

International Bible Lessons Commentary

Deuteronomy 10:12-22; 16:18-20

International Bible Lessons
Sunday, June 24, 2012
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The [**International Bible Lesson**](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, June 24, 2012**, is from **Deuteronomy 10:12-22; 16:18-20**.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lessons Commentary* (formerly, *Bible Lesson Forum*) below. **Study Hints for Thinking Further** discuss the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the [**International Bible Lessons Commentary**](#) website. For additional **International Bible Lesson Commentaries**, see the complete and comprehensive [**International Bible Lessons Commentary Index**](#). The weekly [**International Bible Lesson**](#) is posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught at <http://InternationalBibleLessons.org> and in [**The Oklahoman**](#) newspaper.

International Bible Lesson Commentary

Deuteronomy 10:12-22

(Deuteronomy 10:12) **So now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you? Only 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,**

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament teach that God's primary concern is with the inner person, the condition or state of their spiritual heart, their ultimate intention when they choose to do something, their attitude. "To fear the Lord" includes the recognition that God does hold everyone accountable and responsible for the state of their hearts, their choices, and their actions. God expects us to love Him because He is worthy of our love as our Creator, Father, King, Sustainer, and Savior. We should love God with our whole being and personality. Our love for God should lead us to obey God (as He leads us according to His Word) and serve God (wherever His Spirit may lead us).

(Deuteronomy 10:13) and to keep the commandments of the LORD your God and his decrees that I am commanding you today, for your own well-being.

God has not left us wondering about how we should live or what we need to do to love, obey, and serve Him. God has given us explicit commandments in the Bible, and Jesus demonstrated how to obey God's commandments. True love will lead us to obey God's commandments. True love would never lead someone to murder, steal, or defame another. If anyone is uncertain about what love forbids or requires, they can read the Bible. God gave commandments so people would

know specifically what to do for their well-being now and forever as well as the well-being of others. God's commandments reveal how best to live according to the way He created our mind, body, and soul, and how to have the best relationships with Him and others.

(Deuteronomy 10:14) Although heaven and the heaven of heavens belong to the LORD your God, the earth with all that is in it,

All the substances that compose heaven and all the heavens of space and all the substances that compose Earth, and all the matter, plant, animal, human, and heavenly life (material and nonmaterial) belong to God as His creation. God created everything that exists; therefore, everything belongs to God as their Creator. All beings with the ability to think and choose owe their love and loyalty to God as their Creator and Sustainer.

(Deuteronomy 10:15) yet the LORD set his heart in love on your ancestors alone and chose you, their descendants after them, out of all the peoples, as it is today.

God has set his heart and love upon Israel, upon the fathers (or patriarchs) Abraham and Isaac and Jacob (who became Israel). Moses told the Israelites that God had set His heart upon them and had chosen them. Why has God set His heart and love upon the Israelites? Because God planned for His only begotten Son to be born as a descendent of Israel, as a descendant of the tribe of Judah, so God could bless "all the peoples." The future coming of Jesus made Israel special to God, because His future coming would bless "all the peoples."

(Deuteronomy 10:16) Circumcise, then, the foreskin of your heart, and do not be stubborn any longer.

Whereas God required the Hebrew men to be circumcised physically to show they were set apart as servants of God, God commanded all of His servants, all of Israel, to circumcise their hearts – to remove unholy attitudes, actions, and thoughts from their lives, relocate the things that were taking first place in their lives instead of God and put them in their proper place. Evil thoughts, deeds, and possessions they were to remove entirely from their lives. Good thoughts, actions, and things were to be put in their proper place, which was to be a lower place than loving and serving God (which they were to put in first place).

(Deuteronomy 10:17) For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe,

Israelites were tempted time and time again to worship the false gods of their neighbors, and they did so contrary to the law of God. They were to worship God alone, because God, the LORD, is above all gods and lords. God is great and almighty. God loves all peoples and is just to all peoples. God will not be morally

corrupted by temptations to sin. God will not have evil desires or thoughts. No one can bribe God to do something they want God to do. Notice: Moses wrote this explanation using God's name as God revealed himself to Moses, as "LORD;" which translated is "Jehovah" or "Yahweh." Only the LORD is to be their God. The LORD, who revealed himself to Moses and throughout the Old and New Testaments, and especially in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is to be our God.

(Deuteronomy 10:18) who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing.

God set His heart on the Israelites in love because of His Son's future birth (Jesus had to be born through some group of people, and God chose the Israelites as His ancestors), but God is not partial or unjust toward other peoples of the Earth (God the Father sent Jesus for all the other peoples of the earth). God is just toward all peoples, rich and poor, but he is a special heavenly Father to the person who has no earthly husband or parents, to widows, to orphans, and to those who were strangers to Israel or outside of Israel (to Gentiles).

