

Justice and Obedience

Deut 5:1-3; 10:12-13; 27:1-10

SS Lesson for 12/05/2021

Devotional Scripture: Micah 6:6-9

OUTLINE

LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Key Verse: Deut 10:12-13

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

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Laws that are perfect and revives the soul (Ps 19:7-8)

Laws that are holy (Rom 7:12-14)

Laws that the world is held accountable to (Rom 3:19)

Laws that uncover sin (Rom 7:7)

Laws that lead us to Jesus by faith (Gal 3:24)

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A covenant that is based on a promise (Gal 3:17-18)

A covenant from God because there is no one greater (Heb 6:13)

A covenant that is holy and righteous because of the power of Jesus' blood (Heb 12:24)

A covenant through God's promises (Acts 2:39)

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Obey by being ready to do whatever is good (Titus 3:1)

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Lesson Background and Key Verse

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

The lesson's texts come from the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy. Its name means "second law." That is an appropriate title as Deuteronomy is the second instance of the giving of God's law to Israel—the first time being to the generation that followed the one of the exodus from Egypt. Israel's long journey to the promised land of Canaan had come to its climax as the people had arrived east of the Jordan River (Deuteronomy 1:1). The previous generation of Israel, prevented from entering the promised land, had perished in the wilderness because of unbelief (1:35, 37). Deuteronomy details Moses' expounding on God's law to Israel (1:5) and his farewell address to a new generation on the verge of entering the promised land. One way Deuteronomy can be studied is on the basis of Moses' four major addresses. The first reviews the ways God worked in and provided for Israel throughout the desert wanderings. The review culminated in a reminder that Israel was a people set apart, called to live in obedience to God (Deuteronomy 4:1–4). The second address reviewed God's law for Israel and provided moral boundaries for living in the promised land (Deuteronomy 4:44–26:19). Moses' third address explored the demands of covenant life and the dangers of disobedience. It culminated in a call for Israel to commit to following God and his laws (Deuteronomy 30:11–20). In what became the final scene of Moses' life, his fourth address presented Joshua as the new leader for Israel (Deuteronomy 31:1–8). This address served as that man's commissioning as the people entered the promised land (32:48–52).

God desired that Israel be known as a people well acquainted with his righteous standards. He expressed that desire in terms of a covenant. The covenant served as the formal agreement between God and his people, describing how Israel was to live as a holy people and how God committed to making Israel his people. Covenants were not unique to ancient Israel. Other ancient Near Eastern cultures used similar legal agreements, often made between a more powerful kingdom and a lesser kingdom. These agreements often included a historical narrative (detailing the history between the parties), stipulations for the submission of the lesser party, and curses or blessings for the disregard or obedience of the previously mentioned stipulations. For pagan cultures of antiquity, covenants provided legal precedent for how parties were to relate to one another, especially if a power differential was present. Throughout Israel's history, God made several covenants with his people. Each detailed a different aspect of his commitment to and his expectations for the Israelites (see Genesis 9:8–17; 15:1–21; 2 Samuel 7:8–16; Jeremiah 31:31–34). This week's Scripture texts describe how Israel was to commemorate and commit to the covenant God made with them at Sinai (Exodus 19:3–8; 20:1–17; 24:3–8).

Key Verse: Deut 10:12-13

12 "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes which I command you today for your good?"

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

10:1-5. The LORD, acting on Moses' request not to destroy the people, rewrote the Ten Commandments on **stone tablets**. This indicates that God did annul the prior covenant, concluded in Exodus 24:3. Probably each of **the two tablets** contained a complete copy of **the Ten Commandments**. This was normal in establishing the ancient Near Eastern suzerainty treaties to which Deuteronomy has been previously compared. As God instructed him, Moses made **a wooden chest or ark** (cf. Ex. 25:10-16) in which he then placed **the tablets**. This construction was done, of course, in connection with building the tabernacle (Ex. 37:1-5; 40:20-21).

10:6-9. These verses may be an editorial insertion (cf. 2:10-12). When Israel was at **Moserah... Aaron died**. According to Numbers 20:28; 33:38 Aaron died on Mount Hor. Probably Moserah was the district where Mount Hor was located. The mention of Aaron's death indicates that the Lord also granted Moses' plea at Horeb years before to spare Aaron's life. **Eleazar**, Aaron's third **son**, became the high **priest** (Deut.

