

Deuteronomy 5 – The Importance of God’s Law

Introduction: We will look tonight at the beginning of Moses’ second speech (by far the longest). We will focus especially on the importance of God’s law and the attitude that the Israelites needed to have toward it. In addition, we will make the appropriate applications to our own lives, as we are also children of God.

- Deuteronomy 5:1-5
 - o Moses is about to recall the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai (Horeb)
 - o What is the attitude that the Israelites needed to have toward God’s Law?
 - In verse 1, “Be careful to do them”
 - Last time we studied chapters 1-4 and focused especially on the idea of diligent obedience to the Lord (always looking out for trials, not being idle, etc.)
 - Notice in chapter 4:1-40 (the end of Moses’ first speech) the same ideas (give a few minutes to skim through and notice similar phrases)
 - Deuteronomy 4:5-6 – Be careful that you are an example to other nations
 - Deuteronomy 4:9 – Be careful so that you do not forget what God has done, and so that you teach them to those who come after you
 - Deuteronomy 4:15, 19 – Be careful not to be distracted by idols
 - Deuteronomy 4:23 – Be careful not to forget about God
 - Notice other uses of this phrase (and similar) in following chapters
 - Deuteronomy 5:1 – Be careful to learn and do the commandments
 - Deuteronomy 5:32 – Be careful so as not to turn to the left or right
 - Deuteronomy 6:3 – Be careful so that it will be well with you
 - Deuteronomy 6:25 – Be careful so you are considered righteous by God
 - Deuteronomy 8:1 – Be careful so that you can take the land
 - o Notice that the point of hearing and learning the commandments is not simply to have knowledge, but to allow the commandments to directly affect how we think, speak, and act (“observe them”)
 - o Why would it be so important that the Israelites “be careful” to obey the Law?
 - Temptations would not always be obvious to them
 - It would be very easy for them to fall prey to idolatry, complaining, and unfaithfulness if they were not careful to be focused on God – Deuteronomy 11:16
 - o Notice verse 3: the Lord’s covenant lasts forever, and it is a covenant which is between the Lord and His people for all time
 - o Notice verse 4: He spoke “face to face” with the people – what does this mean?
 - This is not a God who is distant and impersonal, setting laws up and leaving us alone
 - Instead, God, by His own description, seeks to know us “face to face”
 - o Notice the people’s reaction to God’s power in verse 5 (they are afraid, similar to the way the people were afraid of Jesus’ power demonstrated in Mark 4-5)
- Deuteronomy 5:6-11
 - o Why does God choose to give the Ten Commandments in this order?
 - It seems that one in a sense “encapsulates” the other
 - If one is careful to do each of the earlier commands, the later commands will already be observed
 - o What is interesting about the way God describes the way He rewards and punishes people in verses 9-10 (notice especially the degrees of each)?

- Hatred for God (disobedience) brings punishment “to the third and fourth”
 - Love for God (obedience) brings mercy “to the thousandth”
- Deuteronomy 5:12-15
 - Note the activities to take place on the Sabbath day
 - They have six days to do all of “their” work
 - On the Sabbath, they were to “do no work” – i.e. do none of their own work
 - They were to remember that they had been slaves in Egypt
 - The Sabbath was not a day of doing nothing – it was a day of holiness and one that was to be devoted to the Lord; it was something that needed to be “observed”
- Deuteronomy 5:16-22
 - Not only were the people to obey and honor God, but they were also to honor their parents (note the extra promise that is given in this particular commandment)
 - What progression do you see in the commandments given in verses 17-21?
 - Expansion of their circle of responsibility
 - The “worst” sins are listed first
 - For consideration: the phrase, “and He added no more” – None more was needed (consider Jesus in Matthew 22:36-40)
 - Why do you suppose God gave the commandments on tablets of stone? (Permanence)
- Deuteronomy 5:23-27
 - What kind of attitude do we see in the people of Israel as they respond to the voice of the Lord in the midst of the fire, etc.? (Humble, reverent, etc.)
 - They seem to recognize the special privilege that they enjoy in having an audience with God, but are afraid because they recognize His power
 - They are so struck with the power of God that they claim that they will do anything that God tells them to do (see verse 27)
- Deuteronomy 5:28-33
 - God praises the people; as they have spoken correctly concerning themselves and God
 - What does God wish for in verse 29? Why?
 - That the people would always have this attitude toward Him and His law
 - By fearing God and keeping His commandments, things would go well for the people of Israel
 - God tells Moses (who will shortly share with the people) that they must obey God completely, but strictly – they cannot turn to the right side or to the left