(Deuteronomy 10:19) You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Instead of thinking with arrogance or pride that they were special and more important to God than all others because of who they were as Israelites, God expected the Israelites [because they were special to Him, and were to love and serve Him, and obey His commandments] to love not only their fellow Israelites, but also love and serve strangers (or Gentiles). God did not want racial discrimination in the hearts of His special people, but gave them special privileges so they would have special blessings and knowledge of God to share with all peoples. They were to remember that they once lived as strangers. Remembering how that felt, they should treat strangers with special care.

(Deuteronomy 10:20) You shall fear the LORD your God; him alone you shall worship; to him you shall hold fast, and by his name you shall swear.

God will be impartial and just toward all people. To uphold the value and sanctity of His law while extending mercy to sinners, Jesus came and died on the cross in their behalf (so God could act in love, in both justice and mercy without violating His law when forgiving repentant sinners). There is good reason for the person who turns from God to worship other gods to fear the consequences of God's just punishment, for God provided a Savior for all repentant people. In a world full of temptations, God tells us to "hold fast" to Him, for He is our Savior from sin and temptations. In the days of Jesus, some people would swear by almost anything except God's name so they could evade their responsibilities, so Jesus told people not to swear at all, but simply say "yes" or "no" (see Matthew 5:33-37).

(Deuteronomy 10:21) He is your praise; he is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things that your own eyes have seen.

We often find satisfaction in our achievements and we praise the success of others. God is the Person we praise and honor for Who God is and for what God does. Based on what the Israelites saw and what we know from the Bible, and what we have seen and experienced ourselves, God is the One in whom we take pride in knowing and then telling others about, because of the awesome things God has done in the past and continues to do in our lives and the lives of others.

(Deuteronomy 10:22) Your ancestors went down to Egypt seventy persons; and now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars in heaven.

God promised Abraham that his descendants would be so numerous that they would be as numerous as the stars of heaven: "He brought him outside and said, 'Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be'" (Genesis 15:5). Though only 70 persons in Jacob's (Israel's) family went to Egypt to escape the famine, when they left Egypt, God had fulfilled His promises to Abraham, for they left as a great multitude.

Deuteronomy 16:18-20

(Deuteronomy 16:18) You shall appoint judges and officials throughout your tribes, in all your towns that the LORD your God is giving you, and they shall render just decisions for the people.

The Israelites who left Egypt with Moses had been slaves and under the direct orders of Pharaoh and their slave masters. They knew nothing about self-government or how to govern themselves under any just laws or the laws of God; so, God taught them how to set up branches of government to administer just laws, the moral laws He gave to them. In the beginning, there were judges and priests, and later kings, to render just decisions among God's people.

(Deuteronomy 16:19) You must not distort justice; you must not show partiality; and you must not accept bribes, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of those who are in the right.

God had Moses list some of the most usual ways people distort justice. These sins would have been common in Egypt and Canaan at that time (and all times everywhere later); so, God forbid these unjust practices from the very beginning of the nation of Israel. During 40 years in the wilderness, the Israelites learned the laws of God and how to do right and practice justice so they were ready to set up tribal governments and later a kingdom in the Promised Land.

(Deuteronomy 16:20) Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, so that you may live and occupy the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

The pursuit of justice requires everyone to treat each other fairly. No one should ever experience any injustice or do anything unjust to another, especially among God's people. No one should have any good reason to complain to a fellow believer (or to anyone who claims to believe in God), "You are not being fair." If injustice was done, the judge was to make judgments to set things right and restore justice. Through the work of the priests and right sacrifices, people could be forgiven, but this always involved making things right with the injured person as far as possible (the making of restitution). God required restitution in His law: "The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 'Speak to the Israelites: When a man or a woman wrongs another, breaking faith with the LORD, that person incurs guilt and shall confess the sin that has been committed. The person shall make full restitution for the wrong, adding one-fifth to it, and giving it to the one who was wronged. If the injured party has no next of kin to whom restitution may be made for the wrong, the restitution for wrong shall go to the LORD for the priest, in addition to the ram of atonement with which atonement is made for the guilty party'" (Numbers 5:5-8).

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Why do you think some people say it bothers them when they learn that God requires them to "fear the LORD"? What might you tell them?
2. Why is it important to tell people that God's laws are for their "own well-being" or benefit?
3. Why did God choose the Israelites "out of all the peoples"?
4. Why did God tell the Israelites that He "executes justice" and "loves the strangers," and told the Israelites to "also love the stranger"?
5. What might happen to a business, country, church, government, or other organization when leaders or officers "distort justice" or "show partiality"?

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