

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL

Deuteronomy 6–8

Memory Verse: *“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might”* (Deut. 5:5 ESV).

Background Helps:

Here are some miscellaneous comments on this week's readings:

Deuteronomy 6

- Notice the emphasis on obedience to God (e.g., 6:1-3, 17, 24-25), especially obedience to the great commandment to “love the LORD your God” (6:5), which is our memory verse.
- Moses instructs Israel to avoid idolatry (6:14-15), because the LORD is one (6:4) and he is a jealous God (6:15).
- Moses emphasizes that these commandments should be passed by parents to the next generation: 6:2, 6-9, 20-25.
- Moses gives these instructions to Israel so that they will not miss out on the blessings of the covenant that God made with their forefathers—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—to give them the Promised Land of Canaan: 6:3, 10, 18-19, 23. Thus we see that the covenant God established with Israel through Moses is based on his earlier covenant with Abraham.

Deuteronomy 7

- Moses warns the people not to make any covenant with the peoples of the land of Canaan or to intermarry with them. Why? Because these nations would turn the Israelites away to serve other gods (7:1-5).
- Moses reminds Israel about the covenant God made with their forefathers. Israel is God's chosen people, and he has set his love on them to fulfill “the oath that he swore to [their] fathers” (7:8) to multiply the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and give them the land of Canaan (Ex. 32:13). “The LORD . . . is a faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations” (7:9). If the people obey the LORD “. . . [he] will keep with you the covenant and steadfast love that he swore to your fathers. He will love you, bless you, and multiply you . . . in the land that he swore to your fathers to give you” (7:12-13).
- The “great and awesome God” will enable Israel to dispossess the nations from Canaan, so that Israel can occupy the land God promised to them (7:17-26).

Deuteronomy 8

- Moses refers to the covenant with the patriarchs once again: “The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers” (8:1).
- Moses reminds the people how God had dealt with them during their forty years of wilderness wandering (8:2-6) and promises them abundant blessing in the good land he is giving to them (8:7-10).

- He warns them, in their pride, not to forget the LORD and all he has done for them (8:11-20): “You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers” (8:18).

Lesson Helps:

Three possible lesson approaches:

1. A possible aim for children’s classes: My students will learn how we demonstrate our love for God by obedience, so that they will obey him. Build this proposed lesson around the memory verse, the great commandment to love God in Deuteronomy 6:5. By the end of class, your students should have memorized this verse. Use selected verses from the rest of Deuteronomy 6–8 to show (1) how we demonstrate our love for God by obedience and (2) how Moses applied this principle to the nation of Israel. Use Matthew 22:34-40 to show that Jesus called Deuteronomy 6:5 “the great commandment of the Law.” Urge your students to express their love to God by obedience to him. Show them how this obedience is made possible for us under the new covenant when God writes his law on our hearts through the work of the Holy Spirit (Jer. 31:31-34). “Kids, it’s impossible in our own strength to love God and obey his commandments, but the Holy Spirit will help us. Let’s ask him to do that now in prayer.”
2. Another possible aim for any class: My students will learn about God’s covenant promise to give Israel the land of Canaan, so that they will obey the him. Study the many references in Deuteronomy 6–8 to God’s covenant promise of the land of Canaan to the patriarchs (see under Background Helps above). Also, study the many exhortations to obedience in these chapters. Moses ties this covenant blessing of the land to the obedience of the people (e.g., Deut. 7:12ff.). Many of our blessings from God are also dependent on our obedience to him, an obedience that is made possible for us under the new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34).
3. A possible aim for a class of parents and/or grandparents: My students will learn about their responsibility to pass God’s commands to future generations, so that they will teach them to their children and grandchildren. This lesson would focus attention on Deuteronomy 6:2, 4-9, 20-25, showing parents and grandparents how they can use everyday instruction from the Bible and their own personal testimony to influence their children and grandchildren toward a life of obedience. Other verses in Deuteronomy 6–8 could be used to emphasize the principle of teaching our children to obey, an obedience made possible under the new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34).

Home Assignment:

 Read Deuteronomy 9–11.

 Memorize Deuteronomy 10:12 ESV.