

Deuteronomy Chapter 5

Verses 5:1 – 11:32: As Moses began his second address to the people of Israel, he reminded them of the events and the basic commands from God that were foundational to the Sinaitic Covenant (5:1-33; See Exodus 19:1 – 20:21). Then (in 6:1 – 11:32), Moses expounded and applied the first three of the Ten Commandments to the present experience of the people.

Verses 1-5: The summons to obey the law begins the section called “covenant stipulations” in an ancient Near Eastern suzerainty (overlordship) treaty. “Hear, O Israel” is repeated (in 4:1; 6:3-4; 9:1; 20:3; 27:9), to mark the beginning of a new appeal for obedience on the part of Israel. The verb carries the sense of “obey”. The full implications of a proper hearing is that “ye may learn them, and keep, and do them”. Knowledge is a prerequisite to performance.

Moses demands attention. When we hear the word of God we must learn it; and what we have learned we must put in practice, for that is the end of hearing and learning. Not to fill our heads with notions, or our mouths with talk, but to direct our affections and conduct.

Deuteronomy 5:1 "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."

“Hear, O Israel”: The verb “hear” carried the sense “obey”. A hearing that leads to obedience was demanded of all the people (compare 6:4; 9:1; 20:3; 27:9).

Moses has called all of the people together for a re-stating of the law. The law was first given at Horeb, where the voice of God came from the fire. Moses knows that many of those who were present that day are dead. The 40 years in the wilderness has caused many of the older people to die. Moses will repeat the law and judgements to them again, so they will be without excuse.

Deuteronomy 5:2 "The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb."

“A covenant with us in Horeb”: The second generation of Israel, while children, received the covenant that God made with Israel at Sinai.

Moses immediately explains who God is. He is every individual's personal LORD and God. The covenant He made with the people was conditional. If they keep His commandments, He will bless them. If they do not keep them, He will curse them.

Deuteronomy 5:3 "The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, [even] us, who [are] all of us here alive this day."

“Made not this covenant with our fathers”: The “fathers” were not the people’s immediate fathers, who had died in the wilderness, but their more distant ancestors, the patriarchs (see 4:31, 37; 7:8, 12; 8:18). The Sinaitic or Mosaic Covenant was in addition to and distinct from the Abrahamic Covenant made with the patriarchs.

The covenant is for the living, not for the dead. This is the covenant that God made with them as a people at Mount Sinai. The nation of Israel had gone into agreement with God. The older people who were involved in that agreement are dead. Moses, Caleb, and Joshua remain of the leaders who met with the Lord at Sinai. The covenant was not made with individuals, but with the nation. This new generation is now Israel. The covenant then, is with them.

Deuteronomy 5:4 "The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire,"

Meaning, not in that free, friendly, and familiar manner, in which he sometimes talked with Moses, of whom this phrase is used (Exodus 33:11). But publicly, audibly, clearly, and distinctly, or without the interposition of another. He did not speak to them by Moses, but to them themselves. He talked to them without a middle person between them, as Aben Ezra expresses it. Without making use of one to relate to them what he said; but he talked to them directly, personally.

"Out of the midst of the fire": In which he descended, and with which the mountain was burning all the time he was speaking. Which made it very awful and terrible, and pointed at the terrors of the legal dispensation.

Moses had gathered the people to the side of the mountain, and God had spoken to them from the fire on the mountain.

Deuteronomy 5:5 "(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,"

Between the Word of the Lord and you, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan. That is, about that time, not at the exact precise time the ten commandments were delivered, for these were spoken immediately to the people. But when the ceremonial law was given, which was ordained by angels, in the hand of a mediator (Gal. 3:19). And which was at the request of the people as follows, terrified by the appearance of the fire out of which the moral law was delivered.

"To show you the word of the Lord": Not the Decalogue, that they heard with their own ears, but the other laws which were afterwards given, that were of the ceremonial and judicial kind.

