

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-
Presbyterian Church, 10 Downing St.
Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

**DHW BIBLE CLASS
LESSON 7**

**DEUTERONOMY
CHAPTERS 11 & 12**

INTRODUCTION

Having related to his fellow Israelites of the faithfulness and mercy of God, Moses repeated the injunction to love the LORD and obey His commandments. Love and obedience are the themes of this week's lesson (11:1, 8, 13, 16, 22). They are inseparable: love expresses itself practically in obeying, and obedience is motivated by love. Every Christian who professes his love for God must respond by obeying Him. The alternative is disobedience. Disobedience means rebellion and unbelief. It is displeasing to God. There is no middle ground. The choice to love and obey or rebel and disobey rests with the children of Israel. God had done and given enough to motivate the children of Israel to love and obey Him. It was left to the Israelites to choose.

The twelfth chapter focuses on the all important teaching concerning our relationship with God. What is the most important response that every Christian ought to have towards the Almighty, Loving, Holy and Providential God who redeemed him with the precious blood of His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus

Christ? *Worship!* God must be worshipped at the place and in the manner He has prescribed. Some circles of contemporary Christendom practise a form of worship that borders on worldliness to please the expectations of the worshippers rather than the worshipped. One B-P minister said to another that the reason he changed his conservative form of worship was to "be relevant." If he does not do so, he claims he will lose his young people.

The first part of Chapter 11 deals with the command to love and obey God (11:1, 8, 13), and the latter, the choice Israel had to make: obedience would result in blessing, disobedience, a curse (11:26). Chapter 12 touches on God's chosen place of worship and reiterates the proper approach in worshipping God.

OUTLINE

**A. The Call to Love and Obey God
(11:1-7)**

1. The call to love and obey God given once again (1).
2. Each generation was responsible for their appropriate response to God (2).
 - a) The LORD dealt with the present generation (2a)
 - b) The LORD was not dealing with the next generation (2b).
3. The present generation had seen great and mighty acts of God (2c-7).
 - a) The miracles in Egypt (3-4).
 - b) The judgement upon Dathan and Abiram in the wilderness (5-7).

B. God's Promises of Power, Peace and Prosperity in the Land was Contingent on Israel's Obedience to God (8-17)

1. Israel would be strong (8).
2. Israel would live long in the land (9).
3. God would bless the land (10-12).
4. God would give rain in its due season and water the wheat, vines, and olive trees (13-14).
5. God would give grass for the cattle (15).
6. Israel to beware that she did not worship idols and be destroyed (16-17).

C. God Would Bless the Children of the Israelites if Israel Obeyed (11:18-21)

1. Israel must keep God's Word in the heart (18).
2. Israel must teach her children (19).
3. God would bless the Israelites and their children (20-21).

D. God Would Make Israel an Invincible Nation (11:22-25)

1. God would drive out all the nations in the land (22-23).
2. Wherever Israel set foot would be hers (24).
3. Israel would be the dread of the nations (25).

E. A Blessing and Curse Were Set Before Israel (11:26-32)

1. God set before Israel a blessing and a curse (26).
2. Blessing if Israel obeyed (27).
3. A curse if Israel disobeyed (28).
4. The two mounts of blessing and cursing: Mount Gerizim

and Mount Ebal respectively (29-32).

F. Commands that Determined Israel's Proper Worship of God (12:1-32)

1. Israel reminded to destroy the inhabitants, cities, and altars of the land (1-4).
2. God would choose a place where Israel would congregate to worship Him (5-14).
 - a) They must bring their burnt offerings to the designated worship place and eat before the LORD (5-7).
 - b) No one was allowed to do as he pleased (8-9).
 - c) When they crossed Jordan and settled in the land, they must worship God in the designated place (10-12).
3. Israel must ensure the laws governing the sacrificial offerings and non-sacrificial offerings (13-19).
 - a) They must not offer their burnt offerings anywhere as they pleased (13-14).
 - b) They might eat any meat as permitted in the LORD, even the roebuck and the hart, except the blood, they must not eat (15-16).
 - c) The cereal tithes must be eaten in the place designated by the LORD and rejoiced in the LORD (17-18).
 - d) They must show care and concern for the Levites (19).
4. Keeping the laws by those who lived far away from the designated place chosen by the LORD (20-28).

- a) The LORD would enlarge their territories (20).
 - b) They might eat meat within their settlements which were far from the designated place of worship (21-22).
 - c) They must not eat the blood (23-25).
 - d) All vows must be done before the LORD at the designated place (26-27).
5. The injunction to keep all the laws that it would go well with Israel (28).

G. Israel Being Cautioned to Keep the Laws of God (11:29-32)

- 1. The LORD would help Israel to have victory over the other nations (29).
- 2. Israel must take heed not to be snared into worshipping the gods of the other nations (30-31).
- 3. Israel must keep the laws exactly (32).

