

Deuteronomy

Lesson 8

Chapter 10

In our previous study, Moses had been sent down from the mountain where he had been with the LORD for forty days and nights because the camp had broken one of the newly given Ten Commandments by crafting a golden calf to worship as its new god. Moses had descended the mountain with the two tablets carved and inscribed by the finger of God. In his anger, Moses threw the tablets and broke them. He chastised the camp, crushed the golden calf to dust, and poured the dust in the stream of water that ran through the camp coming from the flint rock that the LORD had Moses strike to provide drinking water. Once the camp was disciplined, Moses climbed back up the mountain for another forty days with the LORD. During that time, two new tablets were prepared.

VII. Moses' Summary of the Rewritten Tablets and the Reward of Obedience

A. The New Stones with a Case

As we enter chapter 10 of the book of Deuteronomy, Moses remembers those second forty days, and he gives a summary of the rewritten tablets as well as the summary of the reward that comes with obedience. First, we will learn about the new stones and a case to hold them. Verse 1. *"At that time the LORD said to me, 'Cut out for yourself two tablets of stone like the former ones, and come up to Me on the mountain, and make an ark of wood for yourself. ² I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets which you shattered, and you shall put them in the ark.' ³ So I made an ark of acacia wood and cut out two tablets of stone like the former ones, and went up on the mountain with the two tablets in my hand. ⁴ He wrote on the tablets, like the former writing, the Ten Commandments which the LORD had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly; and the LORD gave them to me. ⁵ Then I turned and came down from the mountain and put the tablets in the ark which I had made; and there they are, as the LORD commanded me."* (10:1-5).

Before Moses ascended the mountain to be with the LORD, he did two things down in the camp. He cut two new stones that matched the stones the LORD had cut and written the Ten Commandments upon. Moses also built an ark. This was not the Ark of the Covenant. That Ark would be crafted by skilled craftsmen later after Moses comes down from the mountain following the second forty days. This ark was made from wood by Moses as a case to hold the two tablets when he brought them back down the mountain at the end of the second forty days. The word "ark" simply means a *chest*. We would call it a box. Moses made this wooden box for the Ten Commandments' stones to be stored inside the Ark of the Covenant. The stones would be kept inside the Ark of the Covenant inside a wooden box made perfectly to keep them safe. With that, we can estimate the size of the tablets of stone.

The Ark of the Covenant was two and a half cubits long by one and a half cubits wide and high. A cubit is a standard of measurement that can fluctuate greatly depending on who sets the cubit standard. The cubit was the length from the tip of the elbow to the tip of the longest finger. That length varied from man to man. Therefore, at a building site, the foreman would mark on a wall or cut a stick that was matched the length of his elbow to the tip of his longest finger, and all the rest of the craftsmen would cut a stick to match his measurement. His measurement was called the "rule" by which all the measurements were based. The sticks that copied the original "rule" were called "rulers" because they were the law of the standard of measurement for the build. The ruler was then marked in half, quarters, eighths, sixteenths, and even small. The average man's cubit was

seventeen and a half inches, but the average was not good enough in a precision build; therefore, one man's measurement became the rule for all building measurements. For our purposes, and we will be within an inch or two right, we will use eighteen inches as the rule for the cubit.

With eighteen inches for the rule of the cubit, the Ark of the Covenant was about forty-five inches long and twenty-seven inches wide and high. The wood was probably about two inches thick for the joints' sturdiness without glue, nails, or screws, but with wooden pegs. This meant that the measurements of the inside of the Ark were about forty inches long by twenty-three inches wide and high. Considering the ark case for the stones would be two inches thick also, the stones could have been no larger than thirty-six inches long and nineteen inches wide.

B. The Three Inserted Verses

Verses 6 through 9 of chapter 10 were inserted long ago in the text. Both Wycliffe and Tyndale included them in the original translations into English; however, they are not found in the oldest and most reliable copies. The New American Standard Version, which we are using, places them inside of the parenthesis to indicated that they were not part of the original text delivered by Moses. However, the editors of the NASV were kind enough to mark these verses with parenthesis, which means the information is found in the Bible somewhere. It is located in Numbers 33. These verses were most likely written in the margin of a minister's copy as a note. When the minister had a new copy made because his was worn and tattered, the scribe included the minister's notes as text in the new copy. We will not deal with the content of these three verses here. For information about the content, please see the notes or video for Numbers Lesson 20.