"For ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount": Lest they should be consumed by it. And indeed bounds were set about the mount, and they were charged not to break through.

"Saying": This word is in connection with the preceding verse, the Lord's talking out of the midst of the fire, when he said what follows.

We can see in the next verses, the fear the people had of the LORD, and also the fact that Moses spoke to God for them.

Exodus 20:18-19 "And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw [it], they removed, and stood afar off." "And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die."

Verses 6-22: There is some variation here from (Exodus chapter 20), as between the Lord's prayer in (Matt. chapter 6 and Luke chapter 11). It is more necessary that we tie ourselves to the things, than to the words unalterably. The original reason for hallowing the Sabbath, taken from God's resting from the work of creation on the seventh day, is not here mentioned. Though this ever remains in force, it is not the only reason. Here it is taken from Israel's deliverance out of Egypt; for that was typical of our redemption by Jesus Christ, in remembrance of which the Christian Sabbath was to be observed. In the resurrection of Christ, we were brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, with a mighty hand, and an outstretched arm. How sweet is it to a soul truly distressed under the terrors of a broken law, to hear the mild and soul-reviving language of the gospel!

Verses 6-21: The first 4 commandments involve relationship with God, the last 6 deal with human relationships; together they were the foundation of Israel's life before God. Moses here reiterated them as given originally at Sinai. Slight variations for the Exodus text are accounted for by Moses' explanatory purpose in Deuteronomy. See notes on Exodus 20:1-17 for an additional explanation of these commands. The commands to love God and to love others summarize the entire Ten Commandments and reflect His holy character (Matt. 22:37-40).

Verses 6-10: This section contains the first and second commandments and relates to the worship of God. "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage": is a phrase that appears over 125 times in the Old Testament. Usually this reminder went along with a command or ethical demand. The context or environment of law and obligation in the Old Testament period was the redemption of Israel from Egypt. The Lawgiver and His gracious act of redemption provide the context against which the commandments are given. "Before me": The highest duty of man is given in the first commandment. "Image": There are 14 Hebrew words for idols or images; this probably refers to "gods of silver or gods of gold" (Exodus 20:23), as well as those carved from stone, wood, and those later made from metal. "Likeness": Resemblance" or "form" applies to any real or imagined pictorial representation of deities. This is not intended to stifle artistic talent, for the command has reference to religious worship: God Himself commanded Moses to make many artistic representations on the curtains in the tabernacle. "Jealous": This must not be construed to mean that God is naturally suspicious, wrongfully envious of the success of others, or distrustful. When used of God it refers to:

- (1) The quality in His character that demands exclusive devotion;
- (2) The attribute of anger that He directs against all who oppose Him; and
- (3) The energy that He expends on vindication His people.

"Mercy" (*chesed*), implies an unfailing love that is grounded in the covenant and is used both of God's attitude toward His people and of the response He desires from them (compare 1 John

4:11, 19), the latter occurring especially in Hosea. It is always closely connected with the two concepts of covenant and faithfulness.

Deuteronomy 5:6 "I [am] the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage."

This is the preface to the ten commandments, and is the same with that in (Exodus 20:2; see note on Exodus 20:2). And those commands are here delivered in the same order, and pretty near in the same words, with a little variation, and a few additions. Which I shall only observe, and refer to (Exodus 20:1), for the sense of the various laws.

He is the great I AM. He is the One who eternally exists. It was actually God that brought them out of Egypt. Moses led them under the direction of the LORD. The rules for all men to live by must come from God. Man's law is not unfailing.

Deuteronomy 5:7 "Thou shalt have none other gods before me."

“None other gods”: Compare Exodus 20:3. “Other gods” were non-existent pagan gods, which were made in the form of idols and shaped by the minds of their worshipers. The Israelite was to be totally faithful to the God to whom he was bound by covenant (compare Matt. 16:24-27; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:23-26; 14:26-33).

This is the first of the Ten Commandments. We see in this very first commandment, that there is One God. The worship of false gods would break the first commandment of God.

