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Circumcise Your Hearts

10: 12-22

Circumcise your hearts DIG: How are verses 12-16 like the first part of the Ten Words? How are verses 17-22 like the second part of the Ten Words? What four responses does God want from His people? How would you define each? What kind of relationship with YHVH would these produce? What are the two groups who fear ADONAI? What does it mean to have a circumcised heart? In what way do these explain the quality of relationship God seeks with Isra'el?

REFLECT: Is your heart circumcised? If not, what is building up that callus? What can you do to soften your heart once again? What does God ask of you? Do you think the description in verses 12-16 still holds true for God? In verses 17-22 for His followers? Do you fear ADONAI? How is obeying the LORD for our own good? Who can you help this week with an uncircumcised heart? Are you ready for Him to return today? How so?

For Isra'el to circumcise their hearts, it meant giving ADONAI their undivided loyalty, which He not only deserved, but demanded.

So now, rather like when Paul uses, **therefore**, the word indicates a transition from **Moshe's first address** to the practical implications that follow them. In the same identical way, **4:1** opens with the same words that link that chapter to the preceding historical recollection of **Chapters 1-3**. In other words, **the Ruach ha-Kodesh**, speaking through **the prophet**, was saying: Because all these blessings have been given to you (**to see link click [Bj](#) - The First Address: The General Stipulations of the Covenant**), **O Isra'el**, what are you going to do with them? These words mark a turning point from historical reminiscence to command.²⁷³

Our relationship with God (10:12-16), like the first part of the Ten Words: So now, O Isra'el, what does ADONAI your God require of you (10:12a)? Micah said it this way: He has told you, O man, what is good, and what ADONAI is seeking from you; only to practice justice, to love mercy, and to

walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8). The intention is to get down to the basics and show that the claim of **God** upon **the covenant people** is not complicated or mysterious, but fundamentally simple. Not simple as in easy – because if obedience were easy there would be little need for these chapters full of encouragement, warning, and promise. No, the motivation for obedience would be **their** undivided loyalty to **ADONAI**.²⁷⁴ **Therefore**, in this passage, **Moshe** lays out what **ADONAI** requires of **them**:

They were to fear ADONAI your God (10:12b): This does not mean that **the Isrealites** were to be frightened, or afraid, of **Him**. It does mean that **they** were to possess an attitude of deep respect for **Him** – respect in response to **His** faithfulness to them over the years. This **fear**, or respect, begins inwardly but eventually will show itself outwardly. **Isra'el's** constant disobedience was the outward evidence of an inward rebellion.

Practically speaking, we can divide those who **fear ADONAI** into two groups. The first group **fears ADONAI** when **they** meet **Him** as **their Judge**. **The Father does not judge anyone, but has handed over all judgment to the Son (John 5:22)**. **Paul** declares that **there is no fear of God before the eyes of those** who reject **God (Romans 3:18)**. When **Yeshua** returns at **His** Second Coming **they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, hiding from the face of the One seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb (Isaiah 2:10 and Revelation 6:16)**. For the second group, **the fear of the LORD** is always associated with long life and wisdom. **Proverbs 19:23** says: **The fear of ADONAI leads to life, and the one who has it rests satisfied, untouched by harm**. To fear **ADONAI** in this way is to allow **Him** to take control of the steering-wheel of your life.

*Dear Great and Wise Heavenly **Father, You** are so wonderful! It is a joy to let **You** guide my life. **You** always want the best for **Your** children, and will never withhold anything good from **Your** child (**Psalms 84:11**). When **You** drive the steering wheel of our lives, you drive us to the best places where we will have joy for all eternity. Yes, you may allow trials in our lives, but you use them for our good. **These trials are so that the true metal of your faith (far more valuable than gold, which perishes though refined by fire) may come to light in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Messiah Yeshua (First Peter 1:7)**. Though they seem long to us now, they are really only momentary in light of all eternity of joy with **You**. **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). Please take the steering wheel of my life and drive me to wherever **You** think is best for me- for **Your** love and wisdom are so great for each of **Your** children. I love to worship and obey **You!** In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*

