

Deuteronomy Chapter 10

Verses 1-11: Moses reminded the Israelites of God's great mercy to them, notwithstanding their provocations. There were four things in and by which the Lord showed himself reconciled to Israel. God gave them his law. Thus, God has entrusted us with Bibles, Sabbaths, and sacraments, as tokens of his presence and favor. God led them forward toward Canaan. He appointed a standing ministry among them for holy things. And now, under the gospel, when the pouring forth of the Spirit is more plentiful and powerful, the succession is kept up by the Spirit's work on men's hearts. Qualifying and making some willing for that work in every age. God accepted Moses as an advocate or intercessor for them, and therefore appointed him to be their prince and leader. Moses was a type of Christ. Who forever lives, pleading for us, and has all power in heaven and in earth.

Verses 1-3: "Two tables of stone like unto the first": God had listened to Moses' intercession and dealt mercifully with the Israelites who had broken the covenant by rewriting the Ten Commandments on two tablets prepared for that purpose by Moses. The second tablets were made of the same material and were the same size as the first.

Deuteronomy 10:1 "At that time the LORD said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood."

"Ark of wood": This refers to the ark of the covenant. Moses telescoped the events in these verses. Later, at the construction of the ark of the covenant, Moses placed the two new stone tablets within that ark (see Exodus 37:1-9).

Notice in this, that Moses hews the second set of stones. God prepared them the first time. These stones were to be housed in the ark of the covenant. The plans for the ark were given Moses on the mount. The ark was built, and put into the tabernacle in the wilderness at a later time. The ark was to be made of shittim wood and overlaid with gold.

Deuteronomy 10:2 "And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark."

Though they were hewn by Moses, the writing on them was the Lord's. And the very same laws, in the same words, without any alteration or variation, were written by him on these as on the former. Partly to show the authenticity of them, that they were of God and not Moses, of a divine original and not human. And partly to show the invariableness of them, that no change had been made in them. Though they had been broken by the people; of which Moses's breaking the tables was a representation.

"And thou shalt put them in the ark": Which being a type of Christ may signify the fulfilment of the law by him, who is the end, the fulfilling end of the law for righteousness to every believer. And that as this was in his heart to fulfil it, so it is in his hand as a rule of faith and conversation to his people.

We read in a previous lesson, that the finger of God wrote on the tables of stone. It will be the responsibility of Moses to care for the tables of stone until the tabernacle is built, and they are placed in the ark in the holy of holies.

Deuteronomy 10:3 "And I made an ark [of] shittim wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand."

That is, ordered it to be made, and it was made by Bezaleel, and that of shittim wood. So the ark that was put into the Holy of Holies was made of this wood (see notes on Exodus 25:10; 37:1).

"And hewed two tables of stone like unto the first": Two marble ones, as the Targum of Jonathan; that is, he ordered them to be hewed, and took care that they should be exactly made as the former were. Of which he had perfect knowledge, having received them of the Lord, and brought them with him down the mount.

"And went up into the mount, having the two tables in my hand": In order to have the words of the law, the ten commandments, written on them. These being only hewn stones, without anything on them. They were very probably marble, of which great quantities were near at hand.

Moses hewing the stones, instead of God, shows that there must be some effort on man's part to renew the covenant with God. Perhaps there was a short period of time between the time Moses came down with the first tables, and the time he re-enters the mount with the tables for God to write on the second time. Chapter 25 in Exodus reveals a more detailed explanation of this.

Deuteronomy 10:4 "And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me."

The same laws, in the same letters.

"The ten commandments which the Lord spake unto you in the mount": In Mount Sinai, on which he descended, and from whence he delivered the Decalogue by word of mouth in an audible manner, that all the people could hear it.

"Out of the midst of the fire": In which he descended, and where he continued, and from whence he spake, so that it was indeed a fiery law.

"In the day of the assembly": When all the people of Israel were assembled together at the bottom of the mount to hear it.

"And the Lord gave them unto me": The two tables, when he had written upon them the ten commandments.

You can find the Ten Commandments in Exodus chapter 20. Their first knowledge of the Ten Commandments was when God spoke them aloud to the whole camp. Moses went to the mount two separate times, and received two different sets of the same commandments.

Deuteronomy 10:5 "And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the LORD commanded me."

From the Lord, out of whose hands he had received the tables.

"And came down from the mount": With the two tables in his hand as before. One in one hand, and the other in the other hand.

"And put the tables in the ark which I had made": Or ordered to be made.