Deuteronomy 5:8 "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:"

“Any graven image ... any likeness” (compare Exodus 20:4-5). Reducing the infinite God to any physical likeness was intolerable, as the people found out in their attempt to cast God as a golden calf (compare Exodus chapter 32).

Any image would not be God. God is Spirit.

John 4:24 "God [is] a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship [him] in spirit and in truth."

Graven images are idol worship.

Verses 9-10: “The third and fourth generations ... thousands” (see note on Exodus 20:5-6 for an explanation of this often misunderstood text).

“Them that hate me ... Them that love me”: Disobedience is equal to hatred of God, as love is equal to obedience (compare Matt. 22:34-40; Rom. 13:8-10).

Deuteronomy 5:9 "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,"

This is the preface to the ten commandments, and is the same with that in (Exodus 20:2; see note on Exodus 20:2). And those commands are here delivered in the same order, and pretty near in the same words, with a little variation, and a few additions. Which I shall only observe, and refer to (Exodus 20:1), for the sense of the various laws.

"Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children": There are no sins which so surely entail penal consequences upon succeeding generations as the abominations of idolatry. All idolatry means the degradation of the Divine image in man. But it is not meant here that the soul of the son shall die for the father. The penalty extends only “to them that hate me.”

We know the Jews had been easily influenced by the heathen women to bow down to their false gods. This is the one sin that God will not overlook. This is spiritual adultery, when they are unfaithful to God. This is strictly forbidden.

Deuteronomy 5:10 "And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments."

"Them that love me": We have an echo of this commandment in the words of our Savior: “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). The promise of His presence with us through the “other Comforter” compensates for the absence of any visible image. As love in this verse is practical, so is hatred in the previous verse. To hate God is to disobey His commandments.

The mercy of God is forever.

Deuteronomy 7:9 "Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he [is] God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;"

James 5:11 "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

Deuteronomy 5:11 "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."

“Take the name ... in vain” (compare Exodus 20:7). Attach God’s name to emptiness (compare Psalm 111:9; Matt. 6:9; Luke 1:49; John 17:6, 26).

This verse relates to the third commandment. The meaning is to “misuse” the name of God, or to use it for no real purpose. Examples may be:

- (1) To affirm something that is false and untrue;
- (2) To express mild surprise; and
- (3) To use His name when there is no clear goal, purpose or reason for its use in the context, such as in a prayer of other religious context.

This is speaking of all profanity that uses the name of the LORD. It is strictly forbidden to misuse the name of the LORD.

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."

What comes out of the mouth, begins in the heart. Those who profane the name of the LORD, have profanity in their hearts.

Verses 12-15: These verses relate to the fourth commandment. It was given for the liberation, not the bondage, of the individual. It was for "rest". Another reason is given here, relating to the creation of the nation when they were redeemed from Egypt. Because of this new work of redemption, they are to rest.

Deuteronomy 5:12 "Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee."

"As the LORD thy God hath commanded thee" (compare Exodus 20:8-10). These words are missing from Exodus 20:8, but refer back to this commandment given to Israel at Sinai 40 years earlier. Or observe it, by setting it apart as a time of natural rest, and for the performance of holy and religious exercises, where the phrase is a little varied, "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy"; it having been instituted before.

"As the Lord thy God hath commanded thee": Not at Sinai only, for the same might then have been observed of all the rest of the commands, but before the giving of the law, at the first of the manna (see Exodus 16:23).

The Sabbath is the 7th day of the week, or Saturday. Christians practice firstfruits, which is Sunday. Those under the law must practice Sabbath, or Saturday.

Deuteronomy 5:13 "Six days thou shalt labor, and do all thy work:"

The exhortation to observe the Sabbath and allow time of rest to servants (compare Exodus 23:12). Is pointed to, by reminding the people that they too were formerly servants themselves. The bondage in Egypt and the deliverance from it are not assigned as grounds for the institution of the Sabbath, which is of far older date (see Genesis 2:3). But rather as suggesting motives for the religious observance of that institution. The Exodus was an entrance into rest from the toils

of the house of bondage, and is thought actually to have occurred on the Sabbath day or "rest" day.

