

# Deuteronomy 6:1-6

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- 6.1 וְזָמַתְּ הַמִּצְוָה הַחֲקִים<sup>a</sup> וְהַמְשַׁפְּטִים אֲשֶׁר<sup>1</sup> צִוְּיָה יְהוָה  
 אֶל־הַיְכָלְכֶם לְלַמֵּד אֶתְכֶם<sup>2</sup> לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ  
 אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם<sup>4</sup> עֹבְרִים שָׁמָּה<sup>5</sup> לְרִשְׁתָּהּ:  
 6.2 א<sup>a</sup> לְמַעַן<sup>6</sup> תִּירָא אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ<sup>7</sup> לְשָׁמֹר אֶת־כָּל־חֻקֹּתָיו<sup>b</sup> וּמִצְוֹתָיו  
 אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי<sup>8</sup> מְצַוְּךָ<sup>c</sup> אֹתָהּ<sup>d</sup> וּבְנֶךָ<sup>d</sup> וּבֶן־בְּנֶךָ<sup>d</sup> כָּל־  
 יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ וּלְמַעַן<sup>9</sup> יֵאָרְכוּ יְמֶיךָ:  
 6.3 וְשָׁמַעְתָּ יִשְׂרָאֵל<sup>10</sup> וְשָׁמַרְתָּ<sup>11</sup> לַעֲשׂוֹת אֲשֶׁר<sup>a</sup> יִיטֵב לְךָ<sup>13</sup>  
 וְאֲשֶׁר<sup>14</sup> תִּרְבֹּן מְאֹד<sup>b</sup> כַּאֲשֶׁר<sup>c</sup> דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי  
 אֲבֹתֶיךָ לְךָ<sup>d</sup> אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ פִּי־  
 6.4 שָׁמַע<sup>a</sup> יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:  
 6.5 וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל־מְאֹדְךָ:  
 6.6 וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי<sup>8</sup> מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם עַל־לִבְבְּךָ:

## VERBALS

#	Root	Parsing	Weakness	Meaning	Syntax
1	צוה	Piel Perf. 3ms	ע"ו ל"ה	command	Relative Cl. Adjective
2	למד	Piel Inf. Const. + ל	strong	teach	Purpose/Meaning?
3	עשה	Qal Inf. Const. + ל	פ' ל"ה	do	D.O. / Comparative?
4	עור	Qal Act Part. (m.pl.)	פ' ע"ו	go over	Rel. Clause Adjective
5	ירש	Qal Inf. + ל + 3fs obj.	פ"י	subdue	Purpose
6	ירא	Qal Impf. 2ms	פ"י ל"א	fear	Purpose
7	שמר	Qal Inf. Const + ל	strong	keep	Means / Purpose
8	צוה	Piel Ptc. + 2ms	ע"ו ל"ה	command	Rel. Clause Adjective
9	ארך	Hi. Impf. 3mp + parag. נ	פ"א	prolong	Purpose
10	שמע	Qal Pf. 2ms + ו	ל'	hear	Main Verb
11	שמר	Qal Pf. 2ms + ו	strong	keep	Main Verb
12	עשה	Qal Inf. Const. + ל	ל"ה פ'	do	Compl. / Purpose
13	יטב	Qal Impf. 3ms	פ'	be good	Purpose / Result
14	רבה	Qal Impf. 2mp	ל"ה	be great	"
15	דבר	Piel Pf. 3ms	strong	promise	Comparative
16	זוב	Qal Act. Ptc. + f.s. Const.	strong	flow	Adjective
17	שמע	Qal Imptv. 2ms	ל'	hear	Main Verb
18	אהב	Qal Pf. 2ms	פ"א	love	M. Verb/ Consequence
19	היה	Qal Pf. 3cp	all weak	be	M. Verb/ Consequence

## CRITICAL NOTES:

### 1<sup>a</sup> V<sup>Ken9</sup> pc Mss & S' וְהָ, Q וְחָקִים

Kendicott's Hebrew manuscript #9 and a few Septuagint and Syriac manuscripts add “and,” and the Qumran scrolls add “and” and omit “the.” Whether or not there's an “and” or a “the” before “statutes” in “This is the command, the statutes, and the judgements,” does not make a difference. It's obviously a list of three things which Moses delivered to the people. The definite article and the conjunction help lend parallelism to the list, so I'd keep the -הָ and, since proper English would not use an “and” in the second of a list of three anyway, and since there's not overwhelming support for it, I'd leave the -וְ out, as it is in the Masoretic Text.

