

## GOD'S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL

### Deuteronomy 9–11

**Memory Verse:** *“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, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul”* (Deut. 10:12 ESV).

#### Background Helps:

In this week's readings Moses continues to “preach” to the people of Israel, encamped on the eastern side of the Jordan River. God's chosen nation is on the threshold of entering and possessing the Promised Land (Deut. 9:1-3). Deuteronomy 9–11 falls into two main sections:

1. Deuteronomy 9:1–10:11 is largely a look back at the incident of the golden calf recorded in Exodus 32–34: “Hear, O Israel . . .” (Deut. 9:1). On that occasion the people broke the covenant God had made with them through Moses, summarized in the Ten Commandments, which were inscribed on two stone tablets by the finger of God (9:9-11). The only reason God did not destroy the nation at that time was because of Moses' intercession. He pleaded with the LORD on the basis of God's earlier covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (9:5, 25-29). (See additional references to that earlier promise in 9:3 and 10:11.) God heard Moses' prayer, did not destroy the people, and reissued the Ten Commandments on two more stone tablets (10:1-5, 10-11).
2. Deuteronomy 10:12–11:32 is largely a series of exhortations to the people of Israel about their relationship to the LORD, enforced by various incentives. God gives these exhortations in view of the nation's future occupation of the Promised Land: “And now, Israel . . . (10:32). Notice the following exhortations all having to do with Israel's relationship to God:
  - “Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good? (10:12-13, including our memory verse.)
  - “You shall fear the LORD your God. You shall serve him and hold fast to him, and by his name you shall swear” (10:20).
  - “You shall therefore love the LORD your God and keep his charge, his statutes, his rules, and his commandments always” (11:1).
  - “And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul . . .” (11:13).
  - “For if you will be careful to do all this commandment that I command you to do, loving the LORD your God, walking in all his ways, and holding fast to him . . .” (11:22).

Moses gives many incentives for the people to obey these exhortations including his past acts of love for Israel (10:14-15, 21-22), the threat of discipline for disobedience (11:1-7, 16-17), and the promise of blessing for obedience (11:8-15, 22-25). At the end of the section (11:26-32), the LORD sets before them the blessing and the curse: a blessing for obedience and a curse for disobedience.

Notice again the obligation of parents to pass on these commandments to future generations (11:18-21), and observe the frequent references in this section to the covenant promises that God had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (10:22; 11:9, 21, 25).

### **Lesson Helps:**

Here are three possible approaches to this week's material (similarly to last week):

1. A possible aim for children's classes: My students will learn how God renewed his covenant with Israel after the incident of the golden calf, so that they will love and obey the LORD. This lesson would review the story of the golden calf from several weeks ago (see Ex. 32-34), which is exactly what Moses does in Deuteronomy 9:4-10:5, 10-11. After Moses' intercession for the people, this story climaxes with God's etching the Ten Commandments on two more stone tablets, thereby reestablishing his covenant with Israel. (Post the Ten Commandments on two "stone" tablets in your class.) What should our response be to such grace? See Deuteronomy 10:12-13, which includes our memory verse. Urge your students to love and obey this gracious Lord.
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 love and obey him. Study the many references in Deuteronomy 9-11 to God's covenant promise of the land of Canaan (see under Background Helps above). Also, study the many exhortations to love and obey God in these chapters (also, see above). Moses ties this covenant blessing of the land to the obedience of the people (e.g., Deut. 11:8-15, 22-32.). Many of our blessings from God also depend on our obedience to him, an obedience that is made possible for us by 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 11:18-21, showing parents and grandparents how they can use everyday instruction from the Bible to influence their children and grandchildren toward a life of obedience, an obedience made possible under the new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34).

### **Home Assignment:**

-  Read Deuteronomy 29-31.
-  Memorize Romans 10:9 ESV.