COMMENTARY

Inseparability of Love & Obedience

Moses repeated what God required of them: to fear the LORD, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve Him with all their heart and soul (10:12). God was Israel's praise for He had done great and awesome works which they had seen with their eyes, for example, their forefathers numbered seventy when they came to Egypt but now they were "as the stars of heaven for multitude" (10:22). Therefore, Moses called on the Israelites that they should "love the LORD thy God and

keep His charge and his statutes, and His judgements, and commandments, always (11:1)." Following his exhortation to the children to love and obey God, Moses reasoned with them why they ought to love and obey the LORD their God. Three motivating reasons were given to them: (1) God's chastisement; (2) God's great and mighty hand which He stretched out to them; and (3) God's miraculous acts which He did in Egypt and to Pharaoh (11:2-3).

Moses gave some examples. He drew their attention to what God had marvellously done in Egypt and to Pharaoh. God destroyed the Egyptian army when they pursued the Israelites on horses and chariots in the waters of the Red Sea. Then for the providence of God, Moses reminded them of how the LORD led them through the wilderness until they came to the present place. And then, for an example of the holiness of God, Moses reminded them of the judgement that fell upon Dathan and Abiram and their families when they disobeyed and rebelled against God (cf. Num. 16). They had seen all these and therefore they ought to obey God. And if they did so, God would make them strong to possess the land, and they would enjoy many years in the land that flowed with milk and honey. This strongly suggests power, peace and prosperity in the land for Israel.

Moses repeated his exhortation again to the Israelites that they should obey and love God, and serve Him with all their heart and with all their soul (11:13). Sometimes we may think that Moses was overdoing his reminding of the Israelites to love and obey God. This is not so if we consider the nature of man. We often keep repeating so that the truth of God's Word is firmly

embedded in the mind and heart of the listeners. It was for their own good to love God and obey Him. This they must remember and never forget. If they obey God's Word, God would bless them. Moses in fact loved them and was very concerned for them. He repeatedly told them to love God and obey Him.

And in order to remember that, Moses exhorted them to keep God's words in their heart and in their soul. Bind them in their arms and on their foreheads to remind them. These outward trappings should be the expression of a genuine inward desire of their hearts. A further reinforcement of knowing the Word of God was to teach their children always and in every situation. They should write the Word of God on the door posts of their homes and on the gates. In fact, Moses told them that when they enter the land and came to two mountains each facing the other, namely, Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, they must rehearse the blessings and the cursing of God on the mountains respectively (11:29). The purpose is obvious. The mountains are centrally located in the land. Every time the children of Israel look at the two mountains they would be reminded of God's blessing and cursing. This is a permanent visual image of the solemn choice that Israel must make in their relationship with God.

Someone has made a study of how much we learn through our senses. We learn 89 percent by seeing, 10 percent by hearing, and only 1 percent by the other senses! Today we have the Word of God in book form, which we call the Bible. We "see" the Bible that we possess, and the continual reading, teaching and doing of God's Word will bring blessings from God. Putting the Bible out of sight during the week

and not reading it is not to know what God wants us to do. Compound this sin of omission by doing our own thing will incur God's wrath. Reading the Bible and doing what God desires of us will certainly change our attitude and conduct toward ourselves, and most of all, God.

Choice & Rewards

God did not impose all His commandments, statutes, laws and judgements upon them merely to satisfy Himself. For God can not bless them if they disobey Him. Being holy and righteous, He is true to His nature and character. He cannot deny Himself. Hence the commandments are given and those who love and obey Him receive His blessings and those who disobey and rebel, His chastisement.

God promised the Israelites that if they obey His commandments, they would live long in the land. They could enjoy their children. The enemies would not be able to subdue them even though they are greater and mightier. Every place on which their feet set foot on would be theirs. The land in which they will claim and possess is extensive, from the wilderness in the south (Negev) to the tall and towering cedar trees on mountains of Lebanon in the north, from the river Euphrates in the east to the great sea (Mediterranean) on the east! They would a strong nation, invincible, and they would be the dread of the nations around them.

God gave Israel a choice: *"Behold I set before you this day a blessing and a curse"* (11:26). A blessing that God had spelt out to them if they obey. A curse if they will not obey His commandments. *Whither goeth thou, O Israel?* What are the practical implications of

loving and obeying God? Moses revealed this in the chapters following.

