

# ***FPFWC Christian Development***



## **God Requires Justice**

December 2021

Winter Quarter

**December 4, 2021**

## **Lesson #1 –Justice and Obedience**

**Scripture Focus – Deuteronomy 5:1b-3;10:12-13; 27:1-10**

### **ICE BREAKER –**

1. *Should we look at God’s commands as a crutch, or an invitation to a deeper life in Christ?*
2. *Why should obedience to God remain our top priority?*

***Key Verse Now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?—Deuteronomy 10:12–13***

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

God desired that Israel be known as a people well acquainted with His righteous standards. He expressed that desire in terms of a covenant. The covenant served as the formal agreement between God and His people, describing how Israel was to live as a holy people and how God committed to making Israel His people.

Covenants were not unique to ancient Israel. Other ancient Near Eastern cultures used similar legal agreements, often made between a more powerful kingdom and a lesser kingdom. These agreements often included a historical narrative (detailing the history between the parties), stipulations for the submission of the lesser party, and curses or blessings for the disregard or obedience of the previously mentioned stipulations. For pagan cultures of antiquity, covenants provided legal precedent for how parties were to relate to one another, especially if a power differential was present.

Throughout Israel’s history, God made several covenants with His people. Each detailed a different aspect of His commitment to and His expectations for the Israelites (see Genesis 9:8–17; 15:1–21; 2 Samuel 7:8–16; Jeremiah 31:31–34). This week’s Scripture texts describe how Israel was to commemorate and commit to the covenant God made with them at Sinai (Exodus 19:3–8; 20:1–17; 24:3–8).

### **LESSON COMMENTARY**

**5:1–3.** After setting a geographical and historical introduction (4:44–49), Moses moved to his second major speech in the book (chaps. 5–12). As he did earlier (1:1), he **summoned all Israel** to give their attention to a reiteration of the Ten Commandments as well as additional statutes and ordinances. He began with the command **Hear**, a frequently used imperative in this section of the book (4:1; 6:4; 9:1). Israel was to do more than listen passively to these laws; they were to

**learn them and observe them carefully** (v. 1). Moses' goal for Israel was to obey these laws as a reflection of their wisdom and righteousness (4:6–8). The laws were a mixture of “religious laws” and regulations that affected their community and justice. Moses stressed that **the LORD ... made a covenant** with Israel at **Horeb** (v. 2), not with previous generations but **with all those of us alive here today** (v. 3). 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. These children would have been present at Mount Sinai, but were not sentenced to die in the wilderness (see Dt 1:39–40) as were their parents who lacked faith and obedience. They were “the second generation.” 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.

**10:12–13.** Moses signaled a conclusion to this address by the words **Now, Israel** (cf. 4:1). He summarized the message by asking the rhetorical question, **what does the LORD your God require from you?** (v. 12). The definitive answer is to **fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good.** This is an appropriate way to summarize his message which began in 4:44 and ends at 11:32. Many of the key verbs are repeated from this larger section (i.e. “fear” 5:29; 6:13, “walk” 5:33; 8:6, “love” 6:5; 7:9, “serve” 5:9; 8:19, “keep” 6:2; 8:6).

**27:1–8.** Moses now appeared with the elders of Israel to motivate the people to **keep all the commandments** (v. 1) in preparation for a covenant ratification ceremony. The elders served to verify that Moses had been faithful as God's mediator in giving God's law. Also the elders began to function in this role of providing spiritual and national leadership for the nation, since Moses would soon die and they would be the ones to facilitate the blessing and cursing ceremony. This chapter is part of a structural bookend surrounding the main body of laws in the book (Dt 12–26) as shown in the chiasm below.

**LESSON NUGGET** – *God wants to write His Word on our hearts and make it a part of the inner person (2 Cor. 3:1-3). If you love the Word, meditate on it daily, and obey it, the Spirit will perform this wonderful work and transform your life.*

**Sources:** *Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary.*