

Deuteronomy 5:1-21:

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**Detailed observation, application and other sources:**

- I. Verses 1-5: intro to the restatement of the Ten Commandments:

Then Moses summoned all Israel and said to them:

*“Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I am speaking today in your hearing, that you may learn them and observe them carefully. <sup>2</sup>The Lord our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. <sup>3</sup>The Lord did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, with all those of us alive here today. <sup>4</sup>The Lord spoke to you face to face at the mountain from the midst of the fire, <sup>5</sup>while I was standing between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the Lord; for you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up the mountain. He said...*

- a. This is the beginning of Moses’ second speech or sermon.
- b. Moses calls all the people together.
- c. Moses talks to the people beginning his address with “hear” or “Listen.”
- d. Notice we see those two words again: “Statutes” and “ordinances.” I talked about thee almost synonymous words a few weeks ago.
- e. If you want more detail: These technical Hebrew terms (חֻקִּים [khuqqim] and מִשְׁפָּטִים [mishpatim]) occur repeatedly throughout the Book of Deuteronomy to describe the covenant stipulations to which Israel had been called to subscribe (see, in this chapter alone, vv. 1, 5, 6, 8). The word חֻקִּים derives from the verb חָקַק (khaq, “to inscribe; to carve”) and מִשְׁפָּטִים (mishpatim) from שָׁפַט (shafat, “to judge”). They are virtually synonymous and are used interchangeably in Deuteronomy.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Biblical Studies Press, [The NET Bible First Edition Notes](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Dt 4:1.

- f. Moses wants them to hear these so that they may learn them and observe them carefully. Carefully would be literally translated simply as “do them.”
- g. I notice the words: learn them→observe them→ carefully
- h. Verse 2 is recalling the covenant at Horeb, recall that Horeb is Mount Sinai.
- i. Verse 3: this is an interesting verse because the Lord did not make the covenant with them that are there that day. The covenant was made with their parents and ancestors.
- j. The ESV Study Bible shares: *In reality, the Horeb covenant ([Exodus 19–24](#)) was made with the previous generation. However, generations are conflated to make a rhetorical point: the current generation is just as bound by the covenant at Horeb as their parents were. See notes on [Deut. 1:20–21](#) and [1:29–31](#). See also [4:10](#); [11:2–9](#); [29:13–15](#).*
- k. The Moody Bible Commentary adds: *The adult population present at Horeb, nearly 40 years earlier, would have all died because of the sin of rebellion at Kadesh-barnea (Nm 14:1-4), with the exception of Joshua and Caleb. So Moses was probably addressing the children of the first generation of the exodus... Moses, intriguingly, mentioned the third and fourth generations (Dt 4:9), so he definitely was concerned about future generations while mainly addressing the second generation.<sup>2</sup>*
- l.** *Another source Commentary on the Old Testament adds: Jehovah our God made a covenant with us in Horeb; not with our fathers, but with ourselves, who are all of us here alive this day.” The “fathers” are neither those who died in the wilderness, as Augustine supposed, nor the forefathers in Egypt, as Calvin imagined; but the patriarchs, as in Deut. 4:37. Moses refers to the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai, which was essentially distinct from the covenant at Sinai, which was essentially distinct from the covenant made with Abraham (Gen. 15:18), though the latter laid the foundation for the Sinaitic covenant. But Moses passed over this, as it was not his intention to trace the historical development of the covenant relation, but simply to impress upon the hearts of the existing generation the significance of its entrance into covenant with the Lord. **The generation, it is true, with which God made the covenant at Horeb, had all died out by that time, with the exception of Moses, Joshua, and Caleb, and only lived in the children, who, though in part born in Egypt, were all under twenty years of age at the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai, and therefore were not among the persons with whom the Lord concluded the covenant. But the covenant was made not with the particular individuals who were then alive, but rather with the nation as an organic whole. Hence Moses could with perfect justice identify those who constituted the nation at that time, with those who had entered into covenant with the Lord at Sinai. The separate pronoun (we) is added to the pronominal suffix for the sake of emphasis, just as in Gen. 4:26, etc.;** **and אלה again is so connected with אלהים, as to include the relative in itself.<sup>3</sup>***
- m. Verse 4: The Lord spoke to them face to face

<sup>2</sup> The Moody Bible Commentary (Kindle Locations 10496-10497). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, [Commentary on the Old Testament](#), vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 882.

