

Exegetical Notes - Deuteronomy 6:1-12

“A Father’s Blessing”

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Deuteronomy 6:1-12

Verses 1-3

¹ These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, ² so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. ³ Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

- Having charged the people of Israel to hear, learn, and follow the Laws of God, and having given them the summary version of the law, the Ten Commandments, Moses now begins to instruct them on each specific part of the law in detail.
- He reminds them that they are under covenant obligation, by their own choosing, to God. They have bound themselves to God and have agreed to keep/obey God’s law. If they fulfill their part of the covenant, God will bless them and their children.
- Jesus said that this was the first and greatest commandment (see Matthew 22:34-40 and Mark 12:28-31).

Verses 4-9

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

- Verses 4-5 contain the great commandment. Israel is to love God with her entire heart, soul, and all her strength. It simply means that Israel is to love YHWH above and beyond everything else including self, family, wealth. Israel is to love God above everything else.
- Since she will demonstrate her love for God by keeping his commandments there are several things which she must do. She must write the commandments of God on her heart. She must teach them to her children by talking about them with her children at every opportunity. She is to wear the law of God on her hands and on her forehead. And she is to write them on the door frames of her houses and on her gates.

Verses 10-12

¹⁰ When the LORD your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, ¹¹ houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—then when you eat and are satisfied, ¹² be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

- Notice that the word is “when,” not “if.” God, who knows the future, understands that Israel will accept the “deal” which he is offering and will inherit the promised land.
- When Israel receives the promised land, she must never forget from whom the blessing came. God gave it all to her; none of it was her doing.

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