⁶ (Now the sons of Israel set out from Beeroth Bene jaakan to Moserah. There Aaron died and there he was buried and Eleazar his son ministered as priest in his place. ⁷ From there they set out to Gudgodah, and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land of brooks of water. ⁸ At that time the LORD set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to serve Him and to bless in His name until this day. ⁹ Therefore, Levi does not have a portion or inheritance with his brothers; the LORD is his inheritance, just as the LORD your God spoke to him.)

C. The Forty Day on the Mountain and Moses' Plea

Moses reminded the camp on the Plains of Moab that he stayed on the mountain for forty days the second time. While there, he pleaded with the LORD to not destroy the nation but to allow it to continue and possess the Promised Land. Verse 10. ¹⁰ I, moreover, stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights like the first time, and the LORD listened to me that time also; the LORD was not willing to destroy you. ¹¹ Then the LORD said to me, 'Arise, proceed on your journey ahead of the people, that they may go in and possess the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.' (10:10-11).

The LORD granted Moses his plea. He would be allowed to lead the nation onto the place where the nation could take the Promised Land as their own possession, just as He had promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

D. The Requirements for Israel to Possess the Promised Land

1. The Things that Bring Good to Israel

But the granting of Moses' plea was not without a requirement on the people. It was not a new requirement. It was part of the Ten Commandments. But those waiting at the foot of Mt. Sinai were still stiff-necked and rebellious. Moses would lead them to Kadesh-barnea where the spies would be sent into the Promised Land, and with the report, the nation would rebel and be sent back to Mt. Sinai for thirty-eight more years. But this is the book of Deuteronomy, and Moses is delivering this message to a new generation of Israel that is ready to cross the River Jordan and take the Promised Land. To them, Moses gives the requirements for her to possess the Promised Land.

Verse 12. *“¹²Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³and to keep the LORD’s commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?”* (10:12-13).

First, the nation was to “fear the LORD your God.” To “fear” means to have reverence for the LORD. But what does that mean? Reverence means to have respect and awe.

Second, the nation was to “walk in all His ways.” It is a general instruction to do things God’s way and not man’s way.

Third, the nation was to “love Him.” The people were to have an undying affection for the LORD.

Forth, the nation was to “serve the LORD … with all your heart and with all your soul.” The service of the LORD was to consume the heart and soul of each person in the nation. Service to Him was to be their innermost passion and desire.

Fifth, the nation was to “keep the LORD’s commandments and His statutes … for your good.” The commandments and the statutes built on the commandments were pleasing in the eyes of the LORD. He wanted His people to be holy and righteous in an unholly and unrighteous world. Keeping the commandments and statutes of the LORD guaranteed the blessings and great fortune that only the LORD could provide. The LORD would provide all the good in the world for Israel if she kept His laws.

2. The Things that Belong to the LORD

Then Moses said, “Behold....” Today we would say it different. We would say, “Pay attention to this.” That is what “behold” means. Verse 14. *“¹⁴Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it. ¹⁵Yet on your fathers did the LORD set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day.”* (10:14-15).

The LORD owns everything, the heavens, and the earth and everything in both. Yet, He chose a certain part of His creation, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all their descendants, to give his affectionate love. That affectionate love applied to every person standing in front of Moses there on the Plains of Moab. Even they belonged to the LORD, and He loved them. *“Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it.”* All things would be good for Israel if she kept His commandments and statutes because everything belongs to the world anyway. He can give Israel all she needs because He owns all she needs.

3. The Things the LORD Would Not Do

But Moses warned that there were things that the LORD would not do. Verse 16. *“¹⁶So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer. ¹⁷For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe.”* (10:16-17).

When Moses says, “circumcise your heart,” he asks the people to cut away all that is not needed in their lives. The people are to put away the worldly principles and set their hearts on the Divine principles given by the LORD. But, to do that, the Jews had to “stiffen your neck no longer.” People who balk at the laws and do what they want and desire, at their own peril, are said to be *stiffnecked*. The word means *stubborn or obstinate*. Being opposite of *stubborn* meant the people had to regenerate and willing to comply fully with the LORD. But why was that important to the LORD? *“For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe.”* Now we come to the things the LORD would not do. He would not “show partiality nor take a bribe.” *“Partiality”* means a one-sidedness, unjust or unreasonable preference for one party over another. Moses is warning the nation of Israel that even though the LORD chose to love her and care for her, He would not show partiality to her, showing unjust or

unreasonable care for her, if she refused to love Him and follow His laws. Moses used the word “*bribe*.” It means to pilfer, steal, take dishonestly or practice extortion. His warning to Israel is that the nation cannot willfully sin against the LORD and expect the LORD to continue to bless them with His generous gift to meet all their needs. He will not allow Israel to steal from the world and proclaim that God gave her permission because He owns it all and loves the Nation of Israel. Neither will He let the nation's people go through the motions of keeping the law when their hearts are not in it. That would be a bribe to the LORD, and He will not show the nation partiality and bless them.