"And there they be, as the Lord commanded me": There they were when Moses rehearsed what is contained in this book, on the plains of Moab, about thirty eight years after the putting them, into it. And there they continued to be when the ark was brought into Solomon's temple (1 Kings 8:9). And there they were as long as the ark was in being. Which may denote the continuance of the law in the hands of Christ under the Gospel dispensation as a rule of walk and conversation to his people.

The tables were actually put into the ark, after the tabernacle had been dedicated to the LORD. Moses kept the commandments, until that time. In a summary such as this, sometimes one sentence covers a period of time.

Verses 6-9: These verses show that the priesthood of Aaron and service of the Levites were restored after the incident of the golden calf.

Deuteronomy 10:6 "And the children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan to Mosera: there Aaron died, and there he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest's office in his stead."

"Mosera: there Aaron died": Aaron was not killed at Sinai, but lived until the 40th year of the Exodus, which shows the effectiveness of Moses' intercession before the Lord (compare Num. 20:22-29; 33:38-39). After Aaron's death, the priestly ministry continued in the appointment of Eleazar. Mosera is the district in which Mt. Hor stands, on which Aaron died (compare Num. 20:27-28; 33:38).

We see that this has jumped many years forward. God forgave Aaron and the congregation of Israel, for their worship of the golden calf. In the verse above, we see that God continued the office of high priest in the son of Aaron, who was Eleazar.

Deuteronomy 10:7 "From thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah; and from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of rivers of waters."

Which Jarchi takes to be the same with Hor-hagidgad, and so do most (see Num. 33:32). But Aben Ezra says it is not, but is a general name, including Zalmonah, Punon, and Oboth, places the Israelites came to after they removed from Mount Hor, where Aaron died (see Num. 33:41).

"And from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of rivers of waters": Which the above writer takes to be the same with Beer, the well (Num. 21:16). And by this description of it, it was a place where there was much water.

Gudgodah was associated with the cave of Gilead. Jotbath seemed to be a place where the water was plentiful in streams. Water had been a major problem with the Israelites on their desert journey. Neither of the places here are well known. They were probably mentioned by Moses, because of the abundance of water there.

Deuteronomy 10:8 "At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day."

Not at the time that Moses came down from the mount with the tables of the law, but some considerable time after. Even after the tabernacle was erected. Nor at the time that Aaron died, and Eleazar succeeded him, but many years before that. Unless there was a fresh separation of them, or a renewal of it when Eleazar became high priest in his father's stead. And so that being mentioned is the reason of its being repeated here.

"To bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord": Even that into which the law, sometimes called the covenant, was put. And therefore, here called the ark of the covenant. When this was carried from place to place, as it was especially in the wilderness, it was the business of the Levites to bear it, particularly the Kohathites (Num. 3:31).

"To stand before the Lord to minister unto him": That is, to his priests, in the tabernacle, and to keep and guard that.

"And to bless in his name unto this day": Not to bless the people, which was the work of the priest, but to sing praise in the name of the Lord, to give thanks unto him, and bless and praise him. "At that time": This refers to the time that Israel was at Mt. Sinai.

This happened back where God had restored the covenant with the two new tables of stone. At the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness, God appointed the Levites for work with the holy things. The tribe of Levi actually substituted for the firstborn of each family. The Levitical tribe was to keep this separated condition, even after they came into the land of promise.

Deuteronomy 10:9 "Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD [is] his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promised him."

"No part nor inheritance": The family of Levi received no inheritance in the land of Canaan (see Num. 18:20, 24).

In the separation of the land of promise, the tribe of Levi did not inherit. They belonged to the LORD. They were to live of the gifts of the altar. The tribe of Joseph got two portions instead of one, and Levi was removed from the land portions. Levites lived and worked in the service of the LORD. They received cities for their families to live in.

Numbers 18:24 "But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer [as] a heave offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance."

Verses 10-11: Because of Moses' intercession not because of their righteousness, the Israelites were encamped on the banks of the Jordan, ready to enter the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 10:10 "And I stayed in the mount, according to the first time, forty days and forty nights; and the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also, [and] the LORD would not destroy thee."

Which is to be connected with (Deut. 10:6), and relates what passed before he came down from the mount with the two tables. As that he stayed there as long as he did when he received the first tables, and fasted also as long as he did then (see Exodus 34:28).

"And the Lord hearkened unto me at that time also": To his prayer on the behalf of the people.

"And the Lord would not destroy thee": Though he had threatened it, and their sin had deserved it.

