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Statutes, Mitzvot, and Ordinances

26: 16-19

Statutes, mitzvot, and ordinances DIG: What is the significance of the “heart” and the “soul” when it comes to obedience? In the mutual declarations, which comes first? God’s? Or the people’s? Why is one based on the other? What is different about this confession, and the first two we have seen?

REFLECT: What is the significance of, “This day,” “Today,” and “Now today,” for you? What sense of urgency do you have about God’s Word? Do you have God’s Word in your heart? Do you know that God has great things planned for you, and that your salvation is secure?

God guaranteed the blessings of His covenant to Isra’el; the blessing was promised to the nation as a whole, even though certain people may suffer on particular occasions.



These four verses conclude **Moses’** explanation of the stipulation of the Covenant (**to see link click [Bi](#) - The Stipulations of the Covenant**) by calling for a total commitment to **the LORD** and **His** mitzvot, and also by affirming **God’s** commitment to **Isra’el**. This section may also be viewed as a formal ratification of the covenant between **ADONAI** and **Isra’el** even though the word “covenant” does not appear in these four verses (see **[Ah](#) - The Treaty of the Great King**). **Isra’el** accepted and affirmed **her** covenantal responsibilities and **YHVH** affirmed **His** promise to exalt an obedient **Isra’el** over all the nations of the earth.

The first two confessions (see [Ex - When You Come into the Land](#)) and ([Ey - The Year of the Tithe](#)), looked forward to the time when **Isra'el** would be settled in **their Land** and reaping the harvests. This confession, however, brings us back to the plains of Mo'ab where **Moshe** was equipping the younger generation to enter **the Land** of Promise.

A. This day: Every member of **God's** covenantal nation needed to live wholeheartedly in accordance with **His mitzvot**. **This day ADONAI your God is commanding you to do these statutes and ordinances - so you are to take care and do them with all your heart and with all your soul (26:16).** **This day**, and **today**, were the words **Moses** used frequently as he addressed **the people** (2:25, 4:26 and 29, 6:6, 7:11, 8:1 and 18, 10:13, etc). It was indeed a solemn time when **Moshe** reiterated the mitzvot and reviewed the nation's history. The future generation depended on **the people** receiving, understanding, and obeying **the Word of God** that **Moses** was sharing with **them**.

B. Today: By embracing **their** covenantal relationship with **YHVH, the Israelites** affirmed that **Ha'Shem** was **their God**, and that **they** were **His people**. **Their** promises to **walk, keep** and **obey**, would be the means by which **they** would demonstrate **their** identity as **the people of God** to the surrounding nations.⁵⁶⁸ **Today you have affirmed ADONAI as your God, that you will walk in His ways, keep His statutes, mitzvot and ordinances, and listen to His voice (26:17).** **God's statutes** (Hebrew: *hachukkim*, meaning *to write into law permanently*), **mitzvot**, and **ordinances** (Hebrew: *hammishpatim*, meaning *a judgment of the court*) needed to be observed for the nation to prosper. This triad: **mitzvot, statutes, and ordinances** appear in three other passages (5:31, 6:1, and 7:11), and embody everything that **God** commanded as a unit. The constant danger was that **the people** not receive **God's Word** into **their** hearts, but only hear it with **their** ears . . . and then forget it. Like **the Israelites** of **Yeshua's** day, **they** had ears but could not hear.

Messiah said: **This is why I speak to them in parables: Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. Otherwise, they might turn and be forgiven (Matthew 13:13; Mark 4:12).** **Jesus'** audiences were not denied the opportunity to believe in **Him**. But after persistently closing **their** minds to **His** message, **they** were excluded from further understanding **it** by **His** use of **parables**. Yet even **the parables**, which veiled the truth, were meant to provoke thought, enlighten and potentially reveal **it**. **The parables** uniquely preserved **people's** freedom to believe, while demonstrating that if such a decision is made, it is **the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8-9).**⁵⁶⁹ But because **the people** looked to the Sanhedrin to make a decision about the validity of **Christ's** messiahship and the

Jewish Supreme Court having rejected **Him**, the majority of **the people** started to turn against **the Son of God**.

Isaiah perfectly described the faithless **Jews** of **Yeshua's** day. **The parables fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them (Mattityahu 13:14-15).**

Isaiah wrote during a time of devastating judgment against the southern kingdom of Judah. While **Isaiah** was preaching **his** message of doom, King Uzziah died and the nation was plunged into some of the darkest days it had ever seen (see my commentary on [Isaiah Bo - In the Year King Uzziah Died](#)).

A mere casual acquaintance with **the Word** isn't sufficient. If **God's Word** is to nurture us and change us so that **God** can **bless** us (**Psalm 1:1-3**), we must devote our lives to it, heart and soul. **God** had claimed **Isra'el** for **His** own **people** and promised to **bless them** if **they** obeyed **Him** (**16:18**), and **Isra'el** had declared that **YHVH** was **their God** and that **they** would obey **Him**, "**Today you have affirmed ADONAI as your God, that you will walk in His ways, keep His statutes, mitzvot and ordinances, and listen to His voice**" (**26:17**). There was no doubt that **ADONAI** would keep **His** promises . . . would **Isra'el** keep **theirs**?

A. Now today: In accordance with **His** earlier declaration (**7:6**), **the LORD** affirms that **Isra'el** is **His** specially **chosen nation** and that **He** will one day set **them** in a grand position over all the nations of the world.⁵⁷⁰ **Now today ADONAI has affirmed you as His treasured people, as He promised you; that you are to keep all His mitzvot; that He will set you high above all the nations He has made, for praise, fame and honor; and that you are to be a holy people to ADONAI your God, as He has promised (26:18-19).**

God had great things planned for **Isra'el**, just as **He** has great things planned for each of **His children** (**Ephesians 2:10; First Corinthians 2:6-10**). If **the people** kept **their** covenant promises to **the LORD**, **He** would **bless** them and make **them a blessing**, but if **they** disobeyed **Him**, **He** would have to discipline **them**. **But My people would not listen to Me; Isra'el would not submit to Me. So, I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices. If My people would follow My ways, how quickly would I subdue their enemies and turn My hand against their foes . . . He would have fed**

them with the finest of wheat; with honey from the rock I would satisfy them (Psalm 81:11-14 and 16 NIV).

Yes, our salvation is secure (see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Ms - The Eternal Security of the Believer](#)), but if we disobey **His Word**, we not only miss out on **the many blessings** in this life, but also **crowns** in the next life (see the commentary on [Revelation Cc - For We Must All Appear Before the Judgment Seat of Christ](#)).

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, **You** are so wonderful! **You** plan the lives of **Your children** so they will have the greatest joy for all eternity, but just as it was important for **Isra'el** to keep the covenant promises to receive blessings, so it is important for those who follow **You** now to keep the covenant promises. A mere casual acquaintance knowledge of **You** and **Your Word** isn't sufficient. **Your Word** says: **They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved - you and your household" (Acts 16:31 NIV)**. Real believing is not a mere head nod of approval, but it is a heart love that bows the knee to you by making you their **Lord**. **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. For the Scripture says, "Whoever trusts in Him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all - richly generous to all who call on Him (Romans 10:9-12)**. Praise **You** that those who choose to love and worship **You** as their **Lord** and **Savior**, **You** call your own **children**. **But whoever did receive Him, those trusting in His name, to these He gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12)**. **You** are so indescribably awesome in love, in holiness, in patience, in mercy, in grace and in everything that is good. Words are not superlative enough to express how worthy **You** are of all our love and obedience! I love **You** and want to honor **You** in all I do, think and feel. In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*