Sabbath is a time for rest. Jesus said it best in the following Scripture.

Mark 2:27 "And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:"

Man is to work 6 days, and rest 1 day.

Deuteronomy 5:14 "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."

In (Exodus 20:10), it is only in general said.

"Nor thy cattle": Here by way of illustration and explanation the ox and the ass are particularly mentioned. The one being used in ploughing ground, and treading out the corn, and the other in carrying burdens; and it is added.

"Nor any of thy cattle": As their camels, or whatever else they were accustomed to use in any kind of service. They were none of them to do any kind of work on the Sabbath day. The following clause also is not used before, which expresses the end of this institution.

"That thy manservant and thy maidservant may have rest as well as thee. Which if the cattle had not rest, they could not have, being obliged to attend them at the plough or elsewhere. And this respects not only hired, but bond servants and maidens.

The Sabbath is actually a time set aside from all physical labor. It is a time of refreshing in the LORD. Every man and animal need a time to rest their body and their mind. This special time was set aside for man by the LORD, to give him a time of refreshing. Even though this day is set aside for worship, it is for the benefit of man.

Deuteronomy 5:15 "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."

"Brought thee out thence": Here an additional reason is given for God's rest after creation (i.e., for the observance of the Sabbath (see Exodus 20:11), God's deliverance of the people from Egypt. While the Israelites had been slaves in Egypt, they were not allowed rest from their continual labor, so the Sabbath was also to function as a day of rest in which their deliverance from bondage would be remembered with thanksgiving as the sign of their redemption and continual sanctification (compare Exodus 31:13-17; Ezek. 20:12).

“Remember that thou wast a bondman”: Similar words are used in Deuteronomy to encourage the people to the proper behavior expected of them (5:15; 10:19; 16:12; and 24:18, 22). As “children of the LORD” (14:1), they should bear His character.

This day of rest (Sabbath), is not an option, it is a commandment of the LORD. God rested from His labors, and man is to rest one day in seven from his labors.

Verses 16-20: Compare Matt. 19:18:19; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20.

Deuteronomy 5:16 "Honor 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."

This verse relates to authority, with the sanctity of the family in mind. Honor involves:

- (1) Prizing them highly (Prov. 4:8);
- (2) Caring and showing affection to them (Psalm 91:15); and
- (3) Showing them respect, reverence, and deference (Lev. 19:3).

“That thy days may be prolonged” (compare Exodus 20:12; Matt. 15:4; Mark 7:10; Eph. 6:2-3). Paul indicated that this was the first commandment with a promise attached (Eph. 6:2). Jesus also had much to say about honoring parents (See Matt. 10:37; 19:29; Luke 2:49-51; John 19:26-27).

Ephesians 6:1 says that “obedience” is to be “in the Lord”. Parents are to be honored, but never should their wishes or words become a rival or substitute for the Will or Word of God.

Families who heed this command not only honor the Lord, they strengthen society, producing good citizens and leaders. A rewarding proposition for children is also offered: “honor” your parents, and God will honor you with a longer life (Eph. 6:2-3). The practice of honor is respect.

Matthew 15:4 "For God commanded, saying, Honor thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death."

Our father and mother, actually, are responsible for our birth. God gives us life. He uses our fathers and mothers to bring us to life. We should have great respect for the parents who brought us into the world. God should be first in our lives, but we should have respect for our parents.

Deuteronomy 5:17 "Thou shalt not kill."

This verse relates to the sanctity of life. The Hebrew language has seven words related to “kill”. This word is almost always used of killing a personal enemy (*ratsah*), but is not confined to intentional and premeditated murder. The prohibition applies to:

- (1) Suicide:

- (2) To all accessories to the murder (2 Sam. 12:9); and
- (3) To all those who have the authority of a magistrate or governor, but who fail to use it to punish known and convicted murderers (1 Kings 21:19).

