

# Adult Bible Class

## The Book of Deuteronomy - Chapters 6 - 8

### Deuteronomy Chapter 6 (continued)

**4 (NKJV)** "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!

The greatest teaching in the Bible is that there is one God. Verse 4 above is called the *Shema* in Hebrew and is a central teaching of Judaism. In Hebrew it is spoken, *Shema Yisrael Adonai eloheinu echad*. The teaching of one God (God alone) was in stark contrast to the religions of the cultures that surrounded this new nation of Israel. Egypt had many gods, and the other cultures of the area worshiped multiple gods. The worship of only one God made the religion of the nation of Israel totally unique.

The doctrine of God is really quite simple. God took on humanity and gave Himself as a ransom for our sins. Only a man was qualified to pay the price for our sins. Jesus was fully God and fully man. God condescended and became a man so we humans could become like Him. When Jesus returns, those who are "in Christ" will receive a glorious body like His body at the rapture of the church.

The God of the Old Testament came to this earth - Jesus Christ! The Son of God is God in human flesh. Hebrews 1:3 tells us that there is only one person in the Godhead.

Deuteronomy 6:4 (the *Shema*) teaches us that there is only one God. In the New Testament age, there is still only one God - the Lord Jesus Christ. God's name in the New Testament age is Jesus Christ. He is everything.

**Deuteronomy 6:5 (NLT)** And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. 6 And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. 7 Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. 8 Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. 9 Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

The ancient Israelite was taught to love God with all his heart, mind, and strength. He was also taught to love God's commandments and laws. God's commandments were not to be hidden. God's people were not to keep silent about them. Love for God and His law begins in the heart. Then this love for God and His law was taught to their children - in the house, outside the house, in the morning and in the evening. Later Jews obeyed verses 8 and 9 literally - they tied "phylacteries" (or tefillin) on their hands and foreheads, which were bands with boxes on them with Scripture verses inside. They also put a "mezuzah" by the front door of the house which had Scripture (the *Shema*) written on it.

While some Jews obeyed these verses literally, we can see a spiritual application - God wants His commandments to be on our minds and in our hearts, and He wants us to *do* His commandments.



**Deuteronomy 6:10** “The Lord your God will soon bring you into the land he swore to give you when he made a vow to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is a land with large, prosperous cities that you did not build. **11** The houses will be richly stocked with goods you did not produce. You will draw water from cisterns you did not dig, and you will eat from vineyards and olive trees you did not plant. When you have eaten your fill in this land, **12** be careful not to forget the Lord, who rescued you from slavery in the land of Egypt. **13** You must fear the Lord your God and serve him. When you take an oath, you must use only his name.

**14** “You must not worship any of the gods of neighboring nations, **15** for the Lord your God, who lives among you, is a jealous God. His anger will flare up against you, and he will wipe you from the face of the earth.

God was giving them a good land. The former occupants of the land lost the right to live there because they became a wicked and idolatrous people. God’s people were never to forget where they came from and what God had done for them and how He provided for them.

There is potential peril in prosperity. Sudden prosperity is especially hazardous. Having to depend on God for our needs keeps us close to Him. Having everything suddenly given to us often results in forgetting God.

**16** You must not test the Lord your God as you did when you complained at Massah.

If you remember, the children of Israel journeyed from the Red Sea toward Mount Sinai, and the people complained to Moses because of their great thirst. They said, “*Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?*” (Exodus 17:3).” Though the people complained, God instructed Moses to hit a rock and water would come out to quench their thirst.

God told His people that they should not tempt or test Him like they did at Massah (also called *Meribah*). They should not complain. They should live by faith in Him, trusting Him, looking to the wonderful things that He had done in the past as an indicator that He would take care of them in the future.

**Deuteronomy 6:17** You must diligently obey the commands of the Lord your God—all the laws and decrees he has given you. **18** Do what is right and good in the Lord’s sight, so all will go well with you. Then you will enter and occupy the good land that the Lord swore to give your ancestors. **19** You will drive out all the enemies living in the land, just as the Lord said you would.