This reverts back to Moses' second trip up the mount for the second set of the tables of the ten commandments. This is summing up the results of God forgiving them for their transgression.

Deuteronomy 10:11 "And the LORD said unto me, Arise, take [thy] journey before the people, that they may go in and possess the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give unto them."

Here Moses goes on with his relation of things at Mount Sinai, how that upon his supplication for the people, on account of the destruction they were threatened with for their idolatry. The Lord was graciously pleased not only to hear him and forgive the people, but ordered him to go before them, and lead them on towards the land of Canaan he had promised them (Exodus 32:34).

"That they may go in and possess the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give unto them": And which had it not been for their later murmurings and rebellions, they had been in the possession of it in a little time, especially after their departure from Sinai.

This is not looking back. Moses is told of God, for the children of Israel to go in and possess the land that their father's should have gone in and taken.

Verses 12-22: We are here taught our duty to God in our principles and our practices. We must fear the Lord our God. We must love him, and delight in communion with him. We must walk in

the ways in which he has appointed us to walk. We must serve him with all our heart and soul. What we do in his service we must do cheerfully, and with good will. We must keep his commandments. There is true honor and pleasure in obedience. We must give honor to God; and to him we must cleave, as one we love and delight in, trust in, and from whom we have great expectations. We are here taught our duty to our neighbor. God's common gifts to mankind oblige us to honor all men. And those who have themselves been in distress, and have found mercy with God, should be ready to show kindness to those who are in the same distress. We are here taught our duty to ourselves. Circumcise your hearts. Cast away all corrupt affections and inclinations, which hinder you from fearing and loving God. By nature, we do not love God. This is original sin, the source whence our wickedness proceeds. And the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God (Rom. 8:5-9). Let us, without delay or reserve, come and cleave to our reconciled God in Jesus Christ, that we may love, serve, and obey him acceptably. And be daily changed into his image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord. Consider the greatness and glory of God; and his goodness and grace; these persuade us to our duty. Blessed Spirit! Oh for thy purifying, persevering, and renewing influences, that being called out of the state of strangers. Such as our fathers were, we may be found among the number of the children of God, and that our lot may be among the saints.

God's requirement of Israel was "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked". An uncircumcised heart is one that hears imperfectly, being covered over. And uncircumcised lips (Exodus 6:12, 30), are lips that speak incoherently because they are sealed wholly or in part. If that which hinders is cut away, there will be a submission to the will of God and the end of stubbornness. Certainly, the Old Testament went beyond the physical to the spiritual (compare Rom. 2:29; Phil. 3:3. Col 2:11), in the same sense as the New Testament. "Fatherless": The items mentioned are not unique to Israel's God. Mesopotamian literature has examples of kings who expressed concern for the welfare of widows and orphans. But in Deuteronomy, and other parts of the Old Testament, Israel is urged to show kindness to such people (1:16; 10:19; 24:14, 17; 27:19 Exodus 23:9; note James 1:27 in the New Testament).

This section clarifies the essence of Torah, Yahweh's law for His people. It is commonly alleged that the Old Testament law was something negative, altogether focused on externals rather than the more important issue of the spirit and a poor attempt at achieving salvation through works. But God's amazing grace was evident in Old Testament times too, as these verses reveal.

This is the passage that Micah pointed to when he said, "He has shown you, O man, what is good" (Micah 6:8).

The words "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart" are repeated (in Romans 2:29).

Verses 12-13: "What doth the LORD ... require of thee"? This rhetorical question led into Moses' statement of the 5 basic requirements that God expected of His people (compare Micah 6:8):

- (1) "To fear the Lord your God": To hold God in awe and submit to Him;
- (2) "To walk in all His ways": To conduct life in accordance with the will of God;

- (3) "To ... love Him": To choose to set one's affections on the Lord and on Him alone;
- (4) "To serve the Lord your God": To have the worship of the Lord as the central focus of life;
- (5) "To keep the Lord's commandments": To obey the requirements the Lord had imposed.

Deuteronomy 10:12 "And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,"

For all these favors bestowed upon them, the forgiveness of their sins, and a fresh intimation of their possession of the land of Canaan. And the renewal of the promise of it made to their fathers.

"But to fear the Lord thy God": To fear him with a filial fear, to fear him and his goodness, and him for his goodness sake. And particularly for his pardoning grace and mercy given to them (see Psalm 130:4).