Worship God Only

The most fundamental and visible expression of love and obedience to God is to worship Him. Israel's relationship must be firmly settled. God must come first and this was not negotiable. Nobody and nothing must come between Israel and the LORD their God. So when God gave the land to them and they took possession of it, they were instructed to utterly destroy all inhabitants, the places of worship of the Canaanites, break their altars and graven images, even remove the names of the places (12:1-4). They must remain alert and vigilant that they would not be trapped or ensnared into following the ways of worship of the Canaanites like divining after their gods. They must not worship the LORD God in the manner which the Canaanites worshipped their gods. This is syncretism—a compromising situation: worshipping the LORD God not according to His prescription. How many Christian groups today have been ensnared into worshipping God in the ways of the world, doing them in the name of being relevant or contemporary? Is this not the main characteristic of the Laodicean Church in Revelation 3:14-16, the end-time church which was lukewarm? Christian, beware of compromising and excusing it as culturally correct. This is situational ethics. The question that should be asked is: Is it biblically correct?

When they had taken possession of the land, God would choose a central place for them to worship Him. Unlike the inhabitants of the land who worshipped their gods in many and different places, the

Israelites must congregate at a place chosen by God to worship Him. They must bring their burnt offerings, eat their religious and fellowship meals, and pay their tithes. They must not do all these things as every man thought was right in his eyes. It must be at the place where God had chosen (12:11-14). All other slaughtering for household consumption could be done wherever they choose. The eating of blood, however, was forbidden.

When the LORD had blessed them with plenty to eat and rejoiced before Him, they must be careful not to forsake or forget the Levites as long as they live (12:19). The Levites had no inheritance. The LORD was their inheritance. God had sanctified and set them apart for special services in the place where He would choose for them to meet and worship Him. They must take care of the Levites.

Finally, Moses ended this chapter with the assurance that God would destroy the inhabitants of the land and that they could take possession of the land. They must not imitate the Canaanites' way of worship of their gods. Israel must obey whatsoever God had commanded them to do. They must not add to the commandments and instructions of God nor subtract from it.

SUMMARY

The same injunction of loving and obeying God is no less relevant to the Israelites than to us today. We have read and know how God dealt with His chosen people, Israel. The historical and divinely inspired records are for our learning so that we will also walk right in all the ways of God. The Lord Jesus Christ said

to His disciples, *“If ye love me, keep my commandments”* (John 14:15).

Obedying God is the practical expression of the profession of our love of God. Do you love God; then are you keeping His commandments? If the answer is in the affirmative, the Lord be praised and God bless you. If the answer is negative, and you love and obey someone more than God, then you are not true to yourself, you have deceived yourself. The choice is ours. There is no neutrality with God. It is either obedience or disobedience. Partial obedience is disobedience.

In order to express our love for and obedience to God, the first foundational thing that we must do is to worship Him and Him alone. We may not worship Him as we please or think that what is good enough for me must be good enough for God. This was Cain’s problem when he offered to God what he thought was good enough for Cain. God must accept even though he knew that God required a blood sacrifice. It was Cain’s best but it was not good enough from God’s perspective (cf. Gen. 4:1-10). The principle we draw is that God desires that His people assemble together on the Lord’s Day to worship Him. This was practised by God’s disciples and the Christians in the early days of the founding of the church. As Christians, we must purpose in our hearts and our minds that we will gather with other fellow Christians to worship God every Sunday. There is no compromise in this matter of worship nor is there an alternative in this regard. God must be pre-eminent and have the precedence and priority over all other people and things!

AMEN.

**DAILY READING & DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Deuteronomy 11:1-9;
John 14:15-21

TUESDAY: Deuteronomy 11:10-21;
Colossians 3:12-17

WEDNESDAY: Deuteronomy 11:22-
32; Joshua 24:14-18

THURSDAY: Deuteronomy 12:1-19;
Hebrews 10:19-25

FRIDAY: Deuteronomy 12:20-32; 1
Peter 5:6-10

3. What reasons did God give for obeying Him? (vv.8-9).

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4. What promises did God make to the people of Israel if they obey Him? (vv.13-15)

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do love and obedience go together?

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2. In what way would Israel's past experience teach them about loving and obeying God? (vv. 1-7).

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5. What did God warn the Israelites of in 11:16-17?

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6. What were the ways in which God exhorted the people of Israel to learn His Word so that they would remember to do them?

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7. What commands are repeated here and what promises are given? (vv. 22-25).

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8. What was the nature of the choice that God posed to the Israelites in their relationship with Him? Is there any "neutral" choice? (vv. 26-28).

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9. What visual aid did God use to remind Israel of the choice they had to make regarding their relationship with Him?

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10. What provisions and safeguards against the practice of idolatry are found in verses 1-7?

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11. What benefits might a central place of worship provide?

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12. When the Israelites had settled in the Promised Land, what were the things that they had to take heed of?

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13. What evidence do you see in Chapter 11 of God's grace and God's love?

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14. What principles can you learn from Chapter 12 about how God desires us to worship Him?

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