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Do Not Forget

4: 9-14

Do not forget DIG: When Moshe said, “Do not forget the things your eyes have seen,” what is the relationship between this directive and obedience to the Torah? What does this connection between God’s actions and His Torah tell you about how He works? What suggestions does Moses give to parents to influence their children in a godly direction? Which of these, if any, do you most need to work on?

REFLECT: When is it hardest for you to give God’s Word its due place in your life? What needs to happen this week to make sure that will happen? Can you recall a specific time when God’s Word brought clarity and guidance to your life? What happened? How did Scripture fill you with ache for God? When life gets busy, are you prone to forget God and His commandments? If not, how can you help others to remember.

Moses warns this second generation to be careful not to forget God’s expectations of them. He reminds them that God’s intangible appearance at Horeb to their parents was intended to instill in them the fear of Ha’Shem, and this generation should be no less fearful.

Only be watchful and watch over your soul closely, so you do not forget the things (Hebrew: *ha-d’varim*, meaning *words, matters, things, commandments, events or reasons*) **your eyes have seen and they slip from your heart all the days of your life.** They had never literally seen **their God**, but **they** had seen what **their God** had done. That is, in the **Exodus** from Egypt, and in the travels in the wilderness that had brought **them** to the plains of Mo’ab. This **“forgetting”** does not simply mean loss of memory, but actually failing to live in the light of **ADONAI’s** repeated intervention on **their** behalf. In other words, living as though those great and awesome events never took place.¹¹⁶ **Isra’el** was prone to forget **YHVH** and **His** commandments, and therefore needed to be reminded **not to forget.**

Dear **Father God, You** are Awesome! May we never forget **Your** love for us at the cross, taking on **Yourself** our punishment (**Second Corinthians 5:19**). When we see **Your** outstretched arms of love, may we also see the painful nail prints in **Your** hands and feet and bow in worship at how much **Your** love cost you to redeem us. May our own suffering for bearing **Your** name make us grateful for **Your** great pain that **You** paid to rescue us, and may we always keep our eyes on the joy of pleasing **You** (**Second Corinthians 4:16-17**).

The great events at **Horeb** so long ago were to be guarded carefully so they would not be **forgotten**. **You are to make them known to your children and your children's children (4:9)**. The educational thrust of **Deuteronomy** as a whole is reinforced by frequent instructions for **parents** to take **their** own teaching role within the family network of **the nation** very seriously (**6:7** and **20ff, 11:19, 31:13, 32:46**).¹¹⁷



After encouraging the people to observe God's commandments, Moses continued to impress upon them that they should never forget the awesome event at Mount Sinai, where in the middle of the thunder and lightning they received those commandments. They needed to remember the fact that God revealed directly, and not through a mediator, His will to Isra'el, and no seer or dreamer could ever diminish the authority of the Torah.

Moshe reminded the people of the nation's awesome experience at Horeb when Ha'Shem made His covenant with their parents. The day that [the nation] stood before ADONAI your God in Horeb (which is the name used for Mount Sinai in Deuteronomy), ADONAI said to me, "Gather the people to Me and I will make them hear My [Ten] words (to see link click [Bk - The Ten Words](#)), so that they learn to fear Me all the days that they live on the

earth, and so that they teach their children” (4:10).

The fear of Ha’Shem is one of the dominating thoughts in the TaNaKh. It is a **God-given** response which enables a person to reverence **YHVH**, obey **His** commandments, and to **hate evil (Proverbs 8:13; Jeremiah 32:40; Hebrews 5:7-8)**. **It is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10)**, it is the secret of godly living, and **applies to all mankind (Ecclesiastes 12:13)**. **The fear of ADONAI** is given as one of the characteristics of **the Messiah (Isaiah 11:2-3)**. **God’s people** in every age are urged to cultivate and walk in **the fear of the LORD (Psalm 34:11; Jeremiah 2:19; Acts 9:31 and 10:2; Ephesians 5:21; Philipians 2:12)**.¹¹⁸

The details of the experience of **Ha’Shem** at **Horeb/Sinai** are vividly recalled for this second generation. Human words are quite inadequate to describe the Sh’khinah glory (see the commentary on **Isaiah Ju - The Glory of the LORD Rises Upon You**) and the awful majesty of **God**. The best **Moses** could do was to make symbolic expressions. He said, “Your parents **came near and stood at the bottom of the mountain while the mountain was blazing with fire up to the heart of the heavens - darkness, cloud, and fog. ADONAI spoke to them from the midst of the fire. The sound of words they heard, but a form they did not see - only a voice** was audible” **(4:11-12)**. It has been observed that the Jewish culture never developed a visual religious culture, unlike the Greeks. Part of that reason lies in the imageless nature of **Isra’el’s** worship: **the form they did not see. YHVH** was to be heard, and through hearing, obeyed.¹¹⁹

But this was not a stern, one-way proposition. It was a relationship. **Deuteronomy** preserves the balance between obedience to **God’s statutes** (Hebrew: *hachukkim*, meaning *to write into law permanently*) and **ordinances** (Hebrew: *ham mishpatim*, meaning *a judgment of the court*), and a relationship with **Him** through the constant emphasis on the extraordinary grace of **ADONAI** at **the Exodus** and in **the wilderness**. The response to these acts of **God** is love. Our primary relationship to **God** should be love. If we possess this kind of love, we will be completely obedient and loyal to **Him**. **The Ten Words** need to be written on our hearts, or the gospel will be lost and seen merely as a set of rules (see the commentary on **Jeremiah Eo - The Days are Coming, declares the LORD, When I Will Make a New Covenant with the People of Isra’el**).¹²⁰

God declared to you His covenant, which He commanded you to do - the Ten Words (Hebrew: *ha-d’varim*) - **and He wrote them on two tablets of**

stone which were visible for all **the people** to see (**4:13**). There is a partial identification here of **the covenant** and **the Ten Words**. **The covenant** has, however, much more to it than the general stipulations (see [Bj](#) - **The First Address: The General Stipulations of the Covenant**); there are also specific stipulations (see [Cr](#) - **The Second Address: The Specific Stipulations of the Covenant**). And part of the evidence that **Isra'el** had accepted the conditions of **the covenant** was that **she** lived by **YHVH's statutes** and **ordinances**. In a later day, **James** would say it like this: **Show me your faith without works, and I will show you faith by my works (James 2:18)**.¹²¹

Then **Moses** added: **ADONAI commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and ordinances so that you might do them in the Land you are crossing over to possess (4:14)**. Apart from **the Ten Words**, all the other commandments were proclaimed by **YHVH** to **Isra'el** through **Moses**, who, by that time, was accepted as the faithful prophet of **God**.