### 2<sup>a</sup> > Q

Absent in Qumran scrolls. לְמַעַן = “in order that / to the end that” The omission of this word changes the phrase “you should fear Jehovah” from a purpose clause to an independent main clause (and also gives the hope of a Main Verb in this long sentence!). It doesn't significantly change the meaning, however, because the link between fearing God and keeping His commandments which is detached from v.1 by the omission nevertheless remains in verse 2b. However, due to lack of support for an omission, I think we should keep the word in there.

### 2<sup>b</sup> u חָקִיו

It looks like the Samaritan Pentateuch uses a masculine form of the word “statute” whereas the Masoretic Text uses a feminine form. I wouldn't change on the sole testimony of this source. According to Davidson, the masculine form can have a wider range of meaning, but they can both mean “statute,” so this isn't a significant disagreement.

### 2<sup>c</sup> Ms Q u & הַיּוֹם +

Qumran, Samaritan Pentateuch, and Septuagint add “today /this day.” This is well-supported and perhaps should be changed. It would fit the theme in the next phrase about “all the days of your life” and provide a nice contrast — these commands given TODAY and to ALL THE DAYS of your life. On the other hand, it could be a gloss to reconcile v.2 with v.6.

### 2<sup>d-d</sup> & V pl

Septuagint and Vulgate read plural. Textual changes found only in translations do not make a convincing case for changing the Hebrew text. Obviously the commandments are not only for one son but for all the sons (and daughters!) you have, but the entirety of v.2 is in the singular, perhaps to drive home the application to each individual or to emphasize the unity of the nation.

### 3<sup>a</sup> Q כְּאֲשֶׁר

Qumran scrolls add “as,” but a comparative doesn't make sense here. Probably a scribal error confusing the אֲשֶׁר in the next line which has the כִּי prefix with the אֲשֶׁר on this line which shouldn't have the prefix.

### 3<sup>b</sup> u S V sg

Samaritan Pentateuch, Syriac, and Vulgate, read singular. The Masoretic Text is in the plural “y'all will multiply,” which seems out-of-keeping with all the singular “you's” in this verse. Apparently these three translations either intentionally or unintentionally corrected this aberration. I still think that we should keep the M.T. because even though the “you's” are mostly singular, it is really addressing a plural audience – the whole nation of Israel.

### 3<sup>c</sup> Q מואדה

Qumran scrolls apparently read a variant of the same word מואד found in the M.T. No big deal.

### 3<sup>d</sup> Ⓞ pr δοῦναι, S + *dntl lk* = **dare tibi; prb nonn vb exc, cf 26,15 27,3.**

Septuagint adds “to give” before “to you,” the Syriac adds “he gives to you;” and the editor suggests that probably several words were dropped out. Compare the M.T. wording, “Jehovah promised ... a land,” with the Septuagint and Syriac, “Jehovah promised ... to give ... a land.” Added to the fact that the Sept. and Syr. are less reliable simply because they are translations is the fact that the M.T. consistently uses the same wording in parallel passages (Deuteronomy 26:15 “... as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.” and Deut. 27:3 “... a land flowing with milk and honey, as Jehovah, the God of thy fathers, hath promised thee.”) So it is most likely that the Sept. and Syr. just added a word not in the original. See next critical note on the words dropped out.

### 4<sup>a</sup> Ⓞ pr nonn vb

Septuagint puts after several words. Sept. reads, “... a land flowing with milk and with honey; *and these are the ordinances and the judgements, which the LORD commanded the children of Israel in the wilderness when they had gone forth from the land of Egypt.* Hear, O Israel ...” (Italics mine to emphasize what was added.) This is too long to be a gloss or a haplography. It may be some kind of oral or textual tradition which was either unknown to – or discounted by – the Masorites. It basically repeats v.1 except that it steps back in time from Israel just about to enter Caanan to Israel just escaped from Egypt. It may be significant textually, but not in terms of Biblical teaching.

## ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS:

NAW: 1 Now this is the commandment, the statutes, and the judgements which Jehovah your God commanded<sup>1</sup> to teach<sup>2</sup> y'all to do<sup>3</sup> in the land which you are going over<sup>4</sup> there to possess<sup>5</sup> it 2 to the end that you may fear<sup>6</sup> Jehovah your God to keep<sup>7</sup> all His statutes and His commandments which I am commanding<sup>8</sup> you [today] – you, and your son and your grandson – all the days of your life, and to the end that your days may last long<sup>9</sup>. 3 And, Israel, you will hear<sup>10</sup> and you will take care<sup>11</sup> to do<sup>12</sup> *them* so that it may go well<sup>13</sup> for you and that y'all may be very great<sup>14</sup> – just as Jehovah, the God of your fathers promised<sup>15</sup> you a land gushing<sup>16</sup> milk and honey. 4 **Hear<sup>17</sup>, O Israel, Jehovah our God is the one Jehovah,** 5 so love<sup>18</sup> Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words which I am commanding<sup>8</sup> you today shall be<sup>19</sup> on your heart...

KJV: 1 Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might to *them* in the land whither ye go to possess it: 2 That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. 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 floweth with milk and honey. 4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: 5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

ASV: 1 Now this is the commandment, the statutes, and the ordinances, which Jehovah your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it; 2 that thou mightest fear Jehovah thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. 3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as Jehovah, the God of thy fathers, hath promised unto thee, in a land flowing with

milk and honey. 4 Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah: 5 and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart;

NAS: 1 “Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded *me* to teach you, that you might do *them* in the land where you are going over to possess it, 2 so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. 3 O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do *it*, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, *in* a land flowing with milk and honey. 4 Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! 5 And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart;

NIV: 1 These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, 2 so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. 3 Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of our fathers, promised you. 4 Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

## **INTRO: RELATIONSHIP TO THE COVENANT:**

The book of Deuteronomy is a series of three addresses which Moses gives to the Israelites before they cross the Jordan into the promised land. It is primarily a review of the law (Deutero-“second” nomy-“law”) which God had given to Israel in the summary form of the 10 commandments and the expanded form of the case laws mediated through Moses. The word “command” figures prominently in this passage (5x).

This Mosaic law can be called a covenant because it was unilaterally given from God to man, it defines a relationship between God and man, and it contains blessings and curses. In Ex. 34:28 and Deut. 4:13, the Decalogue is explicitly called “the covenant.” This installment of the covenant receives fuller elaboration in the Bible than any other. (O. Palmer Robertson)

The Mosaic law is the next installment of God’s covenant after Abraham. It builds on the Abrahamic covenant in that it was given at a time when part of the Abrahamic and Noatic Covenant promises had been fulfilled – Israel had been in bondage to Egypt and escaped and now was a great nation. Israel was now about to enter into its promised land, and all the surrounding nations were very impressed with the God of Israel after hearing of all He had done for Israel (G. Vos). As this new nation entered this new land, it needed a good legal system. O. Palmer Robertson also mentions that the Mosaic Covenant builds on the former installments of the covenant in that it gives more detail about who God is and what He expects of His covenant people so that the relationship between God and man can be deeper. He compares the law to a portrait which outlines the features of God so that we can clearly see the shape of the one with whom we are to be in fellowship. In the Abrahamic Covenant, God demanded a total commitment of life from Abraham (“walk before me and be blameless” Gen. 17:1) but here in the Mosaic law, we have a detailed elaboration of what that means (Robertson). Thus the Mosaic Covenant is clearly in the line of progressive revelation from the Abrahamic Covenant.

The Mosaic law-covenant also sets the stage for future installments of the covenant. Its principles hold true for all time – they will be the basis for judgement at Christ’s Second coming. But rather than a regression back to the Covenant of Works, as Robertson says, we have two new elements:

1. The purpose of the law is no longer probationary; it is now a given that man is a sinner, so the purpose of the law is to bring man in humility before God
2. The penalty of the law is no longer ultimate, there is now provision for forgiveness through a sacrificial system which points to Christ.

