

Thursday Bible Law Class

Teach them diligently

Teach these commandments
to your children
and talk about them
when you are at home
or out for a walk;
at bedtime
and the first thing
in the morning.
Tie them on your finger;
wear them on your forehead
and write them
on the doorposts
of your house.

from DEUTERONOMY 6:7-9

Deuteronomy 6

5th March 26

This is a significant chapter, as it is quoted in very important ways in the New Testament. One verse was quoted by the Lord Jesus during his temptations in the wilderness, and another was quoted by the Lord Jesus as being the first among all the commandments of God, and has ever since been regarded as the most important Jewish prayer, and forms the

dying words of devout Jews.

So the chapter begins, by laying out the reasons why the commands of God should be kept. First it acknowledges that the commands need to be taught!

Verse 1: *Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord your God commanded to teach you...*

It is not natural to man to want commandments, - to be limited or restrained in any way, and rather also it is certainly not natural for man to want to retain them in the memory, thus the need for teaching, reminding, - why we as the Apostolic Ecclesia emphasise the need for daily reading of the Bible in some form.

The two reasons are given in verse 2:

- 1) To develop a fear of God- fear Hebrew *yare* meaning reverence. Reverence means a deep respect and admiration. So the purpose of keeping God's commandments is not for God to respect you and me, and be grateful we are being obedient! Like we are with our children, but it is the other way around. Keeping God's commandments teaches the Believer to respect and love God, as in keeping the commandments they bring about a noticeable transformation, bringing a closeness with God.
- 2) *...that thy days may be prolonged.* Keeping the commandments instils an ordered and moderated life, which tends towards longevity, but more importantly shows a correlation between obedience and the blessings of God – although as Job was taught this does not always necessarily follow and cannot be taken for granted. Keeping commandments is not to get a reward, but it must be because it is right, and we want to please God regardless of a reward.

However God in His grace is benevolent and generous, and does reward those who reverence Him, and He promised Abraham a reward, blessings amongst which was: Genesis 15:5: *Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.* So God promised this same blessing towards this seed of Abraham in the next verse:

3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that flows with milk and honey.

This endorsement of the Covenant of Abraham to the nation of Israel as whole must not be forgotten – despite what modern ‘Christianity’ and Islam teaches.

The prosperity of nations today depends – we are told - on economic growth, military power, cheap labour force, cheap oil etc... and so the world blunders blindly into World War 3 and violence poverty and death.

By comparison and extreme contrast, Israel is taught the prosperity of the nation is based upon their collective obedience to God. Simple really. It is a reminder to us – the Apostle John writes in 1 John 5:3: *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.*

At the very header of the commencement of the teaching about the commandments is a statement designed to put the commandments into perspective.

God First

4,5 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might...

This is the statement which Jesus, the Son of God taught was the first and great commandment. See Mark 12:29: *And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.*

The command to love God is prefixed by affirming the YAHWEH name. It is in Hebrew: ***Sh'ma Yisrael YHWH Eloheinu YHWH Echad.***

It teaches the Sovereignty of God, and that God is One. It begins with Sh'ma and so is called the Shema, and regarded as the

holiest prayer in Judaism, and the words a Jew will say on their death bed. It is a shame they do not pay as much attention to other commands.

So to break down this statement:

Hear O Israel. Hearing – in Hebrew means to hear intelligently, that is to listen with understanding. O Israel – Israel means a Prince with God.

Yahweh means I will be. Eloheinu means our Mighty Ones. Echad means One, or United.

Hear O Prince with God! I will be our Mighty Ones. I will be united!

Our Brother Mark quoted this on Tuesday during the Bible Class showing the apostasy of the teaching of the trinity. The Trinitarians get into muddles over this claiming that it proves Yahweh is plural! Instead, it is a statement of intent and teaches God Manifestation – How God will manifest or make Himself known – in a multitude.

Therefore, it neatly sums up the very purpose for the giving of His commands. Here He is promising the covenanted people, that if they keep His commands, they will become Elohim, - Mighty Ones, - and part of the YAHWEH name, united to Him. Taken literally the statement even teaches that Yahweh is one, no room for three!

God teaches in Isaiah 45:5: *I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me* – no God the Son, no supernatural devil, no God the Holy Spirit. Again, simple really.

