

LESSON SIX 6:4-25

2. LOVE TO BE THE MOTIVE FOR OBSERVANCE— THE "SHEMA" (6:4-9)

4 Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah: 5 and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; 7 and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. 9 And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 6:4-9

130. These verses are so very important to the orthodox Jew. Why? How important are they to us?
131. Our love for God is inseparately associated with the word of God. Discuss and demonstrate the connection.
132. What distinction is there between the words, "heart", "soul" and "might"?
133. The manner of teaching our children is so very important. Use two or three synonyms for the word "diligently."
134. Why is the subject of the will and word of God so seldom on the lips of most of us?
135. Here are four occasions for discussing the scriptures: (1) In your house instead of TV, (2) Riding in the car instead of the radio, (3) In bed instead of the magazine, (4) At breakfast instead of the newspaper.
136. What was in "the sign upon thy hand" and in "frontlets between thine eyes"?
137. How shall we use these "visual-aids" for our observance of God's law? What about the use of scripture mottos and plaques? Or is this the meaning?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 6:4-9

4 Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord—the only Lord.

5 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your (mind and) heart, and with your entire being, and with all your might.

6 And these words, which I am commanding you this day, shall be [first] in your *own* mind *and* heart; [then]

7 You shall whet *and* sharpen them, so as to make them penetrate, *and* teach *and* impress them diligently upon the minds (and hearts) of your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up.

8. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets (forehead bands) between your eyes.

9. And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

COMMENT 6:4-9

Surely this passage will show that God's word was to *dominate* and *pervade* their lives. *If we truly love him*, this will be the case *today* as well as then. It also shows how, even in the Old Testament, God desired that his laws be kept out of a heart of love for him. Surely he cannot expect less in the New Covenant! These verses, recited by the Jews as a confession or reiteration of their faith, are called the *Shema*—the Hebrew word for the first word, *hear*, as it occurs here in the imperative. This is the first passage of scripture taught to Jewish children, and is recited by the orthodox every morning and evening.

It is to be a deep, moving, all-consuming, whole-souled love for God that prompts Israel to keep his commandments and communicate them to their children.

HEAR, O ISRAEL: JEHOVAH OUR GOD IS ONE JEHOVAH (v. 4)—This is also the exact rendering of Young's Literal Translation, and the only case we are aware of where the American Standard Version gives *three* alternative translations as follows: "Jehovah our God, Jehovah is one" or "Jehovah is our God, Jehovah is one" or "Jehovah is our God, Jehovah alone". We could multiply translations beyond this, but most are similar to *one* of those above! Whichever one is correct, the idea of ONE GOD (monotheism) is obviously in this phrase. There is, was, always will be only *one true God*. See 4:35,39; Eph. 4:6, I Tim. 2:5, I Cor. 8:4.

If there is just one God over heaven and earth, WHAT THEN? If he is the creator of the world, the maker and sustainer of all, what then? If "there is none else besides", and the whole universe sings out his glory, what should we do? WE SHOULD LOVE HIM WITH ALL THY HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIGHT (v. 5)—See also 30:5,6; 4:29, 10:12. If this was part and parcel of the Mosaic law, how much

more should love prompt our service under *Christ*? And in Lev. 19:18 Israel was told ". . . thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself". Both of these passages were referred to by Christ himself in Matt. 22:34-40. Note the preeminence he gives them. Verse 5 (above) he calls "the great and first commandment," (Mark: "There is none other commandment greater than these") and the Leviticus passage is "a second like *unto* it". "On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets"—i.e., loving God supremely and your neighbor as yourself was the proper basis for the keeping of all Old Testament commands. They were given from a God of love—they were to be observed from the *same motive!* If these two laws were observed as they *should* have been, Jesus could say, "This do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10:28). But if these two BASIC laws were neglected, the observance of others would become a hollow form! Friend, if that was true under the law (and it was!), it is *overwhelmingly* true under the covenant of Christ. Jesus and his apostles taught that our love for him and others must be the basis of all our acts as Christians: Jn. 14:15,23; I Cor. 13 (all), 10:24, 16:14; Col. 3:14, I Pet. 1:22, I Jn. 2:10,11; 4:8,16; 5:2, etc.

3. TEACHING THE LAW (6:7-9; 20-25)

20 When thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which Jehovah our God' hath commanded you? 21 then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt: and Jehovah brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; 22 and Jehovah showed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his house, before our eyes; 23 and he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers. 24 And Jehovah commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear Jehovah our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as at this day. 25 And it shall be righteousness unto us, if we observe to do all this commandment before Jehovah our God, as he hath commanded us.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 6:20-25

138. Read Psalms 119:97; 148 and examine your love for His law.
139. Why emphasize the deliverance from Egyptian bondage?
140. What relation did the signs and wonders have to the truthfulness of God's word?
141. Please notice the purpose of the law of God as stated in verse 24.
142. How does Satan use the law of God to slay us? Cf. Romans 7:7-9.