4. The Things the LORD Would Do

But then Moses turned to the things the LORD would do despite the action of the Nation of Israel. Verse 18. “¹⁸ *He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing.* ¹⁹ *So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.*” (10:18-19).

All around us, there are orphans, widows, and aliens who have nothing and need help. First, we come to the “*orphan*.” Today, we apply the word *orphan* to a child who has lost both parents. But that is not the original meaning of the word. At that time, anyone of any age who lost both parents and biological siblings was considered orphans. An older woman who never married and never had children would be considered an orphan when her parents died. For such a person, the LORD would execute justice.

The word *widow* means a female whose husband has died. In the ancient world, men owned everything, had all the rights to everything, and women were considered property. Widowed women would by necessity fall under the protection of the nearest male relative. But that did not mean the closest male relative would treat her with dignity and respect. The LORD would execute justice for widows who were not cared for righteously.

The word *alien* in Deuteronomy, no matter where you see it, means a person who is not a Jew, specifically a descendant of Jacob through the family of seventy who entered Egypt at the bidding of Joseph at the time of the famine. When entering the Promised Land and taking all the Canaanite territory for their own, non-Canaanites would still live in the land and the Jews. Who would some of these be? All the descendants of Abraham and Isaac, who were not descendants of Jacob, would be called *aliens* because they were part of Israel's Nation. To be specific, for just a moment, all Edomites, the descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother, were *alien*. They were not of the Nation of Israel. Just to list a few more, we must name the Moabites, Ammonites, and Midianites. These were cousins of the Nation of Israel, but not part. The LORD wanted Israel to care for all the non-Canaanite *aliens* living in the Promised Land just as Egypt cared for Israel for most of the four hundred and thirty years she was in Egypt. The care was to be proper care filled with a genuine “*love*” and action. It was not to be lip service alone.

5. The Things Israel Must Do

Israel must do things to obtain all the good the LORD had in store for them in the Promised Land. Verse 20. “²⁰ *You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him and cling to Him, and you shall swear by His name.* ²¹ *He is your praise, and He is your God, who has done these great and awesome things for you which your eyes have seen.* ²² *Your fathers went down to Egypt seventy persons in all, and now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven.*” (10:20-22).

Moses came full circle back to the things Israel must do to stay in the good graces of the LORD. First, “*You shall fear the LORD your God....*” Fear still means reverence as it did in verse 16. He is to be respected with awe.

Second, “*...you shall serve Him and cling to Him....*” In this place, to *serve* means *to render habitual obedience*. Habitual means *it is your inherent nature*. It is what you are and what you do because it is what you think, and it is how you think without having to think about it. We all know what it means

to “cling.” Just as a child clings to the leg of a father or mother, so, too, the Jew was to cling to the LORD.

Third, “... *you shall swear by His name.*” To *swear* means the *promises* that are made because of *His Name*. Israel was to be forever attached to the name of the LORD. Because of that, the LORD required that all promises be made with the knowledge and mindset that Israel represented the LORD; therefore, Israel should represent the LORD well. When you take an oath or sign a pledge, both are promises. Promises should not be given rashly. In the case of signing an oath, pledge, or any kind of agreement, great care must be observed that all things written within the document are truthful and just. But, when it is time to promise, you must do so in *His name*, as His representative. That means you cannot bear a false witness, steal, or covet within the promise.

Forth, “*He is your praise and He is your God ...*” With all your focus on the LORD, you must declare as much with *your praise*. When placed in the first English translations, *praise* meant *to assess, set a price or value on, to prize, to hold in high esteem with great admiration*. It means nothing less here in this verse because the LORD is *your God*. No other nation had seen such mighty works as the Nation of Israel. From the care they found with Joseph as second in command of Egypt until the time they arrived at the Plains of Moab, other nations have seen bits and pieces of the LORD’s care for the nation, but only Israel had seen it all. From the seventy who entered Egypt to the hundreds of thousands that were ready to cross the Jordan River for the Promised Land, the only One they could respect, love, service, promise, and admiration was the LORD God of all creation.