Vos expounds on this point, “The legal system is shot through with strands of gospel and grace and faith ... every sacrifice and every lustration proclaimed the principle of grace ... the Gospel of Moses is the ceremonial law!” Vos also notes the striking ways in which Moses is a type of Christ and the fact that the blessings of the Mosaic Covenant were not based upon the good works of the people but upon God’s grace, for Israel had already been delivered out of Egypt and granted nationhood before the law was given, and later on, God allowed blessings to continue to the nation even when it deserved judgement, and even when He did bring judgement, the nation was graciously restored. Not only that, but the concept of a kingdom of the heart was also present in incipient form in the Law, as God calls His people to love him and God seeks people after His own heart (DFZ). The Mosaic Covenant is clearly part of the Covenant of Grace and a pre-installment of the “New Testament” of Christ yet to come.

## **COMMENTARY:**

### 6.1 וְנָתַתְּ הַמִּצְוֹת הַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים

*I Now this is the commandment, the statutes, and the judgements*

The word “commandment” is singular in the Hebrew, but the KJV and NIV pluralize it to fit the parallel of the three words for the Mosaic law-covenant, since the other two are plural. In Deut. 5, Moses has just reviewed the 10 commandments, and now he is transitioning into the case-law expansion on the 10 commandments, so, according to the Soncino commentary, Moses is not only summing up the decalogue but also including “all the other commandments besides the decalogue concerning which the Israelites asked Moses to be the intermediary.”

A study of Harris, Archer, and Waltke’s *Theological Wordbook on the O.T.* brings out the following points: The three words, “commands, statutes, and judgements” are often found in sequence (Deut. 8:11, 11:1, 30:16, II Sam 22:23, I Ki. 2:3, Jer. 44:23, etc.) and they may not necessarily be delineating different things, however, the following nuances of meaning can be noted:

**הַמִּצְוֹת** COMMANDMENT: instruction based on the authority to rule. Can refer to the terms of a contract or a covenant. Obedience brings blessing, disobedience brings curses and need for atonement. They are not to be changed, but must be remembered and obeyed and passed down to the next generation by oral instruction and writing.

**הַחֻקִּים** STATUTES: from the root meaning “to engrave,” hence a decree, following the practice of a ruler to carve his rules in stone and set them in a public place. Usually interchangeable with Torah, Mishpat, and Mitsvah. (NIV=“decrees”) Used of demands God makes on His covenant people, also for the laws of nature governing sea and stars, and even for duties imposed by man: legal rights, privileges, dues, and customs.

**הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים** JUDGEMENTS: exercise of the entire process of judgement. (NIV=“laws”) Eastern mindset doesn’t divorce the concept of law from the personality of the ruler/judge. Can connote legislative action (a sentence issuing from a magistrate’s court), executive action (punishment), and judicial action (determining what is right and fair). As law, it connotes the “just claims” of God who is the source of all justice. Used of Torah and of individual Mosaic ordinances.

**אֲשֶׁר<sup>1</sup> צִוְּיָהּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם לְלַמֵּד אֶתְכֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת**

*which Jehovah your God commanded<sup>1</sup> to teach<sup>2</sup> y'all to do<sup>3</sup>*

After Israel asked Moses to be the intermediary between them and God in the delivering of the law, God instructed Moses with the law and commanded Moses to teach it to the Israelites. Note that the “you” here is plural: the commands are being given to millions of people.

**בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ:**

*in the land which you are going over<sup>4</sup> there to possess<sup>5</sup> it.*

These laws are to govern the covenant people in their new land. Israel is on the banks of the Jordan, getting ready to cross into the Promised Land and take it over. The verb includes more than just “going” (KJV) but actually “going over;” the NIV “crossing” is fine, but the word “Jordan” is not in this verse! I rendered this verse as literally as I could, including the words “there” and “it” which different English translations drop out because they make for awkward English; keeping them seems to underscore the difference between the Transjordan that the Israelites are currently standing on and the Promised land which they have yet to go over and take. The **שָׁמָּה** has a locative He on the end of it (Owen) and can be considered spatially “where” or temporally “when” (Holladay). The word **רִשְׁתָּהּ** “possess” has to do with subduing and bringing under submission.

**6.2 לְמַעַן תִּירָא אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ**

*2 to the end that you may fear<sup>6</sup> Jehovah your God*

The purpose for the giving of the law is so that Israel will fear God. The concept of fear is not merely being afraid of something, but also of showing respect and worshipping. Do YOU fear God?