"To walk in all his ways": Prescribed and directed to by him, every path of duty, whether moral, ceremonial, or judicial.

"And to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul": For that is the best service which springs from love. And love constrains unto, and which is hearty and sincere, as that is, and is performed in the best manner such are capable of.

To retain all that God has given them, requires them to fear the LORD enough that they will obey Him and walk in His ways. He must be first in their hearts, souls, and minds. Jesus says it best in the following Scripture.

John 14:15 "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

Deuteronomy 10:13 "To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?"

Both the ten commandments and all others.

"Which I command thee this day for thy good": Promises of temporal good things. Introduction into the land of Canaan, possession of it, and continuance in it, being made to obedience to them.

The commandments and the statutes of God are for the benefit of man. The blessings of God upon them, depend entirely upon them keeping God's commandments.

Verses 14-15: God, with the same sovereignty by which He controls all things, had chosen the patriarchs and the nation of Israel to be His special people.

Deuteronomy 10:14 "Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens [is] the LORD'S thy God, the earth [also], with all that therein [is]."

Made and possessed by him. The airy and starry heaven, the third heaven. Which is the heaven of heavens, and the seat of the divine Majesty, the habitation of angels and glorified saints.

"The earth also, with all that therein is": That is his property, and at his disposal, being made by him, and all that is upon it, or contained in it. Even whatsoever is on or in the whole globe consisting of land and water (see Psalm 115:15).

This is saying, it is not just the earth that belongs to God, but all of the universe as well. Everything and everyone in the universe, belong to God. It is amazing to Moses that God would have chosen Israel to be His, out of all the peoples of the world.

1 Corinthians 10:26 "For the earth [is] the Lord's, and the fullness thereof."

Deuteronomy 10:15 "Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, [even] you above all people, as [it is] this day."

Though the heavens and the earth, and all the inhabitants of them are the Lord's by creation, yet he had a special regard unto, and a peculiar complacency in. The fathers of the Israelites, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; from whence arose some particular expressions of love to them. Signified by various acts of kindness done them, and promises made unto them.

"And he chose their seed after them, even you above all the people, as it is this day": To be a special people to him, to enjoy civil and religious privileges greater than any other. And particularly to have his law given to them. His tabernacle and worship set up among them, which were at this time, and which gave them the preference to all other nations (see Deut. 4:7).

This is actually speaking of Abraham, who greatly pleased God. The blessings that came to this family, were because of God's love for Abraham. Israel was honored above all nations with God's great love for them. They had nothing to give God in return, but their love. Even the long stay in Egypt was a conditioning of these people to receive the blessings of God.

Deuteronomy 10:16 "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked."

"Circumcise ... heart": Moses called the Israelites to cut away all the sin in their hearts, as the circumcision surgery cut away the skin. This would leave them with a clean relationship to God (compare 30:6; Lev. 26:40-41; Jer. 4:4; 9:25; Rom. 2:29; see note on Jer. 4:4).

The circumcision was an outward sign of the keeping of the covenant agreement. Moses is explaining to them here, that the cutting away of the worldliness from their hearts was the true circumcision. The condition of the heart is more important to God than the condition of their flesh. We Christians must realize that Christianity is a relationship with Christ, and not a form of religion.

Deuteronomy 10:17 "For the LORD your God [is] God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:"

Of angels and civil magistrates, who are sometimes so called. These are his creatures, act for him and under him, and are accountable to him.

"The Lord of lords": Of the kings and princes of the earth, who have their crowns, scepters, and kingdoms from him. And hold them of him, by and under whom they reign and decree judgment, and who are subject to his authority and control.

"A great God": As the perfections of his nature, and the works of his hands. The blessings of his providence and grace, and the extensiveness of his dominion in heaven, earth, and hell, show him to be.

"A mighty and a terrible": Mighty and powerful to help, protect, and defend his people. Terrible to his and their enemies, even to the kings of the earth.

"Which regardeth not persons": But bestows his favors, whether in a way of providence or grace, according to his sovereign will and pleasure. Without regard to the works and merits of men, their characters or circumstances.

"Nor taketh reward": Or bribes, to avert threatened and deserved judgments (see Job 36:18).

The nations around them worship false gods. The True God is the only God. He proved that over and over. One of the purposes of the ten plagues on Egypt, was to defame the false gods of Egypt. God showed His supreme power over nature, when He parted the Red Sea at His command. He showed His power over all provisions, when He caused water to flow from the Rock. He needs nothing at all. He wants our love and respect.