**Deuteronomy 6:20** "In the future your children will ask you, 'What is the meaning of these laws, decrees, and regulations that the Lord our God has commanded us to obey?'

**21** "Then you must tell them, 'We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with his strong hand. **22** The Lord did miraculous signs and wonders before our eyes, dealing terrifying blows against Egypt and Pharaoh and all his people. **23** He brought us out of Egypt so he could give us this land he had sworn to give our ancestors. **24** And the Lord our God commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear him so he can continue to bless us and preserve our lives, as he has done to this day. **25** For we will be counted as righteous when we obey all the commands the Lord our God has given us.'

Children are naturally curious. God commanded His people to have a testimony ready to give to their children regarding the mighty power of the Lord. We should all have a testimony ready to give to anyone of what God has done for us.

## Deuteronomy Chapter 7

**Deuteronomy 7:1 (NLT)** "When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are about to enter and occupy, he will clear away many nations ahead of you: the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. These seven nations are greater and more numerous than you. **2** When the Lord your God hands these nations over to you and you conquer them, you must completely destroy them. Make no treaties with them and show them no mercy.

There are seven nations mentioned here in the land of Canaan. They are greater and mightier than Israel, but God gave them a command and a promise - Israel will win the victory, and God will give them the land.

The different nations of Canaan's land (all the "ites") were being judged by God. They were exceedingly wicked (for instance, they practiced child sacrifice to their pagan gods). Therefore, God was destroying them to stop their terrible sins. God gave them centuries to repent (this shows the mercy of God), but they only continued and even became worse sinners.

God was giving Israel the land of Canaan to accomplish two things: 1) His people needed their own land to serve Him, and 2) the current residents of Canaan were deserving of judgment for their continued wicked behavior.

**3** You must not intermarry with them. Do not let your daughters and sons marry their sons and daughters, **4** for they will lead your children away from me to worship other gods. Then the anger of the Lord will burn against you, and he will quickly destroy you.

Should Israel intermarry with the "ites," their children would most probably worship idol gods and follow the detestable ways of the current residents of Canaan. Paul wrote concerning marriage with unbelievers:

**2 Corinthians 6:14 (NLT)** Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? **15** What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? **16** And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said:

"I will live in them  
and walk among them.  
I will be their God,  
and they will be my people.

**Deuteronomy 6:17** Therefore, come out from among unbelievers,  
and separate yourselves from them, says the Lord.  
Don't touch their filthy things,  
and I will welcome you.

**18** And I will be your Father,  
and you will be my sons and daughters,  
says the Lord Almighty."

**Deuteronomy 7:5** This is what you must do. You must break down their pagan altars and shatter their sacred pillars. Cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols.

Let's take a look at these foreign gods that were worshiped by the peoples of Canaan and the surrounding areas. One that we have already encountered in previous books is Baal.

**Baal** - Baal was the name of the supreme god worshiped in ancient Canaan and Phoenicia. The practice of Baal worship infiltrated Hebrew life during the time of the Judges. *The Israelites did evil in the Lord's sight. They forgot about the Lord their God, and they served the images of Baal and the Asherah poles* (Judges 3:7).

Baal worship became widespread in Israel during the reign of King Ahab and his wicked wife, Queen Jezebel. *And as though it were not enough to follow the sinful example of Jeroboam, he [Ahab] married Jezebel, the daughter of King Ethbaal of the Sidonians, and he began to bow down in worship of Baal* (1 Kings 16:31).

Baal worship spread to Judah. *Ahaz . . . reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years . . . he followed the example of the kings of Israel. He cast metal images for the worship of Baal* (2 Chronicles 28:1-2).

The word *baal* means "lord". Baal was a fertility god who was believed to enable the earth to produce crops and people to produce children. There were different sects of Baal worship in the area of Canaan. We have read of Baal of Peor where the children of Israel were seduced to worship Baal by the Midianite and Moabite women (Numbers 25). God judged His people there.

Baal was said to be the son of El, the chief god, and the goddess Asherah. Baal was considered to be the most powerful of all the gods. Along with being a fertility god, he was also worshiped as the sun god and storm god.

