

# DEUTERONOMY

## STUDY THREE | CHAPTER 6.1-15




### ALL-CONSUMING LOVE

## INTRODUCTION

In last week's study, Moses concluded his first sermon in Deuteronomy by reminding Israel of where they had been, what God had done for them, and what He was leading them into. Here in our third study, as Moses begins his second sermon, he is drawing towards the heart of the relationship between God and His chosen people, a relationship of exclusive devotion.

To quote one commentator on this section, "The primary issue is not the nature of Yahweh but the nature of Israel's worship of Him." God is calling them to an exclusive and all-consuming love. The centerpiece of today's passage is one of the most famous verses in the Bible. Also known as the "Shema," verses 4-5 call for all who hear, to listen and respond to the revelation of God in all His majesty. We see what it looks like to love Him, and we find that this love must permeate all aspects of our lives if it is going to inoculate us against idolatry. The truths about God in these verses lie behind everything we read in Deuteronomy. Every time we hear or read "the LORD" we need to remember Deuteronomy 6.

## STUDY FRAMEWORK

-  Bible Passage
-  Study Notes + Study Questions
-  Prayer

# Bible Passage

## DEUT 6.1-15

- 1 “Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it,
- 2 that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son’s son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long.
- 3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, 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 our God, the LORD is one.
- 5 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 that I command you today shall be on your heart.
- 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.
- 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.
- 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.
- 10 And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build,
- 11 and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full,
- 12 then take care lest you forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.
- 13 It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear.
- 14 You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you—
- 15 for the LORD your God in your midst is a jealous God—lest the anger of the LORD your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth.”



# Study Notes

## LANGUAGE

Understanding the nature of this wholehearted devotion can be helped if we look a bit more closely at some of the original Hebrew words. Take a look at v.5 in particular:

ahav~love

The use of the word “love” in Deuteronomy signifies deep loyalty and covenant commitment. This devotion works itself out in actions aimed at the well-being and pleasure of the covenant partner. There are three aspects to this love:

- levav - heart  
In the Old Testament world, the heart is the seat of one’s inner being. This includes not only the emotions, but also the intellect and will; the very essence of a person.
- nefesh - soul  
This word is closely connected to the idea of life’s breath (see Genesis 2.7). In the Old Testament, the *nefesh* yearns and thirsts after things. It encompasses a person’s desires, motivations, and appetites.
- me-od - power, strength  
*Me-od* highlights the external aspects of our personhood: all of our resources - economic, social and physical - are involved in loving God.

This deep, deeply personal love also gives us the proper context for understanding the word “jealous” (*qinah*) in v.15. In the Old Testament when the term *qinah* is used to refer to God, it speaks of the legitimate passion that is aroused when an exclusive relationship is violated. So, for example, in a marriage when another lover enters the picture.

## STRUCTURE

Here is a possible structure to help break up the text

- vv.1-3: Motivations for Following God
- vv.4-5: Who is God? What Does He Want?
- vv.6-9: Commands for All Generations.
- vv.10-15 The Danger of Abundance

## IMMEDIATE CONTEXT

- Chapters 5 and 6 mark the introduction of Moses’ second sermon to the people of Israel. Chapter 5 recalls Israel’s history and the gift of the Ten Commandments, while chapter 6 reflects on Israel’s immediate future and motivations for obeying the Lord.

*continued on the next page*

# Study Notes

## IMMEDIATE CONTEXT *(continued)*

- When Moses says “Now this is the commandment...” in v.1, he is referring to ALL the teachings of the law from chs.5-28.
- Chapters 7-11 continue the reflections of why Israel should love their LORD, and also describe the temptations they will experience. The first temptation is here in 6:10-12

## IN DEUTERONOMY

- v.1 “the land to which you are going over...” The idea of Israel being on the threshold of something new is a recurring theme: Deut. 4:26, 9:1, 11:8, 27:2 etc.
- v.7 “You shall teach them diligently...” Carefully receiving and passing on instruction in God’s ways is absolutely central to this book. See for example Deut. 4:10, 11:19, 17:19, 31:12-13
- v.12 “Take care lest you forget...” Forgetting God’s law (and its counterpart, not remembering) is one of the main ways that Deuteronomy describes sin. See for example Deut. 4:9, 8:11, 9:7 etc.

## IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

- v.3 “The God of your fathers...” reminds the listeners of the covenant God made with Abraham and his family in Genesis 12, 15, 26 and 28. God has been faithfully keeping covenant for a long time! (see v.10 as well).
- vv.12-15 bring up painful memories of Israel’s failure as a people through the book of Exodus and reiterates that this cannot continue to be the way in the new land God is giving them.

## IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- When tested on which of the commands is the most important, e.g. Matthew 22:34-40, Jesus answers first with Deuteronomy 6:4-5.

# Study Questions

## WHAT DOES IT SAY?

What are some action words in this passage? Who is doing the different actions?

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What motivation is Israel given in the initial verses (1-3)?

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What is the nature of temptation in this passage? What is the remedy to resisting it?

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“The LORD your God is a jealous god” (v.15). What is divine jealousy? How is it different from sinful human jealousy? Read Exodus 20.5 and Exodus 34.14 to help with this.

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## STUDY TIPS

Ⓐ Pray

Ⓑ Look closely

- Commands
- Descriptions of God or His People
- Words and phrases
- Repetitions, Contrasts, Surprises
- Big Bible Words
- Characters
- Dialogue – who is talking to whom?
- Setting (timeline and place) – does it change?

Ⓒ Look at the context

- What kind of writing is this?  
(eg. narrative, poetry, teaching)
- How does the dialogue progress?
- Divide the passage into its natural sections, looking for transitions in setting, speaker, or theme can help with this
- Create a heading for each section
- Summarize the section in your own words

Ⓓ Share

- In your small group share something you noticed



## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Read Deut 6.16-25 and, if you have time, chs.7.-11.

Why is fear mentioned in vv.1-3? What does fear of the Lord look like?

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Why does Moses say these things immediately after reminding Israel of the Ten Commandments in ch.5? How does that help us understand the connection between law and love in this book?

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Verses 4-5 contain one of the most definitive statements from God about himself. In context here what do you think it means to say “the Lord our God, the LORD is one”? How is this truth connected to the response called for in v.5?

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## STUDY TIPS

### Ⓐ Look at the context

- Read the passage immediately before and after
- How does the context help us understand the meaning of the text?
- Look up cross references.
- How do they help us better understand the passage?
- In your small group share how the context has added to your understanding of this week’s passage.

### Ⓑ Summarize the big idea

- So, what’s the main idea of the passage? How would you title this passage?
- In your small group share the main idea

### Ⓒ Stop to pray

- Thank God for all he has already revealed to you, and ask him to help you see Jesus more clearly, and love him more deeply, through the next steps of your study.



## WHAT DOES IT REVEAL?

What does this passage teach us about who God is?  
Is there anything surprising about this?

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What does it mean to be the people of God in this passage?  
What does sin look like in this relationship?

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Read Matthew 22:34-40. What is Jesus telling us about how to read and understand Deuteronomy? What have the Pharisees missed that we should not when it comes to being in a relationship with God?

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## ADDITIONAL NOTES

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## HOW WILL I RESPOND?

One of the major temptations mentioned in this passage is of abundance leading to the illusion of self-reliance. Do we face similar temptations of abundance? Or do they appear differently in our lives?

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Are there any particular temptations that present themselves during the “good times” of your Christian life?

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Deuteronomy chapter 6 commands the people of God to recognize the LORD and to love Him fully with every part of their being. We know that Jesus calls His followers to the same kind of love. What challenges do you face in your life that prevent you from seeking God with your entire person?

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## Prayer

Prayerfully take an inventory of your mind and heart, your whole person and all your resources - in what areas does your love for God need to be renewed?