Deuteronomy 10:18 "He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment."

"He doth execute the judgment": The sovereign, authoritative God is also impartial (verse 17), as seen in His concern for the orphan, the widow, and the alien (compare Lev. 19:9-18; James 1:27).

He is the Provider of those who trust Him. God cares for those who are unable to care for themselves. He is Father to the fatherless, and takes up the gap for the widow as well. He provides food for those who are His, even if He has to rain it down from heaven. He provides their robe of righteousness to all who believe.

Deuteronomy 10:19 "Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."

Because the Lord loves him; and another reason follows, particularly binding on the Israelites.

"For ye were strangers in the land of Egypt": And therefore, should sympathize with such and show them compassion. Relieve them in distress, and afford them whatever they want, and is in the power of their hands to communicate to them. Remembering their own condition in Egypt, and how welcome such a treatment would have been to them then. As well as the kind and careful providence of God towards them at that time.

If a person has experienced the same problem as another person, he can relate to him better. They were strangers. They should love the stranger, because they understand him.

Deuteronomy 10:20 "Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name."

"Cleave": The verb means "to stick to" or "to hold onto". As a husband is to be united to his wife (Gen. 2:24), so Israel was to cling intimately to her God.

The greatest fear these Israelites had known, was at the mount when the LORD spoke from the fire to them. The fear this is speaking of, is a reverence and an awe of someone so great. A person must choose who they will serve in this life. You cannot serve God and man.

Joshua 24:15 "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that [were] on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

There is a time when every person must make this decision.

Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

The decision of these Israelites is the same as you and I must make. Who do I fear enough to worship? Do I love Him enough to serve Him? Will I remain faithful to Him? Is His name the name I swear by, because there is no greater?

Deuteronomy 10:21 "He [is] thy praise, and he [is] thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen."

The object and matter of it, who deserves the praises of all his creatures, because of his perfections, works, and blessings of goodness. For all mercies temporal and spiritual come from him, and therefore he is greatly to be praised for them. Praise is his due, and it is comely in his people to give it to him (see Jer. 17:14).

"And he is thy God which hath done for thee these great and terrible things which thine eyes have seen": Which were done upon the Egyptians for their sakes, both in the land of Egypt and at the Red sea. And what he had done for them in the wilderness, to Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites (Psalm 106:22).

The LORD, He is God. He is the only One to praise. They have seen miracles beyond the capacity of mankind. He had given them all the room in the world to praise Him.

Jeremiah 33:11 "The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of hosts: for the LORD [is] good; for his mercy [endureth] for ever: [and] of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the LORD."

The only thing we have to offer God, for all the wonderful provisions He has made for us, is our love, our obedience, and our praise.

Hebrews 13:15 "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of [our] lips giving thanks to his name."

Deuteronomy 10:22 "Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the LORD thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude."

"Threescore and ten persons" (see Exodus 1:5). One of the great and awesome things God had done for Israel was multiplying the 70 people who went to Egypt into a nation of close to two and a half million people.

When the brothers of Joseph found him in Egypt, they brought Jacob and his family into Egypt. Jacob brought 70 people into Egypt and his descendants came out just over 400 years later with close to 2,500,000 people. God had fulfilled His promise to Abraham, to make his descendants as the stars of heaven for multitude.

Genesis 15:5 "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be."

Deuteronomy Chapter 10 Questions

1. Who must prepare the two tables of stone this time?
2. When was the ark built?
3. What was the ark made of?
4. What will go on the tables?
5. What wrote on the tables of stone?
6. What is shown by Moses hewing these stones, instead of God?
7. Where can we read more details on this subject?

8. Where had God first given the ten commandments to these people?
9. Where in Exodus is there a list of the ten commandments?
10. Where would the tables be stored?
11. Where did Aaron die?
12. Who ministered in Aaron's place?
13. Guldah was associated with what?
14. What was the tribe of Levi separated out to do?
15. Who was the tribe of Levi a substitute for?
16. Why did the tribe of Levi not inherit land?
17. How long did Moses stay on the mountain the second time?
18. Why was God willing to still give them the Promised Land?
19. What does the LORD require of Israel?
20. The commandments are for whose benefit?
21. For the earth is the _____.
22. What was the long stay in Egypt for?
23. They were to circumcise their _____.
24. Christianity is a _____ with Christ.
25. What was one of the purposes of the ten plagues in Egypt?
26. When did God show His supreme power over nature?
27. Why should they love the stranger?
28. What is the sacrifice we can offer to God?