During the height of Baal worship in Israel, the prophet Elijah confronted the pagan worship. God showed that He controlled the rain by sending a drought that lasted three and a half years. Then Elijah called for a showdown on Mt. Carmel. God answered Elijah with fire from heaven.

In Matthew 12:27, Jesus calls satan "Beelzebub," which links the devil to Baal-Zebub, a Philistine god (2 Kings 1:2). The baalim of the Old Testament are just demons pretending to be deities. Therefore, idolatry is nothing more than devil worship. Paul states this in 1 Corinthians 10:19-20.

**Asherah and Asherah poles** - An Asherah pole was a sacred tree or pole to honor the pagan goddess Asherah (also known as *Astarte*). Asherah poles were first mentioned in Exodus:

**Exodus 34:12** "Be very careful never to make a treaty with the people who live in the land where you are going. If you do, you will follow their evil ways and be trapped. **13** Instead, you must break down their pagan altars, smash their sacred pillars, and cut down their Asherah poles. **14** You must worship no other gods, for the Lord, whose very name is Jealous, is a God who is jealous about his relationship with you.

Later after Israel came into their land, *The Israelites did evil in the Lord's sight. They forgot about the Lord their God, and they served the images of Baal and the Asherah poles* (Judges 3:7).

Gideon was the first one to confront the worship of Asherah. One king chopped down Asherah poles, while the king after him built them back up. Wicked King Manasseh of Judah installed a pole in the Temple of the Lord (2 Kings 21:7). After that, King Josiah took the Asherah pole and ground it to powder.

Asherah was a fertility goddess like Baal. As a goddess of fertility, the worship of Asherah involved lewd sexual practices that were forbidden by the God of Israel. In the KJV, the worship of Asherah is expressed as worship of the "groves."

**Molech** - Molech was believed to be the consort of Asherah. Ritual prostitution was considered an important form of worship of Molech and Asherah. Molech (or Moloch) worship also involved child sacrifice, or "passing through the fire." When a couple sacrificed their firstborn to Molech, they believed that Molech would ensure financial prosperity and future children. God warned His people not to worship Molech:

**Leviticus 18:21** "Do not permit any of your children to be offered as a sacrifice to Molech, for you must not bring shame on the name of your God. I am the Lord.

The worship of Molech and Asherah occurred in the "high places." Later in Israel's history, the worship of Molech was also well known in the Valley of Hinnom right outside Jerusalem.



**Chemosh** - Chemosh was the god of the Moabites. Chemosh was associated with the goddess, Ashteroth. One place in Scripture records human sacrifice to Chemosh:

**2 Kings 3:26** When the king of Moab saw that he was losing the battle, he led 700 of his swordsmen in a desperate attempt to break through the enemy lines near the king of Edom, but they failed. **27** Then the king of Moab took his oldest son, who would have been the next king, and sacrificed him as a burnt offering on the wall. So there was great anger against Israel . . .

Excavation of high place overlooking Jezreel valley in Israel.

While today idol worship seems a thing of the past, the terrible sins that were associated with idol worship still take place. The demons that were behind idol worship in ancient times still try to influence people to commit immoral acts, commit violent acts, forsake their children, and behave selfishly - and to ignore and forget the true God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

David's son, King Solomon disobeyed God's law and married idol worshipping women. God warned Israel what would happen - and it happened to Solomon. He worshiped idol gods later in his life.

**1 Kings 11:1 (NLT)** Now King Solomon loved many foreign women. Besides Pharaoh's daughter, he married women from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon, and from among the Hittites. **2** The Lord had clearly instructed the people of Israel, "You must not marry them, because they will turn your hearts to their gods." Yet Solomon insisted on loving them anyway. **3** He had 700 wives of royal birth and 300 concubines. And in fact, they did turn his heart away from the Lord.

**4** In Solomon's old age, they turned his heart to worship other gods instead of being completely faithful to the Lord his God, as his father, David, had been. **5** Solomon worshiped Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites. **6** In this way, Solomon did what was evil in the Lord's sight; he refused to follow the Lord completely, as his father, David, had done.

