

### I. Urged to obey

- Moses is giving the next generation of Israelites instruction from the Lord as they are about to conclude their wilderness wanderings and enter the Promised Land.
- Some of our reading this week recounts Israel's journey from Egypt to where they are now. Much of it is dedicated to the Lord reminding the people to keep His commandments. Chapter 5 sees a repeat of the Ten Commandments from Exodus 20; with slight modification (5:15 differs from Ex. 20:4, adding an additional reason to observe the Sabbath Day).
- Let's examine Deut. 4:1-15. In this passage, we see God giving a quick list of His expectations concerning the teachings being given to them:
  - ✓ Listen
  - ✓ Don't add to or take away from
  - ✓ Keep and do
  - ✓ Influence/impress others
  - ✓ Give heed (put a hedge around) to yourself diligently/carefully
  - ✓ Don't forget what He did for them
- In 4:32-35, Moses describes the teachings given to Israel as the greatest thing since the creation of the universe.

### II. Hear, O Israel (Sh'ma Yisra'el)

- In Jewish liturgy, the Sh'ma is one, if not the, most important prayers that a Jewish person speaks. It is the first prayer learned by Jewish children and the last words uttered by a dying Jew, if possible. It is spoken when one awakens in the morning and before going to bed each evening. It is also a central prayer in daily worship services.
- Judaism does not have a creed or catechism, but this prayer would be the one pointed to as close to being the central theme of the religion.
- The entire prayer is Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21 and Numbers 15:37-41. Let's examine it portion by portion to see if these parts of God's Word have applicable teaching for us today in the Lord's Church.
- Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (NKJV):

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

- The Lord is our God
- He is the only God. Deut. 4:35; I Corinthians 8:4-6
- We will love Him with everything that we are. This is the first and greatest commandment (Matt. 22:36-38; Mark 12:28-30; Luke 10:25-29). Josiah was the best king at doing this (II Kings 23:25).
- His words shall be written on our heart. Jeremiah describes this as a characteristic of the people under the New Covenant (Jer. 31:33). It is the direction of the father in Proverbs 3:1-5. The Word of Christ is to dwell in Christians (Col. 3:16).
- We must teach his truths to our children. The word "diligently" in Hebrew means to sharpen, like a blade. It is a commandment to Christian fathers (Eph. 6:4). The example of teaching producing workers for God is in II Timothy 1:5 and 3:15-17. It is only Scripture that can accomplish this.
- We should speak of God's Word daily, all during the day. In his final days, Paul passes this instruction to Timothy (II Tim. 4:2-5). What is in our heart will come out of our mouths (Luke 6:45) and nothing unwholesome is supposed to come from our mouths (Eph. 4:29). Therefore, we must have God's Word in our heart, because it is always wholesome.
- Our love of God should be evident in the work of our hands and bodies. His warmth should radiate from our faces. Our good deeds bring glory to God (Matt. 5:16). Ladies are not supposed to simply be attractive

because of physical adornment (I Timothy 2:9, 10). Our deeds come from pure religion (James 1:27) and without good works, our faith is dead and worthless (James 2:14-17).

- Our earthly homes and the Household of Christ (the Church) must reflect and exemplify the Word of Christ. Joshua stated that his house would serve the Lord (Joshua 24:15) despite the actions of others. Our families and the congregation must be founded on Christ and His Word (Matthew 7:24-27).

- Deuteronomy 11:13-21 (NKJV):

“And it shall be that if you earnestly obey My commandments which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, then I will give *you* the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil. And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock, that you may eat and be filled.’ “Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, lest the LORD’s anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you. “Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth.

- If we listen and obey, the Lord will bless us. Following His commandments will allow us to inherit the land Christ promised us: heaven (John 14:21, 23). His commandments are not burdens we cannot bear and obedience to them makes us His children, born of Him. Our faith in this will be our victory over this world (I John 5:1-4). Jesus has gone to prepare heaven for us (John 14:1-3). We can only enter heaven because we are forgiven of our sins by being covered in Christ’s blood. We only keep this coverage by walking in the light, keeping His commandments (I John 1:5-9).
- If we turn aside from His laws, we will face punishment and suffering. Those who practice the deeds of the flesh will not inherit heaven (I Corinthians 6:9, 10; Galatians 5:16-21). Heaven is the destiny of those who believe and Hell is the fate of those who do not (Revelation 21:6-8). We must live out the Law of Christ, bearing the burdens of others (Galatians 6:2), to be good, faithful servants and accepted into heaven (Matthew 25:31-46).

- Numbers 15:37-41 (NKJV):

Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them, and that you *may* not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God. I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I *am* the LORD your God.”

- What can we use/look at to remind us of God’s commandments and the promises He has given?