

Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9^{iv} and Psalm 15^v

So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the LORD your God with which I am charging you.

You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!” For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is whenever we call to him? And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today? But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children’s children.

^{iv} About Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9

Chapters 1-4 of the book of Deuteronomy outline God’s care for God’s people in the wilderness as the basis for obedience to the legal code set forth. Adherence to the law gives security and prosperity in the promised-land. Disobedience to God’s law forfeits the blessing. God’s word is not to be altered by addition or subtraction, a common warning in ancient legal codes, although the “statutes and ordinances” (v. 1) were later codified into 613 specific commandments.

For the Israelites, the law was a gift from God that expressed God’s guidelines for life in their special covenant relationship. Its possession was a privilege and it was regarded with reverence and admiration, for it evidenced God’s proximity to them and God’s intimacy with the chosen people. This heritage was to be transmitted faithfully to future generations.

^v Psalm 15^v

LORD, who may dwell in your tabernacle? *
who may abide upon your holy hill?
Whoever leads a blameless life and does what is right, *
who speaks the truth from his heart.

There is no guile upon his tongue;
he does no evil to his friend; *
he does not heap contempt upon his neighbor.
In his sight the wicked is rejected, *
but he honors those who fear the LORD.
He has sworn to do no wrong *
and does not take back his word.
He does not give his money in hope of gain, *
nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.
Whoever does these things *
shall never be overthrown.