**7** On the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, he even built a pagan shrine for Chemosh, the detestable god of Moab, and another for Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites. **8** Solomon built such shrines for all his foreign wives to use for burning incense and sacrificing to their gods.

**9** The Lord was very angry with Solomon, for his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. **10** He had warned Solomon specifically about worshipping other gods, but Solomon did not listen to the Lord's command. **11** So now the Lord said to him, "Since you have not kept my covenant and have disobeyed my decrees, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your servants.

As it turns out, the wisest man who ever lived was not so wise . . . because he was not obedient to God's wise law. The result was that the nation of Israel was torn into two nations - the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah.

Now back to our chapter in Deuteronomy:

**Deuteronomy 7:5** This is what you must do. You must break down their pagan altars and shatter their sacred pillars. Cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols. **6** For you are a holy people, who belong to the Lord your God. Of all the people on earth, the Lord your God has chosen you to be his own special treasure.

God calls Israel "*a special treasure,*" literally, His property. Yes, God was giving Israel the land of Canaan as their property, but the Israelites themselves were God's property. Just like ancient Israel, we Christians have become God's property:

**1 Peter 2:9 (NKJV)** But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; **10** who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

**Deuteronomy 7:7 (NLT)** “The Lord did not set his heart on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other nations, for you were the smallest of all nations! **8** Rather, it was simply that the Lord loves you, and he was keeping the oath he had sworn to your ancestors. That is why the Lord rescued you with such a strong hand from your slavery and from the oppressive hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. **9** Understand, therefore, that the Lord your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and lavishes his unfailing love on those who love him and obey his commands. **10** But he does not hesitate to punish and destroy those who reject him. **11** Therefore, you must obey all these commands, decrees, and regulations I am giving you today. **12** “If you listen to these regulations and faithfully obey them, the Lord your God will keep his covenant of unfailing love with you, as he promised with an oath to your ancestors. **13** He will love you and bless you, and he will give you many children. He will give fertility to your land and your animals. When you arrive in the land he swore to give your ancestors, you will have large harvests of grain, new wine, and olive oil, and great herds of cattle, sheep, and goats. **14** You will be blessed above all the nations of the earth. None of your men or women will be childless, and all your livestock will bear young. **15** And the Lord will protect you from all sickness. He will not let you suffer from the terrible diseases you knew in Egypt, but he will inflict them on all your enemies!

For Israel, their well-being is largely dependent on their obedience to God. Obedience would result in many children, abundance in crops, flocks, and herds. They would enjoy good health and be free from “all sickness.” They would also be able to overcome the occupants of the land and conquer them completely.

**16** “You must destroy all the nations the Lord your God hands over to you. Show them no mercy, and do not worship their gods, or they will trap you. **17** Perhaps you will think to yourselves, ‘How can we ever conquer these nations that are so much more powerful than we are?’ **18** But don’t be afraid of them! Just remember what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all the land of Egypt. **19** Remember the great terrors the Lord your God sent against them. You saw it all with your own eyes! And remember the miraculous signs and wonders, and the strong hand and powerful arm with which he brought you out of Egypt. The Lord your God will use this same power against all the people you fear. **20** And then the Lord your God will send terror to drive out the few survivors still hiding from you!

The enemies of Israel were neither weak nor few. They were not to be underestimated. However, it was to be the practice of Israel to remember the great things God did in the past to give them faith and confidence that He would take care of them now and in the future. What God did before, He will do again. Having a testimony of past victories was very important. Yes, their enemies were greater than they were, but Israel’s God was the greatest of all, and His promises were sure. Through supernatural power, Israel would win and conquer.

**21** “No, do not be afraid of those nations, for the Lord your God is among you, and he is a great and awesome God. **22** The Lord your God will drive those nations out ahead of you little by little. You will not clear them away all at once, otherwise the wild animals would multiply too quickly for you.

The best method in life is “little by little.” There is no advantage in having more than can be rightly used, appreciated, or cared for. Education is “little by little.” Accumulating wealth is “little by little.” Raising a family is “little by little.” Learning God’s way through the Scripture is “little by little.” Finding our place in the church is “little by little.” Israel would conquer Canaan “little by little.”