There were at least 16 crimes calling for the death penalty in the Old Testament: Premeditated murder, kidnapping, adultery, homosexuality, incest, bestiality, incorrigible delinquency and persistent disobedience to parents and authorities, striking or cursing parents, offering human sacrifice, false prophecy, blasphemy, profaning the Sabbath, sacrificing to false gods, magic and divination, unchastity, and rape of a betrothed virgin. Only for the first crime, premeditated murder, was there no ransom or substitute acceptable (Num. 35:31).

This is speaking of premeditated murder.

Deuteronomy 5:18 "Neither shalt thou commit adultery."

This verse relates to adultery and the sanctity of marriage. It was punishable by death and was distinguished from fornication (Exodus 22:16; Deut. 22:28-29).

Compare Exodus 20:14; Matt. 5:27.

Adultery in the physical sense, is participating in sex with someone you are not married to. Adultery in the spiritual sense, is speaking of the worship of false gods. Adultery of all kinds is strictly forbidden.

Deuteronomy 5:19 "Neither shalt thou steal."

This verse relates to theft and the sanctity of property. The Old Testament taught that God owned everything in heaven and on earth (Psalm 24:1; 115:16), and that He has only entrusted it to others. Thus, theft was actually stealing from God as well as from man.

Compare (Exodus 20:15; Eph. 4:28).

To take anything that does not belong to you is stealing. Employees even steal from their employers, when they do not give them a full day's work for a full day's pay.

Deuteronomy 5:20 "Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbor."

This ninth commandment related to false charges and the sanctity of truth. It applied to all areas of life, even though the terminology used reflects the legal process in Israel "false witness". To despise the truth was to despise God whose very being was truth. "Lying" (in Hosea 4:2), shows the commandment had a broad application.

Compare (Exodus 20:16; Col. 3:9).

This is a very cruel thing to do. It does not build your position up, to tear someone else down. At all times we are required to speak the truth, if we are believers in the LORD. We should build our neighbors up, and not tear them down.

Deuteronomy 5:21 "Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbor's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any [thing] that [is] thy neighbor's."

The sanctity of motives is presented in the final commandment. It relates to an inner quality of contentment. "Desire" (*chamad*), "to desire earnestly", "to long after", "to covet", is used in (Genesis 3:6), as it relates to the tree and its ability to make one wise. The word "covet" (*awah*), also means to set one's desire on something, such as food. This relates to the inner instinct that lies behind all acts, thoughts, and words (compare Matt. 15:19; Mark 7:21; Luke 12:15; Rom. 1:24; 2 Cor. 9:5; Eph. 5:3; and 1 Tim. 6:6): "Godliness with contentment is great gain".

Both the lusting after a neighbor's wife and a strong desire for a neighbor's property were prohibited by the tenth commandment (compare Rom. 7:7).

We should rejoice in the fact that our neighbor has these things. It is coveting to want anything that belongs to someone else.

Luke 12:15 "And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

All of the Ten Commandments are covered in the following two that Jesus gave.

Matthew 22:37-39 "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." "This is the first and great commandment." "And the second [is] like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

God first, neighbor second, and yourself third covers all of the Ten Commandments.

Verses 22-27: The frightening circumstances of God's presence at Sinai caused the people to have enough fear to ask Moses to receive the words from God and communicate those words to them, after which they promised to obey all that God said (see verse 27).

Deuteronomy 5:22 "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."

"And he added no more": These Ten Commandments alone were identified as direct quotations by God. The rest of the stipulations of the covenant were given to Moses, who in turn gave them to the Israelites. These basic rules, which reflect God's character, continue to be a means by which God reveals the sinful deeds of the flesh (compare Rom. 7:7-14; Gal. 3:19-24; 5:13-26).

They are also a holy standard from conduct that the saved live by through the Spirit's power, with the exception of keeping the Sabbath (compare Col. 2:16-17).