10:6) and the Levites were given specific responsibilities in relation to the tabernacle (v. 8). For other details relating to **the Levites** see the 18:1-8.

10:10-11. When Moses was **on the mountain** a second time (vv. 1-5) for **40 days and nights** (cf. the first time, 9:9), he was involved in fasting and intercession for Israel (9:18, 25). Agreeing **not... to destroy** the nation, God told Moses to **lead the people on to possess the land**.

10:12-13. These verses are an introductory summary to the general exhortation in verses 14-22. Having shown the impossibility of self-dependence (chap. 8) and the impossibility of spiritual pride in light of her rebellious history (9:1-10:11), Moses called Israel to exercise her only option for survival: total commitment to **the LORD**. This is seen in the several infinitives used: **to fear** (cf. 4:10), **walk... love... serve**, and **observe**. Such commitment was **for their own good** (cf. 4:40).

10:14-15. **The LORD** is enthroned in **the heavens**, and therefore is not a part of Creation but is sovereign over all of it. Besides creating the universe, He *owns* it and **all the nations on the earth**. But He specially **loved** the patriarchs, and selected them to be intimately related to Him. **And He chose... their descendants**, that is, He called them to be His witnesses. So the first reason Israel was to love the Lord is that He had initiated a relationship of love with this rebellious nation. The same principle is true of God's relationship with believers today (Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:10).

10:16-18. The proper response to their election by the sovereign Lord was to **circumcise** their **hearts** (cf. 30:6). An uncircumcised heart means a will that is hardened against God's commands. It is another way of saying the person is **stiff-necked** or stubborn (cf. 9:6, 13; 31:27). Thus the command to circumcise their hearts assumes that human hearts are naturally rebellious and need correction. Though human hearts are slow to change, Moses warned the nation that no bribe or anything less than an inward transformation could satisfy **the LORD**, who is **the great God**. God's treatment of the helpless (**the fatherless... the widow**, and **the alien**) further illustrates His absolutely just character (showing **no partiality**) and highlights His requirement for Israel to be just.

10:19-22. The mention of the alien in verse 18 recalls God's great deliverance of Israel with **great and awesome wonders** (v. 21) from being **aliens in Egypt** (v. 19; cf. Ex. 23:9). Therefore the Israelites were to **fear... serve**, adhere to (cf. **hold fast to** in Deut. 11:22; 13:4; 30:20), and **praise** Him. As a further encouragement to be faithful to **the LORD**, Moses called the people's attention to the fact that He had already fulfilled part of the promise to Abraham by multiplying their number like **the stars in the sky** (cf. Gen. 15:5; 22:17; 26:4). On the question of whether **70** Israelites moved to **Egypt** (Ex. 1:5) or **75** (Acts 7:14-15).

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Binding Covenant (Deut 5:1-3)

- 1 And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them.
- 2 The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.
- 3 The Lord did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who are here today, all of us who are alive.

Covenant of laws (1-2)

Laws put into effect through the Mediator (Gal 3:19)

19 What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator.

Laws that are put into man's heart (Heb 10:16)

16 "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds."

Laws that are perfect and revives the soul (Ps 19:7-8)

7 The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

Laws that are holy (Rom 7:12-14)

12 So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good. 13 Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful. 14 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.

Laws that the world is held accountable to (Rom 3:19)

19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.

Laws that uncover sin (Rom 7:7)

7 What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet."

Laws that lead us to Jesus by faith (Gal 3:24)

24 So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.

Covenant with God's people (3)

A covenant that puts an end to all arguments because God cannot lie (Heb 6:16-18)

16 Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. 17 Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. 18 God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.

A covenant that is based on a promise (Gal 3:17-18)

17 What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. 18 For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.

A covenant from God because there is no one greater (Heb 6:13)

13 When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself,

A covenant that is holy and righteous because of the power of Jesus' blood (Heb 12:24)

24 to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

A covenant through God's promises (Acts 2:39)

39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call."

A covenant for all who belong to God (Gal 3:27-29)

27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Basic Requirements (Deut 10:12-13)

12 "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul,
13 and to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes which I command you today for your good?"