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 6:20-25

20 When your son asks you in time to come, What is the meaning of the testimonies and statutes and precepts, which the Lord our God has commanded you?

21 Then you shall say to your son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand;

22 And the Lord showed signs and wonders, great and evil, against Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his household, before our eyes;

23 And He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land which He swore to give our fathers.

24 And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to (reverently) fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as at this day.

25 And it will be accounted as righteousness [conformity to God's will in word, thought, and action] for us, if we are watchful to do all this commandment before the Lord our God, as He has commanded us.

COMMENT 6:20-25

ALL THESE WORDS, WHICH I COMMAND THEE THIS DAY, SHALL BE UPON THY HEART (v. 6) See also 11:18—i.e. shall be the express object of meditation and thought (See Josh. 1:8). David, perhaps more than any other Old Testament character, caught the essence of this command. He could say,

Oh how I love thy law!

It is my meditation all the day.

(Ps. 119:97)

Mine eyes anticipated the night watches,

That I might meditate on thy word.

(Ps. 119:148)

And their children were to grow up tutored and continually exhorted from the pages of God's Book:

AND THOU SHALT TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY UNTO THY CHILDREN, AND SHALT TALK OF THEM WHEN THOU SITTEST IN THY HOUSE, AND WHEN THOU WALLEST BY THE WAY, AND WHEN THOU LIEST DOWN, AND WHEN THOU RISEST UP (v. 7)—That is, be teaching and applying the word of God to your children continually. Let them not for a moment forget their responsibility toward the Lord, his word, and his work. Today,

it is certainly needful that we have "family altars"—a time when the family gathers together specifically for prayer, praise, and study. But these words would take us far beyond *that* phase of teaching. They take us to the *daily life* of the family! How many hundreds of times throughout a child's life does a parent have opportunity to show him how God's word applies to this case or that, why it teaches this, how it condemns that, how God's work is seen in nature, etc., etc.

I feel compelled, here, to insert the pointed and worthy remarks of Adam Clarke on this important subject:

"If a man know the worth of his own soul, he will feel the importance of the salvation of the souls of his family. Those who neglect *family religion* neglect *personal religion*; if more attention were paid to the former, even among those called religious people, we should soon have a better state of civil society. On *family religion* God lays much stress; and no head of a family can neglect it without endangering the final salvation of his own soul." (pp. 747, 748)

"A most injurious and destructive maxim has lately [and still is!] advanced by a few individuals . . . though the authors affect to be thought *Christians* and *rational* ones, too; the sum of the maxim is this: 'Children ought not to be taught religion for fear of having their minds biased to some particular creed, but they should be left to themselves till they are capable of making a *choice*, and *choose* to make one.' This maxim is in flat opposition to the command of God, and those who teach it show how little they are affected by the religion they profess. If they felt it to be good for any thing, they would certainly wish their children to possess it; but they do not teach religion to their children because they feel it to be of no use to themselves . . . But what can be said to those parents who, possessing a better faith, equally neglect the instruction of their children in the things of God! They are highly criminal; and if their children perish through neglect, which is very probable, what a dreadful account must they give in the great day! PARENTS! Hear what the Lord saith unto *you*: Ye must diligently teach your children that there is one Lord, *Jehovah, Elobim*; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: and that they must love him with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their might. And as children are heedless, apt to forget, liable to be carried away by sensible things, repeat and re-peat the instruction, and add line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, carefully studying *time, place, and circumstances*, that your labour be not in vain: show it in its amiableness, excite *attention* by exciting interest; show how good,

how useful, how blessed, how ennobling, how glorious it is. *Whet* these things on their hearts till the keenest edge is raised on the strongest desire, till they can say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee!" [Ps. 73:25]"—p. 757.

AND THOU SHALT BIND THEM FOR A SIGN UPON THY HAND, AND THEY SHALL BE FOR FRONTLETS BETWEEN THY EYES. AND THOU SHALT WRITE THEM UPON THE DOOR-POSTS OF THY HOUSE, AND UPON THY GATES (vv. 9,10)—That is, every available means must be employed that the law of God might be firmly and indelibly impressed upon the mind. (And note here that *adults*, and not just children are now being addressed). The word of God was to be *continually before them*—both in the *mind's* eye and the *literal* eye. Lange, noting that the expressions of this verse are "precisely in accordance with oriental usage," states: "*to bind them upon thy hand* is to keep them *for a sign* for thy conduct, as over to be regarded, and which must determine the manner of action. The brow, *between the eyes*, represents the chamber of thought, is as the door to the intellectual nature of man . . . The commandments, as frontlets or browbands, become therefore a badge or confession by which one may be known, and embrace the private life . . ."