“Two tables of stone”: The tables were written on both sides (see Exodus 32:15).

The same message was spoken to the people that the message the fiery finger of God wrote on the tablets. They are the Decalogue, or the Ten Commandments. "Decalogue" means ten words.

Verses 23-33: Moses refers to the consternation caused by the terror with which the law was given. God's appearances have always been terrible to man, ever since the fall; but Christ, having taken away sin, invites us to come boldly to the throne of grace. They were in a good mind, under the strong convictions of the word they heard. Many have their consciences startled by the law who have them not purified. Fair promises are extorted from them, but no good principles are fixed and rooted in them. God commended what they said. He desires the welfare and salvation of poor sinners. He has given abundant proof that he does so; he gives us time and space to repent. He has sent his Son to redeem us, promised his Spirit to those who pray for him, and has declared that he has no pleasure in the ruin of sinners. It would be well with many, if there were always such a heart in them, as there seems to be sometimes. When they are under conviction of sin, or the rebukes of providence, or when they come to look death in the face. The only way to be happy, is to be holy. Say to the righteous, It shall be well with them. Let believers make it more and more their study and delight, to do as the Lord God hath commanded.

Verses 23-27: God is so holy that the Israelites thought that even hearing His “voice” could mean their death (Exodus 20:18-19).

Deuteronomy 5:23 "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;"

The thick darkness, where God was, and with which the mountain was covered (Exodus 20:21).

"For the mountain did burn with fire": Which is a reason both why the Lord spoke out of the midst of the fire, the mountain on which he descended burning with it and also for his speaking out of the midst of darkness. Because not only a thick cloud covered the mountain, but it was altogether on a smoke, which ascended as the smoke of a furnace (Exodus 19:16).

"That ye come near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes and your elders": Or wise men, as the Targum of Jonathan. By which it appears, that not only the common people were frightened at what they heard and saw on Mount Sinai, but those of the first rank and eminence among them, who were the most famous for their authority and wisdom.

Moses had built a fence around the bottom of the mountain to keep them from touching the mountain, while the presence of God was on it. If they had touched the mountain, they would

have died. The fire, smoke, and the voice out of the fire were all they could stand. They ran back from the mountain, when God began to speak in the fire.

Deuteronomy 5:24 "And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath showed 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."

In descending on Mount Sinai in the manner he did, and giving the law from thence with such solemnity. For there was a glory in the ministration of it, as the apostle argues (2 Cor. 3:7). It being delivered with so much majesty, and such a glorious apparatus attending it (see Deut. 33:2). Aben Ezra interprets this of the appearance of fire in which the Lord was, "and his greatness", of the thunders and lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet.

"And we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire": The ten words, as the same interpreter rightly notes, which were vocally and audibly expressed out of the fire.

"We have seen this day, that God doth talk with man, and he liveth": They had proof of it in themselves; God had been talking with them out of the fire, and yet it did not reach and consume them, but they were still alive.

God has revealed Himself to them, so they will realize these Ten Commandments are from Him, and not Moses. They are amazed that any man can hear the voice of God and live.

Deuteronomy 5:25 "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."

Since we are now alive, and have so wonderfully escaped the danger we were exposed unto, let us be careful that we are not liable to it again.

"For this great fire will consume us": If it continues, and we are exposed to it. Perhaps some of them might remember the fire that burnt in the uttermost parts of the camp at Taberah. And the destruction of Korah and the two hundred and fifty men with him by fire (Num. 11:1).

"If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die": For it was such a voice of words they could not endure as to the matter of them. And therefore entreated the word might not be spoken to them anymore; it being the killing letter, and the ministration of condemnation and death. And the manner in which it was delivered was so terrible, that they concluded they could not live, but must die if they heard it again. And imagined that if the fire continued, the flames of it would spread and reach them, and they would not be able to escape them.

God's presence is more than they can bare. Fear of death overwhelms them.

Deuteronomy 5:26 "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?"

