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Teaching the Covenant History

6: 20-25

Teaching of covenant history DIG: What did Moses anticipate? What were parents to do? What is the old, old story? Why was this so important to the nation of Isra'el? What was the condition of her blessing? What would be the result of Isra'el's obedience to her suzerain's demands? What meaning does this story give to the statutes and ordinances?

REFLECT: When our children are ignorant of the past, they have no hope for the future. What are you teaching your children? What do most Jews today base their knowledge of the TaNaKh on? How important is it to you that the children in your life grow up to love God and appreciate His role in their life? How can you help teach them about God's love?

Anticipating the future, Moses urged the people to have their answer ready when their children asked why they kept the mitzvot that YHVH had given to Isra'el.



Moses knew the covenant was not intended for one generation only. Sooner or later the **children** were bound to ask why **their parents** lived the kind of life that was in contrast to the lives of those around **them**.²⁰⁷ Anticipating the question **Moshe** said: **When your son asks you** a probing question **in the time to come**, saying: **What are the testimonies and the mitzvot that ADONAI our God commanded you?** the **child's** question becomes the springboard for teaching. The

first thing to notice is that such questions and teaching opportunities would arise only if **the parents themselves** were conspicuously observing **the mitzvot**. No observance – no questions. If **the parents** had merely answered by saying: **ADONAI commanded us (6:24a)**. Period. **The son** might very well have given Pharaoh's response: **Who is ADONAI that I should obey Him (Exodus 5:2a)?** But even **a child** could understand a story. Therefore, **the parents** would tell the old, old story of **YHVH** and **His** love. This is virtually a summary of the Good News in the TaNaKh.²⁰⁸

*Dear Great Sovereign **Father, You** are awesome! What joy to tell our **children** that **the God** of the universe loves mankind so much, that he ransomed us by becoming our Passover lamb (**First Corinthians 5:7c**)! "**Holy, holy, holy, is Adonai-Tzva'ot**" (**Isaiah 6:3a**) seraphim cry out in **Isaiah's** vision of **YHVH**. **You, God,** are so holy that no man could ever be good enough to enter **Your** heaven (**Ephesians 2:8-9**) and so in **Your** gracious love made the way. **In Him [Messiah Yeshua]** we have redemption through **His blood - the removal of trespasses - in keeping with the richness of His grace that He lavished on us (Ephesians 1:5b, 7-8a)**. We love and worship **You . . . always!***

*Even when we are laughed at or put down, we do not give in. **For I consider the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us. (Romans 8:18)**. We turn our eyes up to **You** to praise, worship and adore **You** for we rejoice in knowing with certainty that when we choose to trust and follow you as our **Lord** and **Savior** - then we become **Your** children (**John 1:12**), and will forever have joy and peace as we live with **You** in **Your** eternal heavenly home! **For if you confess with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart it is believed for righteousness, and with the mouth it is confessed for salvation (Romans 10:9-10)**! In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*

The content of that story was simple. **Then you are to tell your son, "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and ADONAI brought us out from Egypt with a mighty hand. Before our eyes ADONAI showed signs and wonders, great and terrible - in Egypt, on Pharaoh, and on all his house" (6:20-22). The answer to the inquiring children is a reference to the miraculous deliverance from Egyptian slavery. The lesson derived from the deliverance is that ADONAI is not only the Creator of the universe but also the God Who alone in His omnipotence rules over the forces of nature. In**

recognition of this truth Isra'el has the duty to glorify the name of their Creator and Benefactor. And the special mitzvot which He had given to Isra'el were meant for her good and happiness.

“Then He brought us out from there so that He might bring us in, to give us the Land that He swore to our fathers.” Ha'Shem had brought them to their encampment on the plains of Mo'ab at the brink of the Promised Land by virtue of the pledge He had made to the patriarchs. In the light of all the LORD had done on Isra'el's behalf – choosing them as a people, delivering them from Egypt, and giving them this divine inheritance – He had the right to demand their undivided loyalty. ADONAI commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear ADONAI our God – for our good always, to keep us alive by giving us the mitzvot, as is the case this day (6:23-24). The requirements that they obey and fear YHVH summarize the demands of God's covenant with Isra'el. Prosperity and life have been, are, and will always be a result of Isra'el's obedience to her suzerain's demands (to see link click [Ah](#) - Treaty of the Great King).²⁰⁹

To that theme, mentioned both earlier, and later, in Deuteronomy, Moshe adds that obedience to the mitzvot will result in righteousness and blessing, if we take care to do all this commandment before ADONAI our God, just as He has commanded us (6:25). On the one hand, there is no doubt that this righteousness does not mean that Israelites were guaranteed to be with father Abraham in sh'ol after death. But on the other hand, the mitzvot were designed, not as a burden to be borne, but as the gracious provision by a compassionate Sovereign as a blueprint for living (see the commentary on Exodus [Dh](#) - Moses and the Torah). Obedience to His mitzvot would not guarantee salvation, because salvation is always by faith, whether in the Dispensation of Torah (see the commentary on Exodus [Da](#) - The Dispensation of the Torah) or the Dispensation of Grace (see the commentary on Hebrews [Bp](#) - The Dispensation of Grace), but it would result in blessing for Isra'el.

Compare Psalm 24:3-6, where the one who keeps the Torah of God receives blessing from YHVH, and vindication, or “righteousness,” from Him. Who may go upon the mountain of ADONAI? Who may stand upon in His holy place? One with clean hands and a pure heart, who has not trusted in an idol or swear by a false god. He will receive a blessing from ADONAI, and vindication from God his Savior. Such is the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face, O God of Jacob (Psalm 24:3-6). To seek ADONAI is an idiom for covenantal loyalty to, and fellowship with, Him. The reward for this

walk of integrity is the enjoyment of **the LORD's** presence, **blessing**, and **vindication**. This **blessing** is the extension of God's favor to **His** loyal servants, who enjoy the promises of the covenant (**Numbers 6:23-26**). This man has the smile of **God** upon him: he is accepted, he is helped to live an upright life, and as with all those who seek fellowship with **God**, his affairs are under **God's blessing**.²¹⁰ Therefore, the answer to **the son's** question finally focuses on the proper relationship of a mankind to **YHVH**, and the fruit of that relationship in daily life.

In the first six chapters of **Deuteronomy**, **YHVH** reminded **the Israelites** of **their** past, to help **them** remember from where **they** came, see the purpose of **their** election, and what was expected of **them**. Today **the Jewish people** are **blessed** to have a book that speaks of **their** origins. Yet, few of **them** explore those roots. Those who do explore **their** past within the Jewish community often do so with a selection of slices of history. For the most part, **they** stop after the first century, and **they** are content finding **their** origin within the teachings of the sages. But **Jewish** history goes beyond the schools of Hillel and Shammai, and the eras when those men lived. Most **Jews** today do not know that **the traditions of men** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ei - The Oral Law**) which came from this era distorted very important biblical themes and concepts. They strayed from the **faith** of the righteous of the TaNaKh – to works **righteousness**. It is **a different gospel** (see the commentary on **Galatians Aj - No Other Gospel**). And because the bible teaches us to evangelize **the Jews especially, and equally the Gentiles (Romans 1:16c)**, it is our responsibility to tell **them**.²¹¹