SIGN UPON THY HAND (v. 8)—The Hebrew word (OTH) is defined by Gesenius as "*a sign . . . [and specifically here] a sign of something past, which serves to keep it in memory, Ex. 13:9,16; Deut. 6:8 . . .*" Baumgartner has "sign: . . . reminding token."

FRONTLETS BETWEEN THINE EYES (v. 8)—The Hebrew word TOTAPHOTH signifies "bands, fillets" (Gesenius); "appendage, phylacteries, mark" (Baumgartner).

It is the belief of this writer that the two above phrases were not necessarily intended to be literal—i.e. God did not mean that the scripture should be printed on the hands or inscribed between the eyes. The idea of the command was that they were to be continually *reminded* of God's law. (Of course, in *carrying out* the command, it might be necessary to write the law in *many places*). In Exodus 13.9, with reference to the Passover feast, God said, "and it shall be for a sign [Heb. *oth*] unto thee upon thy hand, and for a memorial [Heb. *zikkaron*, memorial, reminder, remembrance] between thine eyes, that the law of Jehovah may be in the mouth: for with a strong hand hath Jehovah brought thee out of Egypt." I do not understand this to mean "PASSOVER" or any other such words were to be printed on the hand or between the eyes, anymote than

a parchment containing the law was to be in the mouth. Rather, the feast itself was to *be* a memorial firmly planted in the memory. Continuing in Exodus, with reference to the consecration of the first-born, we are told in 13:16 "And it shall be for a sign [Heb., *otb*] upon thy hand, and for frontlets Heb. [*totapheth*] between thine eyes: for by strength of hand Jehovah brought us forth out of Egypt." Note how the latter passage is strikingly similar to that above, with the same Hebrew words for *sign* and *frontlets*. Thus the *fact itself* of the *word of God* being constantly and continually in the mind, heart, and memory, (and, of course, proceeding also from the mouth) causes it to be as it were, a token in the hand and a symbol on the forehead to all who know us.

In process of time, however, the spirit and purpose of the above law was lost in the letter, and even though the word was not in their mouth, nor the law in their *heart*, they had their phylacteries on their *heads* and on their *hands*. And the Pharisees, who in the days of Christ put on a great show of sanctimonious piety, made their phylacteries very broad "to be seen of men" (Matt. 23:5). The *intent* and *purpose* of this law had been totally bypassed for the letter. *Reminders* (of the kind mentioned here) or otherwise, were in order. But, like the command to have fringes on their garments (Num. 15:37-41, Deut. 22:12, Cf. Matt. 23:5) as reminders, the Jews degenerated into enlarging them "to be seen of men." Such phylacteries as shown below were thus worn—far more elaborate than either the spirit or the letter of this law would endorse.

I.S.B.E. states, "It is evident that the words in Exodus are beyond all question, used *figuratively*; a careful reading of the verses in Deuteronomy in close connection with their contexts [we have the same phrase in 11:18], in which are other figures of speech not to be taken literally, is sufficient proof of their purely figurative intention also. Only the formalism of later ages could distort these figures into the gross and materialistic practice of the phylactery. Just when this practice began cannot accurately be determined. While the Talmud attempts to trace it back to the primitive, even Mosaic times, it probably did not long antedate the birth of Christ. In conservative Jewish circles it has been maintained through the centuries, and at present is faithfully followed by orthodox Judaism."

4. GOD NOT TO BE FORGOTTEN (6:10-15)

10 And it shall be, when Jehovah thy God shall bring thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee, great and goodly cities, which thou buildest not, 11 and

houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and cisterns hewn out, which thou hewedst not, vineyards and olive-trees, which thou plantedst not, and thou shalt eat and be full; 12 then beware lest thou forget Jehovah, who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 13 Thou shalt fear Jehovah thy God; and him shalt thou serve, and shalt swear by his name. 14 Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the peoples that are round about you; 15 for Jehovah thy God in the midst of thee is a jealous God; lest the anger of Jehovah thy God be kindled against thee, and he destroy thee from off the face of the earth.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 6:10-15

143. Please notice the progress: Egypt—Deliverance—Miracles—Canaan, east—Conquest—Canaan, west. Always in every state the present tense is used; by faith it has already happened! What lesson is there in this for us? Not "if", but "when"!
144. We are in a land (U. S. A.) of great and good cities which we (our generation) builded not, houses full of good things which we did not fill, etc. The temptation and sin of Israel is ours; what is it?
145. What is meant in verse 13 "thou shalt swear by His name."
146. If God does not seem near to us or "in the midst of us," what has happened?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 6:10-15

10 And when the Lord your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you, with great and goodly cities, which you did not build,

11 And houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, and cisterns hewn out, which you did not hew, and vineyards and olive trees, which you did not plant and when you eat and are full,

12 Then beware lest you forget the Lord, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

13 You shall (reverently) fear the Lord your God, and serve Him, and swear by His name [and presence]

14 You shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the peoples who are round about you;

15 For the Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; lest the anger of the Lord your God be kindled against you, and He destroy you from off the face of the earth.