Requirements to be lived (12)

Live by persevering (Heb 10:36)

36 You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

Live by being a doer of the word of God (James 1:22)

22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

Live by not neglecting God's word (Ps 119:16)

16 I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.

Live by putting God's word into practice (Ezek 33:31-32)

31 My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain.
32 Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice.

Live by remaining in God (John 15:4)

4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

Requirements that result in goodness (13)

A goodness that is done at every opportunity (Gal 6:10)

10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

A goodness that is one of the fruit of righteousness (Eph 5:9)

9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)

A goodness that is pleasing to God (Heb 13:16)

16 And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

A goodness that is no one can do except through God (Luke 18:19)

19 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good — except God alone.

Obedience to God's Commandments (Deut 27:1-10)

- 1 Now Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying: "Keep all the commandments which I command you today.
- 2 And it shall be, on the day when you cross over the Jordan to the land which the Lord your God is giving you, that you shall set up for yourselves large stones, and whitewash them with lime.
- 3 You shall write on them all the words of this law, when you have crossed over, that you may enter the land which the Lord your God is giving you, 'a land flowing with milk and honey,' just as the Lord God of your fathers promised you.
- 4 Therefore it shall be, when you have crossed over the Jordan, that on Mount Ebal you shall set up these stones, which I command you today, and you shall whitewash them with lime.
- 5 And there you shall build an altar to the Lord your God, an altar of stones; you shall not use an iron tool on them.
- 6 You shall build with whole stones the altar of the Lord your God, and offer burnt offerings on it to the Lord your God.
- 7 You shall offer peace offerings, and shall eat there, and rejoice before the Lord your God.
- 8 And you shall write very plainly on the stones all the words of this law."
- 9 Then Moses and the priests, the Levites, spoke to all Israel, saying, "Take heed and listen, O Israel: This day you have become the people of the Lord your God.
- 10 Therefore you shall obey the voice of the Lord your God, and observe His commandments and His statutes which I command you today."

Commandments that are be learned (1-3)

Learn through teaching at Church (Eph 4:10-13)

10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) 11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Learn to distinguish between good and evil (Heb 5:13-14)

13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Learn from teachers who have the Word of God dwelling in them (Col 3:16)

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Learn from the Holy Spirit who will teach us (1 John 2:27)

27 As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit — just as it has taught you, remain in him.

Learn through listening to godly counsel (Prov 1:5)

5 let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance —

Learn through being the presence of God (Deut 4:9-11)

9 Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them. 10 Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, when he said to me, "Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children." 11 You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain while it blazed with fire to the very heavens, with black clouds and deep darkness.

Commandments that require an altar (4-8)

An altar that requires innocence (Ps 26:6)

6 I wash my hands in innocence, and go about your altar, O Lord,

An altar approached with praise, joy and delight (Ps 43:4)

4 Then will I go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God.

An altar where righteous sacrifices are brought (Ps 51:19)

19 Then there will be righteous sacrifices, whole burnt offerings to delight you; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

An altar where one can feel at home (Ps 84:3)

3 Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young — a place near your altar, O Lord Almighty, my King and my God.

An altar that is in a house of prayer (Isa 56:7)

7 these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations."

Commandments that must be obeyed (9-10)

Obey by being a slave to righteousness (Rom 6:15-18)

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! 16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey — whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. 18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

Obey by living a life that proves obedience (2 Cor 9:13)

13 Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.

Obey so that we will know God (1 John 2:3)

3 We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands.

Obey by living in God (1 John 3:24)

24 Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

Obey by being ready to do whatever is good (Titus 3:1)

3 Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good,

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Dr. Thomas Constable

Verses 1-11

Warning against self-righteousness 9:1-10:11

"From a literary standpoint Deuteronomy 9:1 to Deuteronomy 10:11 is a travel narrative much like Deuteronomy 1:6 to Deuteronomy 3:29, with which, in fact, it shares much in common. For example, both are introduced (Deuteronomy 1:1-5; Deuteronomy 9:1-6) and concluded (Deuteronomy 3:29; Deuteronomy 10:11) by a setting in the plains of Moab in anticipation of the conquest of Canaan." [Note: Merrill, Deuteronomy, p. 189.]

This pericope contains the second important lesson from the past.

