



Study Guide: Deuteronomy – Chapter 10

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This study guide provides an educational overview of Deuteronomy Chapter 10 using a verse-by-verse structure, theological context, and application-oriented insights grounded in Scripture.

Introduction

Deuteronomy Chapter 10 serves as a pivotal moment in the book, reinforcing the covenant relationship between God and Israel while highlighting the renewal of the tablets of the law. This chapter deepens the understanding of God’s holiness, justice, and mercy, and it calls the people to a heartfelt obedience rooted in love and reverence. Readers should watch for the emphasis on the internalization of God’s commands and the call to imitate God’s character in social justice and devotion.

Context

Deuteronomy is a series of speeches by Moses delivered to the Israelites on the plains of Moab before entering the Promised Land. Chapter 10 follows the breaking of the first tablets of the law at Mount Sinai and describes the creation of new tablets, symbolizing a renewed covenant. The chapter occurs within the broader context of covenant renewal and preparation for life in the land. Moses is the key speaker, addressing the entire nation, reminding them of God’s holiness, justice, and the responsibilities that come with being God’s chosen people.

Outline

The chapter begins with a recounting of the replacement of the broken tablets, emphasizing God’s mercy and faithfulness. It then transitions into a description of the Ark of the Covenant and God’s presence among His people. Following this, Moses reminds Israel of God’s impartiality and justice, especially toward the marginalized. The chapter concludes with a call to love, fear, and serve God wholeheartedly, highlighting the ethical and relational dimensions of the covenant.

Verse-by-Verse Study



Verses 1-3: These verses recount the breaking of the original tablets by Moses in anger at Israel's idolatry and the subsequent crafting of new tablets by God's command. This act symbolizes God's willingness to renew the covenant despite Israel's failure, underscoring divine mercy and justice.

Verses 4-5: The narrative describes the construction of the Ark of the Covenant and the placement of the new tablets inside it. This sacred object represents God's presence and covenant with Israel, serving as a tangible reminder of their relationship.

Verses 6-9: Moses recounts his journey down from Mount Sinai with the new tablets and his command to the Levites to carry the Ark. This passage highlights the special role of the Levites and the importance of obedience to God's instructions.

Verses 10-11: God's presence is reaffirmed as He speaks to Israel from the Ark, commanding them to fear Him and keep His commandments. This emphasizes the relational aspect of the covenant, founded on reverence and obedience.

Verses 12-15: Moses calls Israel to recognize what God requires of them: to fear the Lord, walk in His ways, love Him, serve Him with all their heart and soul, and keep His commandments. This encapsulates the ethical demands of the covenant.

Verses 16-17: The people are instructed to circumcise their hearts, symbolizing an inward transformation beyond external rituals. God is described as great, mighty, and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes, highlighting His justice and holiness.

Verses 18-19: God's concern for the vulnerable—orphans, widows, and foreigners—is emphasized. Israel is called to emulate this care, reflecting God's character in their social conduct.

Verses 20-22: The chapter closes with a call to love and serve God, who brought Israel out of Egypt to be His people. The emphasis is on remembering God's faithfulness across generations and living in obedience as a response to His covenant love.

Key Themes

A central theme is covenant renewal, demonstrated through the replacement of the tablets and the reaffirmation of God's laws. The chapter stresses the holiness and justice of God, who demands sincere obedience and impartiality. Another key theme is the internalization of faith—circumcising the heart—indicating that true obedience comes from



inward transformation. The concern for social justice, especially for the marginalized, reflects God's character and is a vital expression of covenant faithfulness. Finally, the chapter highlights the relational nature of the covenant, calling for love, fear, and wholehearted service to God.

Cross-References

Exodus 34 recounts the renewal of the covenant and the giving of new tablets, paralleling Deuteronomy 10's focus on God's mercy and faithfulness. Leviticus 19 emphasizes social justice and loving one's neighbor, reinforcing the call to care for the vulnerable found here. Jeremiah 4:4 and Romans 2:29 discuss the concept of circumcising the heart, deepening the understanding of internal transformation. Psalm 103 celebrates God's mercy and justice, themes central to this chapter. Finally, Micah 6:8 echoes the ethical demands of fearing God, acting justly, and loving mercy, which are foundational in Deuteronomy 10.

Application

Modern disciples are called to reflect on the inward nature of obedience, examining whether their faith is marked by genuine heart transformation rather than mere external compliance. The chapter challenges believers to embody God's justice by advocating for and caring for marginalized groups in society. It also invites a renewed commitment to love and serve God with all one's being, recognizing His holiness and faithfulness. Remembering God's past faithfulness can strengthen trust and obedience in present challenges. The call to fear God is not about dread but reverence that shapes ethical living and relational integrity.

Summary

Deuteronomy 10 recounts the renewal of the covenant through the replacement of the tablets, emphasizing God's mercy and justice. It calls Israel to an internalized obedience marked by love, reverence, and wholehearted service. The chapter highlights God's impartiality and concern for the vulnerable, urging the people to reflect His character in their social conduct. Ultimately, it frames covenant faithfulness as a relational commitment that shapes both personal devotion and communal responsibility.