**23** But the Lord your God will hand them over to you. He will throw them into complete confusion until they are destroyed. **24** He will put their kings in your power, and you will erase their names from the face of the earth. No one will be able to stand against you, and you will destroy them all.

**Deuteronomy 7:25** "You must burn their idols in fire, and you must not covet the silver or gold that covers them. You must not take it or it will become a trap to you, for it is detestable to the Lord your God. **26** Do not bring any detestable objects into your home, for then you will be destroyed, just like them. You must utterly detest such things, for they are set apart for destruction.

## Deuteronomy Chapter 8

**Deuteronomy 8:1 (NKJV)** "Be careful to obey all the commands I am giving you today. Then you will live and multiply, and you will enter and occupy the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors. **2** Remember how the Lord your God led you through the wilderness for these forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would obey his commands. **3** Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. **4** For all these forty years your clothes didn't wear out, and your feet didn't blister or swell. **5** Think about it: Just as a parent disciplines a child, the Lord your God disciplines you for your own good.

The Israelites were part of a great experiment. God tested them, using difficulties to see what was in their hearts. God put them in situations where they had great need to see if they would rely on God and call on Him - trusting.

When they needed food, God brought it to them from heaven. When they needed clothes for forty years, God caused their clothes never to wear out. When they needed endurance through many years of marching, God caused them to have no physical difficulties. God was shaping these former slaves to get rid of their "slave mentality" and create a mentality of faith, obedience, and trust.

Verse 3 gives us a well known Scripture, ". . . *man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live* (KJV). Jesus quoted this verse when He was being tempted by Satan in the wilderness during His forty days of fasting:

**Matthew 4:3** Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

**4** But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

Jesus was quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3. God caused the Israelites to hunger and then He supplied food in a miraculous way. In this way they were to lean on God's commands and promises, looking back to what God did in the past to have strength for the future. We know that instead of trusting, the Israelites complained horribly.

When Jesus replied to Satan, He was saying that there is more to life than food. The Word of God is the spiritual nourishment that no man can live without. That is what we should hunger for.

**Deuteronomy 8:6** "So obey the commands of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and fearing him. **7** For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land of flowing streams and pools of water, with fountains and springs that gush out in the valleys and hills. **8** It is a land of wheat and barley; of grapevines, fig trees, and pomegranates; of olive oil and honey. **9** It is a land where food is plentiful and nothing is lacking. It is a land where iron is as common as stone, and copper is abundant in the hills. **10** When you have eaten your fill, be sure to praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you.

**Deuteronomy 8:11** "But that is the time to be careful! Beware that in your plenty you do not forget the Lord your God and disobey his commands, regulations, and decrees that I am giving you today. **12** For when you have become full and prosperous and have built fine homes to live in, **13** and when your flocks and herds have become very large and your silver and gold have multiplied along with everything else, be careful! **14** Do not become proud at that time and forget the Lord your God, who rescued you from slavery in the land of Egypt. **15** Do not forget that he led you through the great and terrifying wilderness with its poisonous snakes and scorpions, where it was so hot and dry. He gave you water from the rock! **16** He fed you with manna in the wilderness, a food unknown to your ancestors. He did this to humble you and test you for your own good. **17** He did all this so you would never say to yourself, 'I have achieved this wealth with my own strength and energy.' **18** Remember the Lord your God. He is the one who gives you power to be successful, in order to fulfill the covenant he confirmed to your ancestors with an oath.

The most foolish thing a Christian can do is to think that he is his own savior and provider. There is a danger in success - and that is to forget that it was God that brought success. Without God's blessing and help there would be no success at all.

God was *giving* them the land of Canaan. They had better never forget where all the blessings came from.

**19** "But I assure you of this: If you ever forget the Lord your God and follow other gods, worshiping and bowing down to them, you will certainly be destroyed. **20** Just as the Lord has destroyed other nations in your path, you also will be destroyed if you refuse to obey the Lord your God.