Although the “you” in v.1 was plural, the pronoun switches to singular for the entirety of verse two. This is one point where the KJV and ASV help with the old English distinctions between the singular “thou” and the plural “you!” The singular pronoun treats the millions of Israelites as an individual unit – a nation, but it may also be used to drive home the application of what Moses is saying to each individual in the crowd. “Jehovah is YOUR God,” says Moses; he will later say “our God” in v.4, but for now he’s driving home the fact that every individual must acknowledge Jehovah as their own.

**לְשָׁמֵר אֶת־כָּל־חֻקֹּתָיו וּמִצְוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ**

*to keep<sup>7</sup> all His statutes and His commandments which I am commanding<sup>8</sup>*

How do we treat the infinitive “to keep”? The construction allows for some latitude in interpretation. I took the Lamed prefix as *directive* “fearing God leads us INTO keeping His law.” Holladay takes it as an indication of specificity: “fear God, OR TO BE MORE SPECIFIC, keep His law.” The NIV’s interpretation of *means* is also good; “fear God BY keeping His law.” Whatever the exact relationship, there is no doubt that there IS a relationship between fearing/worshipping/loving God and obeying/keeping his commandments (cf. I John 5:3). If we are God’s people, we must keep His commandments, and, like Moses, we should be faithful to teach God’s commandments to others.

אַתָּה וּבִנְךָ וּבֶן-בְּנֶךָ כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ

*you [today] – you, and your son and your grandson – all the days of your life,*

Moses is in effect saying, “Despite the fact that I’m using ‘you’ in the singular, these commandments are not just for you on this day, but for all people throughout all time.” The covenant is a family institution as fathers are instructed that this covenant is not only for them but also for their children and grandchildren and, just a few verses later, they are commanded to teach it to their children! This phrase, “you, your son, and your son’s son” is actually the subject of the verb at the beginning of this verse “that you may fear;” Keil & Delitzsch say that this placement of the subject at the end of the verse is for emphasis. We should make it a point to keep God’s ways every day of our lives and also teach our children God’s ways!

וְלִמְעַן יֵאָרְכּוּ יְמֵיךָ:

*and to the end that your days may last long<sup>9</sup>.*

“Not only would the knowledge of God’s commands achieve for them and their descendants fear of God and fulfillment of His will, but it would also assure them a long and settled life in the land of their inheritance” (Soncino). This may be hard for Westerners to relate to, but the desire to live a long life is considered about the best blessing a man can have in cultures where age is treated with special honor. The first purpose for which God gave the commands was more God’s purpose, and perhaps a purpose that Israel wouldn’t be too thrilled about, but God really relates to His people with this one, showing that to be in concert with His desires will also fulfil our human desires – see also v.3 “it will go well for you and you will be very great.”

The verb יֵאָרְכּוּ “be long” (with a paragoric Nun at the end) is not in the Niphal stem, so I tried to avoid a passive connotation. It’s actually a Hiphil stem “they will cause to lengthen” with the subject causing the action being masculine and plural; “commandments and statutes” is feminine and also located in the wrong place to be a subject, so the subject of this verb is the masculine “days.” However, days don’t actually cause themselves to lengthen, but it is God who gives long life. Keil and Delitzsch vouch for “days may last long.”

6.3 וְשָׁמַעְתָּ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְשָׁמַרְתָּ לַעֲשׂוֹת<sup>12</sup>

*3 And, Israel, you will hear<sup>10</sup> and you will take care<sup>11</sup> to do<sup>12</sup> them*

The verbs here are in the Perfect tense, rather than in the Imperative. In narrative, the Perfect would be like the English Past tense, i.e. “you heard and took care to do,” but here they are taken as commands.

The concept of “hear” שָׁמַע involves more than just listening; it also encompasses understanding and honoring -- giving heed -- to what you heard. (It’s very close to the concept of faith - DFZ) Likewise, it’s hard to translate the verb שָׁמַר which means “keep, observe, treasure” but juxtaposed with the infinitive “to do” as it is here, most English translations render it “be careful to do.”