What man was there in any age, that was ever heard of or can be named.

"That hath heard the voice of the living God": Who lives in and of himself, and is the author and giver of life to all his creatures. Whereby he is distinguished from and is opposed unto the lifeless deities of the Gentiles; and which makes him and his voice heard the more awful and tremendous. And especially as speaking out of the midst of the fire: which was the present case.

"As we have, and lived?" Of this there never was the like instance; for though some had seen God and lived, as Jacob did, and therefore called the name of the place where he saw him Penuel (Gen. 32:30). And Moses had heard the voice of the angel of the Lord out of a bush, which seemed to be burning, and was not consumed (Exodus 3:2). Yet none ever heard the voice of the Lord out of real fire, and particularly expressing such words as he did, but the Israelites.

This does set them aside as a very special people. They are His chosen people. It is not unnatural for men to fear the presence of God. In fact, terror is a closer description than fear. They are amazed they are still alive.

Deuteronomy 5:27 "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]."

To the mount, and to God on it.

"And hear all that the Lord our God shall say": For they supposed, by the continuance of the Lord on the mount, and the fire burning on it, that he had more to say, which they were not averse to hear. But desired it might be not immediately delivered to them, but by the means of Moses. The sound of the words, and the sight of the fire, being so terrible to them.

"And speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee": They did not doubt, knowing the faithfulness of Moses, his declaring all unto them that should be told him by the Lord. And they were desirous that he should, they did not want to have anything withheld from them, only they could not bear to see and hear things immediately from the Lord.

"And we will hear it and do it": Hearken to it, and receive it, as the word of God, and not man. And yield a ready and cheerful obedience, even to everything that should be required (see Exodus 20:19).

They are aware now, that Moses has a special relationship with the LORD. They ask Moses to communicate with God for them, and then bring His message to them. They promise to accept the message, and do it.

Verses 28-29: God affirmed that the pledge to be obedient was the right response (verse 28), and then expressed His loving passion for them to fulfill their promise so they and their children would prosper.

Verses 28–33: The response of the people in this moment was so right before the Lord that Yahweh wistfully expressed sadness that they would not always respond in this manner (32:29).

Deuteronomy 5:28 "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."

Not only in a general way, as he hears and knows all that is spoken by men. For there is not a word on the tongue, formed upon it, and uttered by it, but what is altogether known to him. But in a special and particular manner observed, took notice of, approved, and was well pleased with what these people said.

"And the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken unto thee": Not only heard the sound of them, but took notice of the sense and meaning of them, and listened to them with pleasure and delight.

"They have well said all that they have spoken": Expressing such an awe and reverence of the divine Majesty, desiring to have a mediator between God and them. And purposing and promising to hearken to and obey whatsoever he should command by him.

The LORD heard them ask Moses to be their representative to Him. The Lord is pleased with that request. The LORD is aware that to speak to them directly would cause problems for them.

Deuteronomy 5:29 "O that there were such a 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!"

This is spoken of God after the manner of men, to show that such a heart is desirable to him, and required by him. Otherwise it is certain that God can give such a heart, and hath promised to give it, (Jer. 32:40; Ezek. 36:27). And if God will work, who can hinder him? (Job 11:10).

"That it might be well with them, and with their children for ever": For the fear of God, and the keeping of his commandments, issue in the good of men, in their own good, their inward peace, and spiritual welfare. In the good of others, their neighbors, servants, and children, by way of example and instruction.

God knows their hearts, and knows the words they spoke were just promises they would not keep. As soon as Moses goes up the mountain for 40 days, they fall into great sin. The covenant depended upon them keeping God's commandments.

Verses 30-33: They asked to be given all God's Word (verse 27), so God dismissed the people and told Moses He was going to give the law to him to teach the people (verse 31). At stake was life and prosperity in the Land of Promise.

Deuteronomy 5:30 "Go say to them, Get you into your tents again."