Chapter 11

E. Rewards of Obedience

1. Of the Signs and Wonders You Have Seen

Moses was not through with the things Israel must do when they entered the Promised Land. He continued in chapter 11 with the rewards of Israel’s obedience, and they would be great in every way. Chapter 11, verse 1. “¹*You shall therefore love the LORD your God, and always keep His charge, His statutes, His ordinances, and His commandments.* ²*Know this day that I am not speaking with your sons who have not known and who have not seen the discipline of the LORD your God—His greatness, His mighty hand and His outstretched arm,* ³*and His signs and His works which He did in the midst of Egypt to Pharaoh the king of Egypt and to all his land;* ⁴*and what He did to Egypt’s army, to its horses and its chariots, when He made the water of the Red Sea to engulf them while they were pursuing you, and the LORD completely destroyed them;* ⁵*and what He did to you in the wilderness until you came to this place;* ⁶*and what He did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben, when the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them, their households, their tents, and every living thing that followed them, among all Israel—* ⁷*but your own eyes have seen all the great work of the LORD which He did.”* (11:1-7).

a) The Signs and Works in Egypt

While still in Egypt, the Israelites had seen the LORD inflict the Egyptians with the blood, frogs, gnats, flies, livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and finally, the death of the firstborn. Not one of those plagues bothered an Israelite living in the same vicinity as the Egyptians. What a sign and work that was of the LORD!

b) The Signs and Works at the Red Sea

They were cornered on the sandy beach of Nuweibaa. Egypt, high mountains surrounded them from behind and to the north and the south, mountains fell off into the sea, with only one way in and one way out. The LORD blocked the Egyptian army in the cut, opened the sea, and dried the ground so the nation of Israel could cross. The nation had no choice but to trust the LORD. Down, down further, they went toward the middle of the sea with walls of water on each side standing hundreds of feet high. Up, up, up they climbed the slow slope to settle on the sandy beach on the sea's eastern side. Then, the LORD moved from the cut, and the Egyptian army followed the nation across. Once they were down, down, down in the middle of the sea, with hundreds of feet of water walls on each side, the LORD stopped the wind, and the water fell. And the army of Pharaoh drowned. More incredible signs and works of the LORD.



Site of Red Sea Crossing at the Beach of Nuweibaa, Egypt

c) The Signs and Works in the Wilderness

In the wilderness, the waters of the springs were bitter. A branch made it sweet when the LORD told Moses to throw it in. At Mount Sinai, there was no water. A strike of the rock brought water from the flint that provided for the nation for forty years. Food was needed, so there was manna every day. The meat was needed, so there was quail, three feet deep and as far as the eye could see. There they heard the voice of the LORD speak to the nation from the fire on the mountain. What mighty signs and works of the LORD the nation saw.

d) The Signs and Works with Dathan, Abiram and Reuben

Then there was the rebellion of Dathan, Abiram, and Reuben. The LORD told Moses to have the people stand back and that they indeed needed to do. For the LORD opened the ground and swallowed them all to the tune of about twenty-four thousand people, rebellious men, women, boys, and girls. Has any other nation seen such signs and works? They had not. But Israel had. Sure, Israel would be rewarded for its obedience to the LORD.

2. Of the Difference Between the Land of Egypt and the Land of Israel

But the obedience would also have its rewards in the Promised Land because of the difference between Egypt's land and the land of Israel. Verse 8. *"8 You shall therefore keep every commandment which I am commanding you today, so that you may be strong and go in and possess the land into which you are about to cross to possess it; 9 so that you may prolong your days on the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give to them and to their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey. 10 For the land, into which you are entering to possess it, is not like the land of Egypt from which you came, where you used to sow your seed and water it with your foot like a vegetable garden. 11 But the land into which you are about to cross to possess it, a land of hills and valleys, drinks water from the rain of heaven, 12 a land for which the LORD your God cares; the eyes of the LORD your God are always on it, from the beginning even to the end of the year."* (11:8-12).

Here the LORD has given us a little clue as to life, as it concerns agriculture, in Egypt. There the seeds that the Jews planted had to be nursed along with daily watering. In other words, getting the plants to grow was not an easy task. But in the new Promised Land, with an obedient following of the LORD, He promised that He would care for the seeds' watering to full harvest. Now that is a deal from the LORD.

a) The Warning Concerning Rain or No Rain

But the LORD was not going to make a blanket promise to Israel without a restriction. Moses had a forty-year history with the camp, too, and he knew Israel was a rebellious and stubborn nation

not prone to a life of obedience. Therefore, there was a warning concerning the rain or no rain. Verse 13. “¹³*It shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the LORD your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul, ¹⁴ that He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil. ¹⁵He will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied. ¹⁶Beware that your hearts are not deceived, and that you do not turn away and serve other gods and worship them. ¹⁷Or the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and He will shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its fruit; and you will perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.*” (11:13-17).

