

DEUTERONOMY SIX, FOUR AND FIVE

Intro: If you have a New Scofield Reference Bible I would like to ask you to turn to p. 225 where you will find our text tonight. But you will also find a very important footnote on that page. It tells you that our text tonight is the beginning of "the Jewish confession of faith," called The Shema. (Read.)

Therefore, there could hardly be a more important passage to the Jewish people. We are also going to see tonight that, in the realm of practical teaching, there was nothing that could surpass this ACCORDING TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. Cf. Mark 12:28-34.

So we are right at the very heart of all that the Bible has to say. Let us look at these two verses as thoroughly as we can in the time we have.

First we have

I. EVIDENCE OF AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT (Deut. 6:4a).

"Hear" is used also in v. 3. It indicates at least three things:

- 1) An important announcement is about to be made. It would correspond with, "Thus saith the Lord," or our Lord's, "Verily, verily," or, "Behold."
- 2) It indicates something which needs to be considered carefully until it is fully understood. You will not get it all at the first reading. You will need to read it again and again, to think about it, to pray over it for all of the light that the Lord will give you.
- 3) It usually indicates that there is something to do--some act of obedience that is required.

"O Israel" means that God is addressing the whole nation as though it were one person because this is a message for all--the young and the old, the men and the women, etc. No one in the nation must miss this important word.

II. THE ANNOUNCEMENT (Deut. 6:4b): "The Lord our God is one Lord."

Moses is not talking here about the unity of God. He is certainly not denying that there is a Trinity. BUT HE IS INSISTING THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD WHO CAN CLAIM THE NAME, JEHOVAH, AND THAT HE IS "OUR GOD."

All that is involved in the term God (His power, His authority and sovereignty, etc.) belongs only to "our God" whose name is Jehovah--meaning that He has always existed, that He will always continue to exist (and so He is living), that He is unchanging in His nature, and that He is utterly independent of anything else or anyone else for His existent.

And just think--Moses is saying to Israel that He is "our God"!

Cf. Isa. 41:8-10; Deut. 7:6-11.

Moses wanted the truth of this to find its place in the heart of every Israelite. And we, too, need to dwell on this until its effect transforms our lives.

Now it is very natural for us to expect that such an announcement would be followed by

III. A COMMANDMENT (Deut. 6:5).

But this is not the kind of a commandment that you would expect! If God is God, then He has the right to ask us to do anything, and He has the power to see to it that we do it! This is the one thing that causes some people to stay away from the Lord. They are afraid of Him! And they think that by staying away from Him they can avoid Him! How foolish man is!

What does He want?

The answer is amazing, and it is so simple. HE WANTS US TO LOVE HIM! This is all. BUT THIS IS EVERYTHING. And lest we miss any part of it, or fail to understand what it means, Moses gives us three words of explanation.

Notice the and's in v. 6--there are 3 of them! This connects the whole verse together. We can see the contrast if we try to substitute the word, or. Cf. Acts 1:8.

- A. We are to love Him with ALL of our heart. God always begins on the inside. This means that the love is inward, genuine, not just outward.

Cf. Isa. 29:13,

" . . . this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men."

If you want to sum up what basically was wrong with Israel in Isaiah's day, here it is--in a nutshell!

The Lord cannot be satisfied just because we say that we love Him. He wants it really to be so. And He knows. Cf. Peter in John 21:15-17.

- B. We are to love Him with ALL of our soul. This word often speaks of the entire person, his life.

Note how God starts with the inside, but He is soon talking about the outside.

Have you been loving the Lord with your life? Can people tell by the way you live that you love Him? Can you say with Paul, "For me to live is Christ"?

To love Him means to desire Him, to delight in Him, to long for Him, to want to please Him. The Psalmist said,

"Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee" (Psa. 73:25).

Do you love the Lord so much that your life is so arranged so that you can spend as much time with Him as possible? Do you love to pray because you are talking to Him? Do you love to read the Word because then He is talking to you? Do you love to hear about His return because then you will see Him and be with Him forever?

Oh, how our lives need to bear witness to our love for Him, just as our lives will bear witness to the love that we have for all of those who are dear to us!

But this is not all.

- C. We are to love Him with ALL of our strength.

How does this add anything to what we already have?

This kindles the fire under the two which have preceded this. This speaks of the enthusiasm of our love, the exuberance, the superabundance, the excitement, the joy.

III. The wedding rehearsal. Everything has to be practised, usually even the kiss! Why? Because the object of the wedding is that the groom and bride can have each other.

How much do you love the Lord? You are His bride!

Do you love Him like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego did? Cf. Dan. 3:16-18.

Do you love Him like Job did? Cf. Job 13:15.

Do you love Him like Peter and John did? Cf. Acts 4:19, 20.

Do you love Him like the Apostle Paul did? Cf. Phil. 1:20.

This is what it means to love Him with our strength.

Concl: Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Highest Possible Authority, said that this was "the first and the great commandment." Out of all 613 that the scribes recognized none was more important, none could ever be listed before this one!

You ask what the Lord wants from you? He wants your love! And He is so worthy of your love.

How do we love God?

We love God by coming to His Son. The Lord Jesus said, "Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:45b). Cf. John 14:6.

But it was to His own that He said the words recorded in John 14:21, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, . . ."

May our love be inward and genuine, but outward and enthusiastic--that He may be glorified, and that others may come to love Him too!