As to the first command itself – Thou shalt love the Lord thy God... it is so described to exclude all else. There is no room for any other. It is human nature to try and squeeze in other ‘loves’ – but the command is powerful: with all thy

- Heart

- Soul
- Mind
- Strength

The love of God to be all consuming. As humans, it is very hard to do this, as by nature curiosity, laziness, greed, lust, boredom and so the list goes on, dilutes the heart, soul, mind and strength, and the love is compromised, so that God fades from the mind altogether. It is very sad indeed.

So recognising this utter calamity, the intrusion of sin, into the greatest love affair ever, how to overcome the serpent reasoning, God in His love, goes on to show how this command can be kept:

7 You shall teach them diligently unto thy children, and shall talk of them when you

- Sit in your house
- Walk by the way
- Lie down
- Get up

Teach diligently – ever active, busily, and not to stop teaching the children – in teaching the younger generation it does the job for two generations, reminds the adults, and instructs the children. Talking about these commands, in and out of the house, going about daily work, resting and getting back out to the days chores again, still talking about the commands – not literally repeating them over and over again, but that the subject matter is explored, and **how** those commands are put into practise –

Talking and teaching the commands in short means to live within them. Demonstrate the commands by showing how, is the best way to teach – by example – and the benefits of the love with the heart mind, soul and strength will surely follow:

1 John 4:16: *And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

8,9: *And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.*

Taking things literally and missing the spirit of the law is what the Jews were and still are very good at. So they get the words *Sh'ma Yisrael YHWH Eloheinu YHWH Echad*, change it to *Sh'ma Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad* (just in case they accidentally take the name of YHWH in vain) write them on a little piece of paper, roll it up, and poke it into a little tube, and stick it literally to the doorpost, (called *mezuzah*) and also into a little box and strap it to their heads. They touch the tube (called *tefillin* – and in the new Testament - see Matthew 23:5 called phylacteries) for good luck and blessings from God, and wear the box on the head, but still rip down Arab olive trees, smash up Arab houses, send missiles to Iran, and bulldoze their neighbours countries, but it is ok, as they have the *shema* on their heads. That sort of behaviour, we can be sure, is not what God had in mind. The same goes for us as well, so a reading of Romans 11 is a good exercise.

Moving on into the chapter, Moses reminds them of how easy it is to forget the Word and commandments of God, when distractions and prosperity arrives!

10 *And it shall be, when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land...* (we note the word when – there is no ‘ifs’ or ‘buts’ – even though the nation had already proved their unworthiness of the covenant, God was still unrelenting in His graciousness and unwavering in His Word, and would keep His side of the covenant

and bring them into the land of promise – for the sake of the Covenant) -

When they arrive in the land and receive ready-built cities, and ready-built houses, full of nice furniture, previous owners all run away, leaving all belongings behind, - thank you very much, and ooh out in the fields well kept olive trees, and nice vineyards, and even wells of water a plenty, - what a nice change from the wandering around in dusty mountainous sandy desert, ah, now we can relax and enjoy!

Isn't this the worst time? Everything just so, it is in fact so tempting to no longer bother, and forget the disciplined scripture study, too busy having a good life! ooh and over there, they spied the gods that the previous owners left behind, 'let's worship them instead' and so Israel fell quickly away, because of distraction.

But here in this chapter, Moses tells them to beware of this situation, and lo and behold, it exactly happened. Even though, they strapped the words to their heads! Reading through this actual history, one cannot but marvel at the perfidiousness of human nature – how disloyal, so much infidelity, and duplicity, we can see it in Israel of old, but this is recorded for our benefit.

Moses warned that it would happen and it did. To counter such a situation, and even a way back, Moses repeated the need to give the next generation a chance, and an opportunity, and in so doing it provided a way for repentance -

20 And when thy son asks you in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you?

It would give them an opportunity to explain their history, their salvation from Egypt, the special redemption, and covenant which had been made, and that the very purpose of these

commands – which may have seemed so onerous and complicated to some – were for their good – for their good always (v24) and for their very lives.

We note the last verse:

25 And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us.

In the event, not a single member of the nation, not even Moses, not Joshua kept all these commandments. So there was no righteousness earned by them. Righteousness could not be ascribed to them. So the Apostle says:

Romans 3:10: *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

Only one man, a Jew, who truly manifest himself as a Mighty One, who loved God with all heart, soul, mind and strength at the exclusion of all else, sacrificing even his body, who kept the law in his head (not on) and in every aspect of his life fulfilled the law and commands of God, and that man – was the one who God sent, to save His people from their sins, Jesus Christ The Righteous. It is only by his righteousness we can be saved, and not our own. See Philipians 3:9 and Titus 3:5.

Brother Terry