Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee.

Deut. 6:18 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,

Deut. 6:19 To cast out all thine enemies from before thee, as the LORD hath spoken.

Again, Moses drives home the truth that the people are to take great care to obey God's word. They are the commands of the LORD—not suggestions from one of many “gods.” Obviously, in context, to do right and good in the sight of the LORD is to obey His word. There is no leeway for a difference of opinion. Again, obedience is directly connected to blessing and possession of the Promised Land.

Deut. 6:20 *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?*

Deut. 6:21 *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:*

Deut. 6:22 *And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes:*

Deut. 6:23 *And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers.*

Deut. 6:24 *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.*

Deut. 6:25 *And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.*

The key verse in this section is verse 24. Moses is instructing the people to be prepared for the questions of the coming generations. They will naturally wonder why they have to keep the commands of the LORD, especially since the heathen nations live so differently and worship different gods. The things of the flesh that are incorporated into the worship of false gods are often tempting. Things forbidden always seem to appeal to the desires of the flesh. They are to be prepared to declare the greatness of the LORD, and tell of His wondrous miracles in delivering them from slavery in Egypt. They are to explain that the land they live in is a gift from God according to His promise to the founding fathers of the nation—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They are to be clear that their blessing and continued privilege of living in such a wonderful land is conditional upon their obedience to God's commands.