אֲשֶׁר יֵיטֵב לָךְ וְאֲשֶׁר יִתְרַבּוּן מְאֹד<sup>14</sup>

*so that it may go well<sup>13</sup> for you and that y’all may be very great<sup>14</sup>*

More results of obeying God! Things will go well, and the people (the first plural since v.1) will be very great. The verb יִתְרַבּוּן can be taken to mean “great in importance” or “many in number;” most English translations limit the meaning to numerical growth “multiply greatly,” and perhaps that is the intended meaning, but I thought that rendering it “be very great” would allow the meaning to go either way in English.

כַּאֲשֶׁר<sup>15</sup> דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַיךָ לָךְ אֶרֶץ<sup>16</sup> זֹבַת חֲלָב וּדְבַשׁ:

*just as Jehovah, the God of your fathers promised<sup>15</sup> you a land gushing<sup>16</sup> milk and honey.*

Here is the connection to the Abrahamic covenant – comparing the increase of the people and their possession of land to the promise God gave Abraham in Gen.12 of many descendents and a land of his own when he had no children and was a wanderer in a foreign country. In the Exodus, God again promised this land flowing with milk and honey (Ex. 3:8), and now the realization of these promises is at hand!

I tried to keep my translation literal here; there is no “in” or “with” in the Hebrew text here. I actually think that rendering it, “a land gushing milk and honey,” is actually a more vivid picture in English anyway! This land which Israel is about to take upon the promise of God is going to be a wonderful land where it is easy to find good food!

6.4 שְׁמַע<sup>17</sup> יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:

*4 Hear<sup>17</sup>, O Israel, Jehovah our God is the one Jehovah,*

The enlarged letters immediately cause curiosity in the Hebrew text. This phenomenon occurs pretty much in all Hebrew manuscripts (DFZ). Bochin postulates that the two *majuscula* letters spell the Hebrew word for "witness" and are to remind people that God is watching them (K&D), but I think the Soncino commentary is a little more reliable in saying that the letters are merely to draw attention to this passage. It is indeed the central creed of Judaism, and is recited by Jesus himself in the Gospels as the greatest commandment. This verse begins the expansion of the first commandment of the decalogue (K&D).

Another curiosity immediately comes from the Hebrew text -- there are no verbs in this sentence! This is particularly perplexing since there are three places where there may be an understood verb of being! The NAS says "Hear O Israel, the LORD is our God," the KJV says, "the LORD our God is one LORD," and the NIV says "the LORD our God, the LORD is one." Is the emphasis that Jehovah is OUR GOD, or is the emphasis that JEHOVAH ALONE is God, or is the emphasis that our God is ONE? Keil & Delitzsch (and the Soncino Commentary) opt for the middle one, saying it signifies "he alone is the LORD ... the one absolute God ... not emphasizing unity but uniqueness from all other gods... It precludes both polytheism and syncretism." "This is the theological summary and condensation of all the commandments," says Dwight Zeller, "emphasizing monotheism, sovereignty, and unity." The greatness of our religion is our God!

Another interesting note, perhaps relating to the Abrahamic covenant is this concept of "our God." This is no longer Moses instructing the people ("your God" as in v.1), but a creed for God's people to say together as they continue to increase in number. Even the Jews pick up on the fact that "The LORD who is now only our God... will in time to come be acknowledged by all the world as the one and only God" (Soncino). This will be in fulfillment of the promise to Abraham that "all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Gen. 12). See also Zechariah 14:9 "And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one" (K&D). This glorious statement fulfills the Abrahamic Covenant while looking forward to the New Covenant with the Gentiles!

6.5 וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ<sup>18</sup>

*5 so love<sup>18</sup> Jehovah your God*

The vav at the beginning of this verse gives the sense that to love God is a logical consequence of believing in Him as the only true God. The singular use of the second person pronoun returns here, too, "you shall love." "Love is the principle from which observance of the commandments was to flow" (K&D). This sounds very much like the theme of the Apostle John! "This is 'the first and greatest commandment' (connected to Lev. 19:8) according to Christ... Even the Gospel knows no higher command" (K&D)

Speaking of the quotes of this verse in the Gospels, it is interesting to compare them:

De.6:5-6 (M.T.)	heart	soul	strength	
De.6:5-6 (LXX)	mind	soul	strength	
Mt. 22:37	heart	soul	mind	
Mk. 12:30	heart	soul	mind	strength
Lk.10:27	heart	soul	strength	mind