Once again, the LORD announces through Moses that the fields' care and watering were totally dependent on their love for Him as their only God. Done! No ands or buts about it. The moment Israel started to worship a false god, the deal was off. No more rain.

b) The Warning Concerning the Words of the LORD

How were the nation's people going to remember to be faithful and obedient to the LORD through every generation to experience the blessing of rain in all seasons for all crops in a year? The LORD through Moses had the warning concerning the words of the LORD. Verse 18. “¹⁸*You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. ¹⁹You shall teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up. ²⁰You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, ²¹so that your days and the days of your sons may be multiplied on the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens remain above the earth.*” (11:18-21).

We saw this same warning almost verbatim in 6:14-19. Impress the LORD's Word in your heart and soul, hold it in your hand, memorize it, keep it at the forefront of your mind, teach it to your sons everywhere you are all day long, and write it on the door frames of your house and your gates. That is how you will remember it. And tell your sons to teach it to their sons. If you live by the LORD's Word, the LORD will take care of you through all times. Simple as that.

c) The Warning Concerning the Promised Land

Then Moses gave the people a warning concerning the Promised Land and their battles to take it for themselves. Verse 22. “²²*For if you are careful to keep all this commandment which I am commanding you to do, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and hold fast to Him, ²³then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you. ²⁴Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours; your border will be from the wilderness to Lebanon, and from the river, the river Euphrates, as far as the western sea. ²⁵No man will be able to stand before you; the LORD your God will lay the dread of you and the fear of you on all the land on which you set foot, as He has spoken to you.*” (11:22-25).

The victory would be easy based on one thing, the Nation of Israel had to be “careful to keep all this commandment ... to love the LORD ... to walk in all His ways ... hold fast to Him.” For that heart among the Jews, the LORD would do the rest.

3. Of the Announcement of the Blessing and the Curse

a) The Warning on the East Side of the Jordan River

To round out this section of Moses' message to the nation there in the Plains of Moab, in Arabah on the east side of the Jordan River, he announced the blessings and curses of the LORD in a warning. Verse 26. “²⁶*See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: ²⁷the blessing if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I am commanding you today; ²⁸and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, by following other gods which you have not known.*” (11:26-28).

Moses promises that the LORD will bless the Nation of Israel beyond all imagination if she remains true and faithful to Him alone as their only God and to exhibit that faithfulness through keeping his commandments. But if the nation ever begins to worship other fake gods, curses will

come, and the blessings will dry up. Moses set this choice before the people on the east side of the Jordan River in the Arabah because as soon as they crossed to the west side of the Jordan River, while still in the Arabah, the LORD requires them to confirm the blessings and the curses.

b) The Requirement on the West Side of the Jordan River

What is the LORD's requirement for the Nation of Israel when they cross to the west side of the Jordan River? Moses gave them the LORD's instruction in verse 29. ²⁹*It shall come about, when the LORD your God brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it, that you shall place the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal.* ³⁰*Are they not across the Jordan, west of the way toward the sunset, in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Arabah, opposite Gilgal, beside the oaks of Moreh?* ³¹*For you are about to cross the Jordan to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall possess it and live in it,* ³²*and you shall be careful to do all the statutes and the judgments which I am setting before you today.*" (11:29-32).

The crossing point of the Jordan River for Israel's nation to traverse was on the west side of the camp in the Plain of Moab. That place would be the point where the nation was "entering to possess" the Promised Land. From where the camp was in the Plains of Moab, the people could see the village of Gilgal in the Arabah across the Jordan. Beyond Gilgal, they could see the peaks of Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. At the foot of the two mounts sat Shechem. The "oaks of Moreh" was the site of the village of Shechem. It was a Canaanite territory.



Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal with Shechem in between.

Nevertheless, once the nation was in Shechem, a ceremony was to take place with the announcements of the LORD's blessings spoken on Mount Gerizim and the announcement of the LORD's curses spoken on Mount Ebal. We will discuss that ceremony in detail when we arrive in Joshua's book and study chapter 8. What a tremendous and moving ceremony it will be for the Nation of Israel: it will be an excellent lesson for us in the future. For now, Moses has completed this part of the message there in the Plains of Moab, and he will now begin his summary of the Laws of the LORD. It is there in chapter 12 that there we will begin our next study.