- n. Verse 5: This is a really interesting passage. Apparently, all of the people were supposed to go up and talk with God on the mountain but they were afraid. The Moody Bible Commentary gives insight: *There is some question as to what was to happen when the nation approached Mount Sinai. In Ex 3:12 God told Moses at the burning bush, "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you [the "you" is singular] that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you [plural] shall worship God at [lit., "on"] this mountain." Apparently God's intent was for the entire nation, not just Moses, to go up the mountain. When they ultimately arrived at the mountain, the LORD instructed Moses to tell the people that "when the ram's horn sounds a long blast, they shall come up to [lit., "on"] the mountain" (Ex 19:13). The trumpet sounded, and instead of going up the mountain to worship God they "trembled" (Ex 19:16), obviously experiencing fear, but allowing their fear to lead them to disobey by not going up onto the mountain. So only Moses went up the mountain and the rest of the nation, because of their fear and unbelief, lost the opportunity to worship God on the mountain as He intended. In Dt 5:5, Moses stressed his role as a mediator standing between the LORD and you. But he also stated that you [plural] were afraid because of the fire and did not go up [lit., "on"] the mountain. This reflects the same reason given in Ex 19:16. As a result of this disobedience the nation lost the opportunity to worship God collectively and now could only approach through mediators. Sadly they could have become a "kingdom of priests" (Ex 19:6) but now would only become a nation "with priests." At this point in the timeline (at Sinai), the Aaronic Levitical priesthood had not yet been established (it is started later (Ex 28:1-4)).<sup>4</sup>*
- o. Gal. 3:19: *Why then was the law given? It was added because of transgressions, until the arrival of the descendant to whom the promise had been made. It was administered through angels by an intermediary<sup>5</sup>*

II. Verse 6: Remember who is giving these commandments

- a. Verse 6: *'I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.*
- b. Notice that commandments 1-4 are about our vertical relationship with God and commandments 5-10 are about our horizontal relationship with others.
- c. The Moody Bible Commentary adds: *The Ten Commandments (Decalogue) seem to begin with the more prominent commandments. The Decalogue is given priority in the book of Deuteronomy as it is the first important piece of legislation Moses gave. It is the core of the theological message of the book, and many scholars see it as a basic outline for the content of chaps. 12–26 (John Walton, "Deuteronomy: An Exposition of the Spirit of Law," *Grace Theological Journal* 8.2 [1987], 213-25). **The Ten Commandments have traditionally been divided into two categories: those***

<sup>4</sup> The Moody Bible Commentary (Kindle Locations 10510-10514). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

<sup>5</sup> Biblical Studies Press, [\*The NET Bible First Edition; Bible. English. NET Bible.; The NET Bible\*](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2005), Ga 3:19.

***that govern one's vertical relationship with God (1-4) and those that govern one's horizontal relationship in community with others (5-10).***<sup>6</sup>

III. Verses 7-21: the commandments

1. Verse 7: no other gods: *You shall have no other gods before Me.*<sup>7</sup>
  - a. This seems like a simply command but it is more than that. We will see this added to in the next verse about idolatry.
  - b. The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary shares: *When the text says that there should be no other god "before me," it does not refer to others having a higher position than Yahweh. The introduction in verse 2 [verse 2 in Ex 20 and verse 7 here] has already indicated as a preexisting assumption that Yahweh is their God. The phrase "before me" means "in my presence" and therefore prohibits other gods from being considered to be in the presence of Yahweh. This prohibits several concepts that were a standard part of ancient beliefs. Most religions of that day had a pantheon, a divine assembly that ruled the realm of the gods, the supernatural, and, ultimately, the human world. There would typically be a deity who was designated head of the pantheon, and he, like the other gods, would have at least one consort (female partner). This commandment forbids Israel to think in these terms. Yahweh is not the head of a pantheon, and he does not have a consort—there are no gods in his presence. The only divine assembly that is legitimate for their thinking is made up of angels (as in 1 Kings 22:19–20), not gods. This commandment also then effectively bans much mythology that deals with the interactions of the gods with one another.*<sup>8</sup>
2. Verses 8- 10: *Do not commit idolatry: You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.*<sup>9</sup> *You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,*<sup>10</sup> *but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.*
  - a. This idea of idols has been repeated throughout Deuteronomy.
  - b. There is great detail: heaven above, earth below, water.

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<sup>6</sup> The Moody Bible Commentary (Kindle Locations 10528-10529). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

<sup>7</sup> [New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995), Dt 5:7.

<sup>8</sup> Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament](#), electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Ex 20:3.