COMMENT 6:10-15

See also 8:11-18. Prosperity and abundance would tempt Israel away from their God. What more could they ask for than *great* and *good* cities which they did not build, *houses full of good things*, which they had not filled. Cisterns, laboriously hewn out of rock ["cisterns cut in stone"—Gesenius]—that they simply took over. Beautiful vineyards and olive groves—already flourishing—were soon literally given to them by God. But they were no more than in the land, than they began to forget and forsake the very God whose hand had given it all!

How often in life have we, figuratively speaking, also inherited cities which we did not build, cisterns we did not hew out, houses full of all good things which we did not build or fill, vineyards and olive groves which we neither planted or cultivated—just harvested! In short, we, as God's children, have inherited a great host of spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ—blessings we did not earn and do not merit in any way! "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory" (Eph. 2:8,9). But because of this very fact, "BEWARE LEST THOU FORGET JEHOVAH," for he has brought us also "out of the house of bondage" (v. 12)—the bondage of sin (Rom. 6:14-18, 22,23). May we not forget our redemption or Redeemer!

SHALT SWEAR BY HIS NAME (v. 13)—See under 5:11)

5. GOD NOT TO BE TEMPTED (6:16-19)

16 Ye shall not tempt Jehovah your God, as ye tempted him in Massah. 17 Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of Jehovah your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee. 18 And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of Jehovah; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which Jehovah sware unto thy fathers, 19 to thrust out all thine enemies from before thee, as Jehovah hath spoken.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 6:16-19

147. Didn't Gideon tempt God with God's approval? Cf. Judges 6:36-40. Explain.
148. Read Exodus 17:1-7 to understand the word "Massah."
149. There seems to be some distinction between "commandments" and the "testimonies and statutes" is there? Discuss.

150. Is "right and good" always exciting and interesting? Can it be? How? Why not?
151. How did certain men become the enemies of both Jehovah and Israel? Irrevocably so?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 6:16-19

16 You shall not tempt *and* try the Lord your God, as you tempted *and* tried Him in Massah. [Exod. 17:7.]

17 You shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and His exhortations, and His statutes, which He commanded you.

18 And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord, that it may go well with you, and that you may go in and possess the good land which the Lord swore to give to your fathers,

19 To cast out all your enemies from before you, as the Lord has promised.

COMMENT 6:16-19

YE SHALL NOT TEMPT JEHOVAH (v. 16)—The Hebrew word *Nasab* means "to try, to prove or tempt God when they doubt as to his power and aid, Ex. 17:2, 7; Deut. 6:16; Ps. 78:18, 41, 56; Isa. 17:12, 'I will not ask, neither will I tempt Jehovah'"—Gesenius. So in I Cor. 10:9 we have, "Neither let us make trial (*ekpeirazomen*) of the Lord, as some of them made trial, and perished by the serpents." See how Christ used the above phrase in Matt. 4:5-7.

AS YE TEMPTED HIM IN MASSAH (v. 16)—As recorded in Exodus 17:1-7. "Massah" is Hebrew for *temptation, trials* (*Gesenius*) or, *tempting, proving* (Margin, Ex. 17:7). It was so called "because they tempted Jehovah, saying, Is Jehovah among us, or not?"

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER SIX

The great design of God in giving his laws is, that the people may fear and obey him, that they may continue in peace and prosperity, and be mightily increased, 1-3. The great commandment of the law, 4, 5, which shall be laid up in their hearts, 6; taught to their children, 7; and affixed as a sign to their hands, heads, doors, and gates, 8, 9. How they are to act when they shall come into the promised land, 10-19. How they shall instruct their children, and relate the history to them of God's wonderful acts, 20-25.

QUESTIONS ON LESSON SIX

QUESTIONS, LESSON SIX (6:4-25)

1. Show what part *love* was to have in keeping the Mosaic law, with reference both to God and our fellow man.
2. What did *Christ* teach on this?
3. Describe how the faithful Hebrew was to make the law pertinent and meaningful to himself and his family.
4. The law was to be "for a sign upon thy hand" and "for frontlets between thine eyes" (v. 8). Explain.
5. What blessings would the Israelites get "free and clear" that they did not now possess?
6. What temptation would accompany this blessings?
7. What happened at Massah?