Which they had left, being brought by Moses, at the direction of God, to the foot of Mount Sinai, to receive the law from his mouth. This being done, they are ordered to return to their tents again, to their families, wives, and children.

They were to return to their tents, while Moses communed with God for them. Moses would receive instructions from God for them, and then deliver the message to the people.

Deuteronomy 5:31 "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."

On the mount by him whither he was called up. Moses was not permitted to go to his tent when the children of Israel were. But was ordered to wait upon the Lord to receive instructions from him, which he was to communicate to the people. Being a kind of a mediator between God and them, as they requested, and which was granted them.

"And I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments". All laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, which belong to them as men, as in a church state, and members of a body politic.

"Which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them": For all doctrine is in order to practice, without which all instructions, and theoretical notions, signify little. And these they were more especially to do, and some of them peculiarly.

"In the land which I give them to possess it": The land of Canaan, and which laid on them no small obligation to do the commandments of God. Since of his free favor and good will, and as a pure gift of his, he had bestowed upon them a land flowing with milk and honey. Into which he was just now about to bring them. As nothing can more strongly engage souls to a cheerful obedience to the service of God, whether in private or in public, than the consideration of the great and good things which God of his rich grace bestows upon them. And has promised to them, and prepared for them, and will quickly put them into the possession of. And upon such an account Moses presses the observance of the commands of God in the following verses.

God taught Moses His ways. He gave him not only the Ten Commandments, but all of the statutes and judgements for the people. It was then, the obligation of Moses to teach them to the people.

Exodus 24:3 "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do."

Deuteronomy 5:32 "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."

Observe every precept, as to matter and manner, which the Lord has commanded. And that under a sense of the great obligations laid on them by him, in giving them freely so good a land to possess.

"You shall not turn to the right hand or to the left": But walk in the way of the commandments of God, and not depart from them at all, but follow the Lord in his own ways fully. The phrase is expressive of a strict and close attention to the word of God, without deviating from it in the least. For every sin, which is a transgression of some command of God or another, is a going out of the way that directs unto (see Isaiah 30:21).

This is a warning from Moses, that they must keep the commandments that God has sent them. They must not wander out of the straight and narrow path He has set before them. They are not to look to the world for answers. They must keep their eyes straight ahead on God.

Deuteronomy 5:33 "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."

None are to be avoided or departed from on any consideration whatever (see Psalm 119:6). An instance of this we have in Zacharias and Elizabeth (Luke 1:6). That ye may live; corporeally, comfortably, in all the outward enjoyments of life needful for them. Particularly in the possession of the land of Canaan, and the benefits of it. For these promises of life upon obedience seem to reach no further, unless as types and emblems of what is enjoyed through the obedience and righteousness of Christ, as the following phrases show.

"And that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess": The land of Canaan; though the Jewish writers carry it further, even to heaven and eternal happiness. And so may we in the sense before given.

God had promised to bless them on the earth in the land He has given them, if they keep His commandments.

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Deuteronomy Chapter 5 Questions

1. What had Moses called all Israel together for?
2. Where was the law first given?
3. Who had made a covenant with Israel?
4. The covenant was _____.

5. Why does Moses say, this covenant was made with them?
6. The _____ of Israel had gone into covenant with God.
7. Who had been present, when God had spoken from the fire to them?
8. Face to face is speaking of what?
9. Why were they afraid?
10. Who had brought them out of Egypt?
11. He is the great I AM. The One who _____ .
12. What is the first commandment?
13. Any image would not be _____.
14. How many generations will God visit the iniquity to?
15. What is the worship of false gods?
16. What is verse 11 speaking of?
17. What day is Sabbath?
18. What do Christians practice?
19. Who celebrates Sabbath, besides the head of the family?
20. Honor thy _____ and thy _____.
21. What is meant by kill in verse 17?
22. What two kinds of adultery are there?
23. What is stealing?
24. What two commandments did Jesus give, that covers the ten commandments?
25. What is another name for the ten commandments?
26. What did the people ask Moses to do for them?