- c. Do not worship them or serve them.
  - d. God is a jealous God.
  - e. Notice the contrast between 3 and 4 generations and God's lovingkindness to thousands for those who keep His commandments.
  - f. The consequences for sin are somewhat natural. The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary adds: *Punishment to the third or fourth generation is not granted to human judges but to God. It expresses the fact that covenant violation brings guilt on the entire family. The third and fourth generation is then a way to refer to all living members of the family. But there is also a contrast here in the loyalty that extends over thousands of generations as over against the punishment that extends only three or four.*<sup>9</sup> Also: *In the ancient Near East a person found his or her identity within a group such as the clan or family. Integration and interdependence were important values, and the group was bound together as a unit. As a result, individual behavior would not be viewed in isolation from the group. When there was sin in a family, all members shared the responsibility. This concept is known as corporate identity.*<sup>10</sup>
3. Verse 11: Do not take the name of the Lord in vain: *'You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.*
    - a. This has to do with senseless uses of the Lord's name. Name had to do with character back then.
    - b. The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary adds: *The giving of one's name was an act of favor, trust and, in human terms, vulnerability. Israel was not to attempt to use Yahweh's name in magical ways to manipulate him. The commandment was also intended to insure that the use of Yahweh's name in oaths, vows and treaties was taken seriously.*<sup>11</sup>
  4. Verses 12-15: honor the sabbath: the text: *'Observe the sabbath day to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. <sup>13</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>14</sup> but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or*

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<sup>9</sup> Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament](#), electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Ex 20:5–6.

<sup>10</sup> Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament](#), electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Ex 20:6.

<sup>11</sup> Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament](#), electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Ex 20:7.

*your daughter or your male servant or your female servant or your ox or your donkey or any of your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you, so that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you.*<sup>15</sup> *You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to observe the sabbath day.*

- a. This is the only commandment not listed in the New Testament.
  - b. This also was tied to God creation in Ex. 20 and here it is tied to their slavery in Egypt.
  - c. This is also a commandment that has no known parallel in the ancient middle east.
  - d. This is a positive command of something to do and not a prohibition.
5. Verse 16: Honor your father and mother: *'Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land which the Lord your God gives you.*
- a. This is the only commandment with a promise which is that they will live long in the land.
  - b. No people group can exist without honoring parents.
  - c. This is cross refernced many places: Ex 20:12; Lev 19:3; Deut 27:16; Matt 15:4; 19:19; Mark 7:10; 10:19; Luke 18:20; Eph 6:2, 3; Col 3:20<sup>12</sup>
6. Verse 17: do not murder: very self explanatory, except that this does not apply to military service.
7. Verse 18: do not commit adultery
- a. This mainly was addressing women, remember it was a polygamous society.
  - b. The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary adds: *The purpose of the legislation was to protect the husband's name by assuring him that his children would be his own. The law does not insure marital fidelity; its focus is paternity, not sexual ethics. The integrity of the family is protected rather than the integrity of the marriage. If a married man had an affair with an unmarried woman, it was not considered adultery. The offender had to pay damages to the father (22:16–17). This is a natural result of a polygamous society. Promiscuous behavior is not acceptable (Deut 22:21; 23:2), but it is not called adultery if the woman is not married. In the Bible the wife is an extension of the husband, and his name is damaged*

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<sup>12</sup> [New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

through adultery. *In other cultures the wife was considered property, and this would merely have been a case of damaged goods. Nonetheless, in Egypt (marriage contracts), Mesopotamia (hymns to Ninurta and Shamash) and Canaan (king of Ugarit extradites and executes his wife), adultery was regularly referred to as “the great sin” and was considered extremely detrimental to society in that it was characteristic of anarchy. Hittite laws, Middle Assyrian laws and the Code of Hammurabi all contain legislation against adultery. The protection of the integrity of the family unit was important because the family was the foundation of society. Compromise or collapse of the family meant compromise or collapse of society.*<sup>13</sup>

8. Verse 19: do not steal.
  - a. Interesting that this likely has to do with more than we think.
  - b. The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Property theft is prevented by the tenth commandment one step before the act. Though the verb used here in the eighth commandment can be used of stealing property, the command is much broader in its focus. Issues such as kidnapping (cf. Deut 24:7) as well as stealing intangibles (dignity, self-respect, freedom, rights) are all important. The word is also used for stealing in the sense of cheating—by cheating someone out of something, you are stealing from him.<sup>14</sup>
9. Verse 20: do not bear false witness
  - a. Honesty and integrity was a big deal.
  - b. A society needs honest witnesses.
10. Verse 21: Do not covet
  - a. This is a commandment against all lustful desire.
  - b. This also shows that sin begins in the heart.

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<sup>13</sup> Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament](#), electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Ex 20:14–15.

<sup>14</sup> Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament](#), electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Ex 20:15.