"Secondly, any success they might enjoy in the coming conquest was not to be interpreted as a mark of divine approval for their own righteousness (Deuteronomy 9:1-6). In fact, both in the incident of the golden calf (Deuteronomy 9:7-21) and in a number of other incidents (Deuteronomy 9:22-23), Israel had proved herself stubborn and rebellious. She was delivered only after the intercession of Moses (Deuteronomy 9:24-29). Past experience should remind the people that they needed discipline for their rebellious ways. Yet through all their recalcitrance Yahweh remained faithful, even to the extent of granting them two more tables of stone when the first ones were broken (Deuteronomy 10:1-11; cf. Exodus 32:19; Exodus 34:1-4). All the experiences of the past would underline the fact that Israel was dependent on Yahweh for divine care, provision, protection, and forgiveness. To forget these facts was to display base ingratitude and self-deifying pride." [Note: Thompson, p. 134.]

"Besides the more vulgar pride which entirely forgets God, and attributes success and prosperity to its own power and exertion, there is one of a more refined character, which very easily spreads—namely, pride which acknowledges the blessings of God; but instead of receiving them gratefully, as unmerited gifts of the grace of the Lord, sees in them nothing but proofs of its own righteousness and virtue. Moses therefore warned the Israelites more particularly of this dangerous enemy of the soul, by first of all declaring without reserve, that the Lord was not about to give them Canaan because of their own righteousness, but that He would exterminate the Canaanites for their own wickedness (Deuteronomy 9:1-6); and then showing them for their humiliation, by proofs drawn from the immediate past, how they had brought upon themselves the anger of the Lord, by their apostasy and rebellion against their God, directly after the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai; and that in such a way, that it was only by his earnest intercession that he had been able to prevent the destruction of the people (Deuteronomy 9:7-24), and to secure a further renewal of the pledges of the covenant (Deuteronomy 9:25 -chap. x. 11)." [Note: Keil and Delitzsch, 3:334-35.]

Verses 1-11

God renewed the broken covenant with Israel because of Moses' intercession, not because Israel deserved it. Moses made the ark (Deuteronomy 10:3) in the sense that he directed Bezalel to make it (cf. Exodus 25:10; Exodus 37:1). "Ark" was a common English word for box, chest, or basket in seventeenth-century England, and most modern English translations still use this old word. Other evidences of God's grace were His appointment of another high priest when Aaron died (Deuteronomy 10:6) and His provision of water in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 10:7). Moserah (Deuteronomy 10:6; Numbers 33:31) may be another name for Mt. Hor (Numbers 33:38), the district in which Mt. Hor stood, or Moserah may not be a place name at all but a common noun (Heb. *mosera*, "chastisement") indicating the reason for Aaron's death rather than the site. [Note: See R. K. Harrison, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 511.] God also set apart the tribe of Levi as priests even though the nation had failed in its calling as a kingdom of priests (Deuteronomy 10:8-9). Furthermore He permitted the disobedient people to proceed on to the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 10:11). Again the order of events is logical rather than chronological.

Excessive self-reliance (ch. 8) and self-importance (Deuteronomy 9:1 to Deuteronomy 10:11) would erode Israel's proper concept of God. The people would regard God as less than He was. This is a violation of the third commandment (Deuteronomy 5:11) that aims at keeping man's view of God's reputation (name) consistent with His character.

Verses 12-13

In view of His past grace to His people, what did God require of them? Moses summarized Israel's responsibility: fear, walk, love, serve, and keep. God expected total allegiance to Himself and obedience to His covenant.

"These are the central ideas not only of Deuteronomy but of the whole Pentateuch in its final shape." [Note: Sailhamer, p. 444.]

The fear of the Lord (Deuteronomy 10:12) includes the response that springs from one's knowledge of his personal sinfulness as he realizes that he stands before a holy God.

"Reverence, obedience, total commitment are the ingredients of the fear of the Lord." [Note: Miller, p. 107.]

Verses 12-22

Admonition to fear and love God 10:12-22

Having recited what God had done for the Israelites, Moses now called on them to respond and make a commitment to Him.

"The structure of the passage reveals an enveloping pattern in which injunctions to obey God (Deuteronomy 10:12-13; Deuteronomy 20-22) embrace the corollary command to exhibit proper care and concern for other people, especially the socially and economically disadvantaged (Deuteronomy 10:14-19). The motive clause and that which binds the whole together is Deuteronomy 10:17, a confession of the sovereignty of God and of his justice." [Note: Merrill, Deuteronomy, p. 201.]

