

Deuteronomy 6:10-15
Dr. Steven R. Cook

Then it shall come about when the LORD your God brings [בוא *bo* – *to come in, go in* – hiphil verb stem = God is the causal agent] you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob [Gen 17:7-8; 26:24; 28:13-14], to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build [sudden wealth],¹¹ and houses full of all good things which you did not fill [to occupy and enjoy], and hewn cisterns which you did not dig [to provide water for themselves and their herds], vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied [enjoying what God provided],¹² then watch yourself [שמר *shamar* – *to watch, keep, preserve* – be responsible for yourself], that you do not forget [שכח *shakach* – *to forget, let slip from memory*; cf. Deut 4:9, 23; 8:11-14, 19-20] the LORD who brought [יצא *yatsa* – *to go, come out* – hiphil verb stem = God caused them to come out] you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery [where they were helplessly trapped and suffering].¹³ “You shall fear [ירא *yare* – *fear, respect* = holy reverence marked by obedience] *only* the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name [i.e., swear loyalty; cf. Deut 10:20].¹⁴ “You shall not follow other gods [i.e., walk in devotion to them, thus breaking loyalty with God], any of the gods of the peoples who surround you [which God forbid; see Deut 5:7; 13:6-8],¹⁵ for the LORD your God in the midst of you [demonstrating His omnipresence] is a jealous God [i.e., zealous to protect His relationship with them]; otherwise, the anger of the LORD your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth [the God who blesses faithfulness also curses disobedience].

Summary:

The main point of this pericope is that God would bless His people when they entered the promised land, but He warns them to keep their priorities, remember His great deliverance from Egypt, and stay faithful to Him. Moses opens this section by informing Israel that God was about to bring them into the Promised Land and suddenly bless them with wealth they did not work for. Moses wrote, “Then it shall come about when the LORD your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you” (Deut 6:10a). Clearly this was something God was going to bring to pass, as the word *bring* translates the Hebrew verb בוא *bo*, which is in the causative stem (hiphil). This means God would *cause* Israel to come into the Promised Land; however, this did not exclude Israel’s participation, for He’d previously given instruction concerning the importance of learning His commands and teaching them to their children that blessing might follow from one generation to the next (Deut 6:1-9). God’s blessing of the land was

based on a previous pledge He'd made to Israel's patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and to their descendants (Gen 17:7-8; 26:24; 28:13-14). Here, the Israelites would know sudden wealth, as God would give it to them.

And Moses specified what they were about to receive, namely, "great and splendid cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied" (Deut 6:10b-11). Up to this time, Israel had been living in tents and moving from one location to the next as they advanced toward the Promised Land. But things would change for them once they took the land, as they would instantly acquire cities, homes with fine possessions, wells that provided water for them and their animals, and orchards of olive trees and other plants producing fruit so they could eat and be satisfied. Moses made clear that Israel did not build, fill, dig, nor plant any of the things they were suddenly to possess. But there was a real danger Israel was about to face, and it would be in the land of prosperity, where God would bless them greatly. The danger was that Israel would become satisfied and forget the One who blessed them. To prevent them from forgetting the God who delivered them, Moses prescribed the following, saying, "then watch yourself, that you do not forget the LORD who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall fear *only* the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name" (Deut 6:12-13). To *watch* (שָׁמַר *shamar*) connotes mental activity in which the Israelites were to guard their own thoughts and not let the blessings influence them to *forget* (שָׁכַח *shakach*) it was the Lord who delivered them from Egypt and slavery. For Israel to forget God was a danger Moses mentioned several times (cf. Deut 4:9, 23; 8:11-14, 19-20). To *fear* God meant having a holy reverence for the Lord. To *worship* God meant having an attitude of thankfulness and praise for His goodness. To *swear* by God's name meant to vow loyalty to the Lord and no others (cf. Deut 10:20).

Moses then gave the negative command, saying, "You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you" (Deut 6:14). To follow other gods meant to walk in devotion to them, thus breaking loyalty with God. This has been a real danger for believers in every dispensation; for though we are in the world, we are not to love the world or its ways. John wrote, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world" (1 John 2:15-16). Moses concludes this pericope with a serious warning, saying, "for the LORD your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise, the anger of the LORD your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth"

(Deut 6:15). God was constantly in their midst, securing their blessings and protecting them from harm. And He is a jealous God, which means he is zealous to protect His relationship with them, for their good. A mother who rightly protects her children from harm understands this kind of jealousy. Sinful jealousy is when we seek to protect what is not rightfully ours. God wanted to bless, but according to the covenant relationship, Israel needed to obey. If Israel turned away from the Lord, they would forfeit their blessings and incur God's anger. And, if they persisted in turning away from Him and following other gods, He would eventually bring about their destruction. Daniel Block writes, "If Yahweh's people behave like Canaanites, they may expect the fate of the Canaanites. The God in their midst prefers to act for their good, but by the terms of the covenant he is not obligated to those whose devotion is compromised."¹ Warren Wiersbe writes:

With privilege always comes responsibility, and Israel's responsibility was to fear Jehovah and obey Him (Deut 6:13), the verse that Jesus quoted when He replied to Satan's third temptation (Matt 4:10). When we cultivate a reverent and submissive heart, we will have an obedient will and won't even want to mention the names of false gods. Israel needed to remember that the Lord owned the land (Lev 25:23) and that they were merely His "tenants." Their inheritance in the land was God's gift to His people, but if they disobeyed His covenant, they would forfeit the land and its blessings. The Lord is jealous over His people and will not share their love and worship with any false god (Deut 5:8–10; 32:16–26).²

As Christians, God wants us to walk with Him and enjoy His love and blessings. Our obedience is driven by love, as a response to His goodness, for "we love, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Love is not an emotion, but a commitment to the One who has saved and blessed us, a commitment that is necessary for our wellbeing and marked by expressions of reverence, praise, and service to Him (Col 3:23-24; 1 Th 5:16-18; Heb 12:28). And, it is vitally important to our walk with God that we keep His Word flowing in the stream of our consciousness, as this helps us guard and maintain the health of our relationship with Him.

¹ Daniel I. Block, *The NIV Application Commentary: Deuteronomy*, ed. Terry Muck (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 193.

² Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Equipped*, "Be" Commentary Series (Colorado Springs, CO: Chariot Victor Pub., 1999), 48–49.