Those who reject **God** will eventually **dread Him**; while **those** who are **His** will willingly follow **Him** and be blessed. So, having this fear implies a proper knowledge of **Ha'Shem**, knowing the proper way to approach **Him** and worship **Him**. When those in the Scriptures saw **ADONAI**, **they** realized **their** own sinfulness. When **Isaiah** saw **ADONAI-Tzva'ot**, he said: **Oy to me! For I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips (Isaiah 6:5)**. Then, **he** was able to go and preach the Word. And **Job**, when **he** finally had **his** wish granted, and **he** was finally able to meet **God**, said: **Now my eye has seen You. Therefore, I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes (Job 42:5-6)**. **They** had a proper understanding of **the fear of ADONAI**. This is an important concept, not only for **the Israelites**, but for all of us today. It motivates us to study our **God**, to know **Him**, so that we might also walk with **Him** and **love Him** more. This **love** for **Yeshua** will be reflected in all areas of our lives. **Solomon** agreed with **Moshe**, and as **he** came to the end of **his** book **he** said: **A final word, when all has been heard: Fear God and keep His mitzvot! For this applies to all mankind (Ecclesiastes 12:13)**.²⁷⁵

Isra'el was to **walk** in all **His** ways (10:12c): Our inward respect for **God** will reveal itself in our **walk** with **Him**. **The Torah** always emphasizes lifestyle. **If we say we have fellowship with Him and keep walking in darkness, we are lying and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of His Son Yeshua purifies us from all sin (First Yochanan 1:6-7)**. Both **Moshe** and **Yochanan** understood that our talk and our **walk** must be consistent. The world can smell a phony a mile away.²⁷⁶

To love ADONAI (10:12d): The word **love** here means more than merely an emotional term. It serves as a synonym for election. As Paul teaches us in **Romans 9:13**, **"Jacob I loved, Esau I hated. God's love** for **Jacob** was revealed in **His** choice of **Jacob**, and **God's** hatred of **Esau** was seen in **His** rejecting **Esau** as the son of promise (from **Malachi 1:2-3**). **YHVH's** choices reflect and express **His love**. But **God's love** must find its response and counterpart in the commitment of the chosen one to **love**, or choose, **the LORD** in return. Throughout **Deuteronomy**, **love** is demonstrated in deeds, or loyalty, to the covenant (**5:10, 6:5, 7:9** and **13, 11:1, 13** and **22, 13:3, 19:9, 30:6, 16** and **20; First**

Corinthians 8:3; Second Thessalonians 3:5; First John 2:5, 3:17, 4:9, and 20-21; Jude 21).²⁷⁷

And to **serve ADONAI your God with all your heart and with all your soul**, meaning with undivided loyalty, which **YHVH** deserved and demanded (**10:12e**). **This statement is found in the Talmud. Rabbi Hanina said: Everything is in the hands of heaven except the fear of heaven as it says, “And now, Isra’el, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear” (Masiah Megilah 25a).** While this concept of free will was disputed by the Jews of that time, as it is among believers today, **according to Josephus, the Pharisees believed in both the freedom of mankind and divine providence. The Sadducees, however, attributed everything to chance and denied providential guidance (Josephus, Wars 2, Antiquity 13 and 18).** Those rabbis in **the Talmud** understood the importance of this verse and took special interest in the concept of **the fear of ADONAI**, which is the first requirement of **the people of God**. But what exactly does that mean?

Moses said that **the fear of ADONAI** would help **the Israelites to keep His mitzvot and His statutes that he was commanding to them** on that **day, “for your own good” (10:13)?** Only two words in Hebrew (*letob tak*, meaning *for good for you*), this phrase condenses all the blessings that **Moshe** elsewhere describes extensively. Through obedience, Isra’el would enter into secure possession of the Land, long life, and enjoyment of **God’s** gifts. It also condenses the important ethical point that **the Torah** itself was a gift of the grace of **ADONAI** for the benefit of mankind, not the imposition of an arbitrary set of rules to be a burden. Today, **the Torah** is our blueprint for living (see the commentary on **Exodus Dh - Moses and the Torah**). And so, **for your own good** may not sparkle as an advertising slogan, but it captures the human perspective of ethics in the TaNaKh.²⁷⁸

Why should **Isra’el** respond to **YHVH her God** with such complete undivided loyalty? It was not merely because of **His** saving acts, or because **Isra’el’s God** was bound up with such obedience. The real reason was more profound. It was because **He loved her** first. Here is the magnificent picture of the grandeur of **God**. **Behold, to ADONAI your God belongs the heavens and the highest of heavens, the earth and all that is in it.** The contrast with the insignificant **Isra’el** is striking. Yet, **YHVH loved her.**²⁷⁹ **Only on your fathers did ADONAI set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants**

after them - you - from all the peoples, as is the case this day (10:14-15). So, the first reason **Isra'el** was to **love the LORD** is that **He** had initiated a relationship of **love** with **His** rebellious nation. This same principle is true of **God's** relationship with believers' today. **But God demonstrates His own love toward us, that while we were yet sinners, Messiah died for us (Romans 5:8).**²⁸⁰



The proper response to **their** election by **YHVH** was to **circumcise their hearts**. **God** had commanded that on **the eighth day the flesh of a male child is to be circumcised (Leviticus 12:3)**. But here, **Moses** lifts up the mere letter of **the Torah**, and brings **it** to greater heights, saying: **Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked** and imitate the stubbornness of your ancestors **(10:16)**. **God never intended circumcision, or any other commandments, to be merely ritual. There is intent and meaning behind all of these commandments. Here Moshe takes a commandment and expands it beyond its physical significance. Yeshua** did the same thing (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Da - The Sermon on the Mount**).