The concept of "mind" as separate from "heart" is probably a development in Greek not characteristic of Hebrew, so it needed to be added. In fact, the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the O.T. abbreviated LXX) uses the word *διανοια* which could be translated either "mind" or "heart," so Mark and Luke, who were not as Hebraic as Matthew and John, may have used the Greek Septuagint as a source for this quote and pulled out both meanings from the one word (DFZ, NAW)

**בְּכָל-לְבָבְךָ, וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ, וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ:**

*with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*

"The three parts of Deut. 6:5... rather than signifying different spheres of biblical psychology seem to be semantically concentric. They were chosen to reinforce the absolute singularity of personal devotion to God" (Harris, Archer, and Waltke quoting J. M<sup>c</sup>Bride). In other words, "with every part of every part of your being" (DFZ). God wants ALL of me! (cf. II Ki. 23:25 -- Josiah "turned to the LORD with his whole heart, soul and strength.")

Although we must be careful not to make hard and fast distinctions where they are not really intended, it is helpful to look at the uses and uniquenesses of these three words in the *Theological Wordbook of the O.T.*

**לֵב** HEART: generally used in Hebrew for the mind and thinking. It is the totality of man's inner or immaterial nature, used of any part individually or of the totality of emotion, thought and will. Used for emotions like fear or courage, for thought like listening or planning, for will like a "hardened heart," and for personal dispositions like pride or faith. The heart stands for the whole person -- if you have a man's heart, you have him.

**נֶפֶשׁ** SOUL: root = "breath" or "wind" Translated as life, soul, creature, person, appetite, mind. The Nepesh can experience physical or spiritual desires or repulsions, can experience emotions like joy or bitterness, can be redeemed or saved from death, and can stand for the entire person, the self. Its unique feature is the concept of life in terms of personal desire. It is rarely used of God except in His desire for relationship with man.

**מְאֹד** MIGHT: this is an unusual substantive use of a word usually used as an adverb "very, exceedingly." It can mean force or abundance, power or property.

Every aspect of these three facets of our being should be mobilized toward the single aim of loving our God!

**6.6 וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם עַל-לְבָבְךָ:**

*6 And these words which I am commanding<sup>8</sup> you today shall be<sup>19</sup> on your heart...*

This love-response to our God is not a mushy, indefinable feeling; it is expressed through the active retention of - and obedience to - God's Word. Love is coupled with keeping God's Word. Notice that the

preposition at the end is "upon / over" your heart. It should overshadow every thought and emotion of our heart. Everything should be evaluated in light of God's Word, the Bible. "It must be, not merely 'remembered,' but laid to heart and be the constant subject of thought and conversation" (K&D).

### **SYNTACTICAL-LOGICAL FLOW:**

1 Now this is

- the commandment,
  - the statutes, and
  - the judgements
- which Jehovah your God commanded to teach y'all to do (PRESENT DELIVERY)  
in the land which you are going over there to possess it (FUTURE USE)

(A) 2 to the end that you may fear Jehovah your God (PURPOSE)  
to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I am commanding you [today]  
you, and your son and your grandson – all the days of your life, and

(B) to the end that your days may last long. (PURPOSE)

3 And, Israel, you will hear and you will take care to do them (RESPONSE)  
so that

(C) it may go well for you and (PURPOSE)

(D) that y'all may be very great (PURPOSE)

just as Jehovah, the God of your fathers promised you  
a land gushing milk and honey.

**4 Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is the one Jehovah,** (RESPONSE)

5 so love Jehovah your God (RESPONSE)

- with all your heart and
- with all your soul and
- with all your might.

6 And these words which I am commanding you today shall be on your heart... (RESPONSE)

### **MAIN IDEA:**

God's people will accept God's word with reverence and will show their love to God by obeying His word.

### **APPLICATIONS:**

- We should take heed to God's word -- read it, internalize it, and obey it!
- We should be faithful to teach God's instructions, just as Moses did, especially to our children.
- We should place our faith in the One true God -- Jehovah
- Our love for God should be so great that we want to obey Him.
- Keeping God's Word is a continual discipline -- we should keep it in the forefront of our thoughts and conversation.



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