Verses 14-19

The rationale behind this response was that as God had demonstrated love for her so Israel was to demonstrate love for God (Deuteronomy 10:14-15). The phrase "highest heavens" (Deuteronomy 10:14) is a Hebrew idiom indicating the totality of heaven; it does not mean that there are multiple levels of heaven. [Note: Craigie, The Book . . . , p. 204; Merrill, Deuteronomy, p. 203.]

"Above all, therefore, they were to circumcise the foreskin of their hearts, i.e., to lay aside all insensibility of heart to impressions from the love of God (cf. Lev. xxvi. 41; and on the spiritual signification of circumcision, see vol. i. p. 227), and not stiffen their necks any more, i.e., not persist in their obstinacy, or obstinate resistance to God (cf. chap. ix. 6, 13). Without circumcision of heart, true fear of God and true love of God are both impossible. As a reason for this admonition, Moses adduces in Deuteronomy 10:17 sqq. the nature and acts of God." [Note: Keil and Delitzsch, 3:344.]

"God chose Israel to be an elect nation, not true of any other nation in this world. However, national election does not guarantee the salvation of every individual member of that nation. Individual salvation is based on individual election on God's part and faith on man's part. In Deuteronomy 10:16, individual members of the elect nation are encouraged to 'circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart.' Whereas circumcision of the flesh is a sign of one's membership in the elect nation, circumcision of the heart is a sign of individual election." [Note: Fruchtenbaum, p. 115.]

Verses 20-22

". . . Moses emphasized a vital relationship with God as fundamental to all other issues in life. Second to this was a genuine love relationship with fellow-man." [Note: Schultz, p. 48. Cf. Matthew 22:37-39.]

(Adapted from URL:<https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/dcc/deuteronomy-10.html>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Few are considered experts in the realm of corn cultivation. However, this is exactly the one thing for which Orville Redenbacher (1907–1995) was known. By the mid-twentieth century, he had perfected techniques that paved the way for mass consumption of popcorn. His name and likeness were associated with accessible popcorn snacks. A 1987 commercial for his brand described the focus of his work: “Do one thing, and do it better than anyone.” The “one thing” for Israel was to be their obedience to God and his law. This was how they were to live according to the covenant. Moses recognized this requirement, and it’s the main reason imperatives like obey, keep, serve, and do are found throughout this week’s Scripture text. A people obedient to the commands of God would have a proper understanding of justice and just living (see Leviticus 19:15–16; Deuteronomy 16:20; Isaiah 1:17; Zechariah 7:9). It was one thing for Israel to write God’s laws on stones; it was quite another thing to practice faithful obedience to those laws. May we write God’s laws on our hearts and practice faithful obedience in all areas of our lives (2 Corinthians 3:3).

Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary

The Instruction - The period of waiting ended for the new generation of Israelites. God fulfilled His promise and allowed them to cross the Jordan River and enter the promised land. Prior to the crossing, Moses addressed the elders, giving them instructions for the groups under their tutelage. God gave each instruction wrapped in His love.

Obedience—Moses reviewed the Lord's instructions demanded of the earlier generation. Although the older congregation died in the wilderness, their pledge to obey God applied to this new generation.

Love - The Lord wanted His children to take Him seriously. He did not want the congregation to run from Him in paralyzing dread, but to love Him enough to listen to His words, allowing His guidelines to influence their thinking and behavior. Moses challenged the Hebrew children to set their affection on God. What a privilege to associate with Him in a close relationship.

Service - Yahweh had a plan for the Israelites, and He has one for us. He longs for His children to place their feet into His footprints, allowing Him to lead, no longer going in their own made-up direction. He carves out visible footsteps for those who are looking for them—a life pattern. Moses commanded the people to give their total allegiance to God and experience deep joy. Moses and the 70 elders had laid out God's instructions. With a heart of obedience, the congregation agreed. Moses emphasized not to just hear what God has to say, but apply His principles each day. What Moses said was designed to keep people in good relationship with God, their King. Every instruction given by Jehovah is for our good. The Lord wrote every command in the backdrop of His love.