But, **Isra'el** had so magnified the physical ritual that **they** forgot the spiritual reality, that **circumcision** marked them as **God's people** with spiritual privileges and responsibilities. **Circumcision** wasn't a guarantee that every Jewish man was going to be with **Abraham in sh'ol (Matthew 3:7-12)**. Unless there was a change in **the heart**, brought about by **YHVH** in response to faith, the person didn't belong to **the LORD** in any real sense. That's why **Moses** exhorted **them** to let **God** "operate" on **their hearts** and do a lasting spiritual work: **ADONAI your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants - to love ADONAI your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live (30:6)**. This message was repeated by **the prophets (Jeremiah 4:4;**

Ezeki’el 44:7 and 9) and the apostle Paul (**Romans 4:9-12;** and **Acts 7:51**).

Unfortunately, this same spiritual blindness is with us today, for many people believe that baptism, confirmation, church membership, or participation in communion automatically guarantees their salvation. As meaningful as those things are, the believer’s assurance and seal of salvation isn’t a physical ceremony, but a spiritual work of **the Ruach ha-Kodesh in the heart (Philippians 3:1-10; Colossians 2:9-12)**. Salvation = faith + nothing. Jewish **circumcision** removed but a small part of **the flesh**, but **the Spirit of God** has **stripped away the body of the flesh through the circumcision of Messiah. You were buried along with Him in immersion, through which you also were raised with Him by trusting** (Greek: *pistis*, meaning *faith, trust, or belief*) **in the work of God, who raised Him from the dead (Colossians 2:11-12).**²⁸¹

Our relationship with our neighbors (10:17-22), like the second part of the Ten Words: For ADONAI your God is God of gods and Lord of lords - the great, mighty and awesome God, who does not show partiality or take a bribe (10:17). The majesty of **YHVH** and **His** awful justice provided further motive for obedience. **God** does require **love**; but those, for example, who outwardly obeyed **the mitzvot**, but did not **love God**, were in effect, offering **God a bribe**. It was as if they were saying, “Look, I’m doing this and that correctly, so taking these good deeds into account, perhaps the rest can be overlooked?” **Ha’Shem** required the **wholehearted** commitment of **love**, from which all the other godly behavior flowed. **ADONAI** saw what was in **the heart** and could not be persuaded, or **bribed**, into reducing **His** requirements of **His children**.

The impartiality of **YHVH** and the impossibility of **bribing Him** are now illustrated with a specific example, to a **mitzvah** is added. **The** more detailed **mitzvot** concerning **orphans, widows** and **aliens** will be found in **24:17-22**). **Moses** demands that **the Israelites** conduct **themselves** toward the weaker members of **their** society just as **God Himself** does, with **justice** and **love**. **He enacts justice for the orphan and widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing.** Earlier, it was stated that **God loved the patriarchs (10:15)**, whose descendents were gathered on the plains of Mo’ab; now the impartiality of **God** is shown in **His love** for the resident **alien**, a person in the Jewish community who did not share full civil and religious rights with **the Israelites**. **ADONAI** provided food and clothing for **the alien**, just as **He** had done for **His own people**. **Therefore, love the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt (10:18-19).** Having experienced **God’s love** and care during **their** own time as **aliens**, they were to

express similar **love** and care to **aliens** in **their** midst.²⁸²

The passage reaches its climax with the repetition of its main points. **ADONAI your God you will fear - Him will you serve. To Him will you cling, and by His Name will you swear. He is the object of your praise and He is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things that your eyes have seen.** Other gods have other ways, but **Isra'el** must **keep the way of ADONAI by doing righteousness and justice, so that ADONAI may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him (Genesis 18:19b).** One part of the covenant promise to **the patriarchs** had already been fulfilled by the growth of **Isra'el's** numbers. **Your fathers went down to Egypt with 70 persons** (see the commentary on **Genesis Km - Jacob's Genealogy**), and now **ADONAI your God has made you like the stars of the heavens in number (10:20-22).** This fact alone was a reason for **Isra'el** to give **ADONAI their** undivided loyalty.