

## STUDY 18

### Deuteronomy 6:13

**You shall fear the Lord your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name.**

Read the context: Deuteronomy 6:10-19

In verse 10, when it tells us that God promised the land to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, what does it say God did; or, to put it another way, how did He make that promise? He \_\_\_\_\_.  
Read Hebrews 6:13-20. According to verse 13, what did God do when He made the promise to Abraham? Whom did He swear by? Why? (still in vs. 13)

Why do men swear by something? (Heb. 6:16) And by whom or by what do they swear? (same vs.)

Why did God confirm His promise to Abraham with an oath? (2 reasons: one in Heb. 6:17 & one in vs. 18)

What are the “two immutable things” talked about in Heb. 6:18?

What does the hope we have, based on the 2 immutable things, act as? (Heb. 6:19)

How we need that! Through all the storms of life that test our faith and buffet us with temptations of doubt and fear, we have an anchor for our souls that is wrapped around the 2 immovable rocks of God’s promise and God’s oath. What 2 things do we learn about God from Hebrews 6:13 & 18?

God promised He would give them the land and He confirmed it with an oath, an oath that was based on His own character and power and greatness. There never was nor is nor ever will be anyone greater or more powerful. He swore by Himself and that settled it. It was a done deal. End of discussion. Period. He cannot lie nor can anyone thwart Him.

We’ll look more closely at other aspects of Deuteronomy 6:10-12 when we study a fear of the Lord verse in Deuteronomy 8. For this study we’ll focus on verses Deuteronomy 6:13-19.

In the verse for today, Deuteronomy 6:13, what are the 3 commands? It seems to me that the last 2 commands are subordinate to the first one. In other words, we serve Him because we fear Him. Hebrews 12:28 seems to bear this out. According to that verse, how are we to serve God? How does the fear of the Lord shape our service? Why would it make our service more acceptable to God?

And we take oaths in His Name because we fear Him. We believe in His power and greatness and we know we can swear by no one greater.

What does Jesus say about the swearing of oaths in Matthew 5:33-37, particularly verse 34? List the 4 things the people would swear by. Why does Jesus say not to swear by any of these

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things? What were they to do instead? (verse 37) Where does Jesus say this need to add strength to your words comes from? James 5:12 reiterates these words of Jesus. What does James say we should not swear by? What reason does James give for his warning?

Yet Deuteronomy 6:13 instructs us to take our oaths in His Name. Read also Matthew 23:16-22. What were the people of Jesus' day swearing by according to these verses? Were the people obeying Deuteronomy 6:13? What had they made more significant than God? And what were they failing to understand according to Matthew 23:17, 19-22?

They tried to add confirmative weight to their promises by swearing on all kinds of things that they valued, but which in reality were of lesser value. They were not walking in the fear of the Lord but in the awe of created things and things of their own doing. They valued their gifts that they brought to offer on the altar, but not the altar that set the gift apart as a sacrifice to cleanse their sins; they valued the gold, but not the temple where God dwelt among His people; they were enamored with the stars and the vastness of the heavens, but not with the One who is seated above and beyond the stars and who created them all with a simple, offhanded word ("And He made the stars also!"). This was a veneer of spirituality over the rotten wood of hypocrisy.

The command in Deuteronomy 6:13 to take oaths in His Name is quite different. There is a contrast here in verses 13-15. What were they warned not to go after in Deuteronomy 6:14? God knew it would be a temptation because it was going to be all around them. Rather they were to fear the **Lord**, serve **Him**, and take their oaths in **His** Name. They were to obey and keep their commitments because they feared the Lord. The fear of the Lord was to change them and make them a different people from the people around them who served other gods. If the people turned to go after other gods, what would this cause? (vs. 15) This is what we must fear. God is not just a God of love, but He is also a God of wrath. If you don't like that idea or think that He was only that way in the Old Testament but has changed and is no longer that way in the New Testament, do a concordance or google word search on the wrath/anger of God. Jesus displayed the wrath of God when He overturned the tables and made a whip to drive out the animals in the temple. The wrath of God was poured out upon Jesus on the cross for your sin and mine. And there are many warnings about the fire of hell, especially from Jesus, in the New Testament.

What would the anger of God cause? This is why God urges the people (and us) so strongly and so repeatedly to fear Him, to love Him, to serve Him only. He longs for our safety and well-being; He desires to protect us. Leaving total allegiance to the one true God and thinking we can break His laws without any negative consequences will lead to our destruction. That is just the Truth about the universe; that is reality.

What do we learn about God in verse 15? Why is He this way? Why or under what circumstances is jealousy aroused in a person? See Proverbs 6:34 and II Corinthians

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11:2. Jealousy is the response of an exclusive love relationship. God wants us for His own in an exclusive love relationship. Anything less will destroy us.

What are the people commanded not to do in verse 16? Read the story in Exodus 17:1-7. In what manner did the people ask for water in verse 2? What did they accuse Moses and God of in verse 3? What does Moses tell God the people were about to do? What question did they ask in verse 7? You can almost hear the tone of challenge and disdainful doubt in their question. They were not bringing their need before God, trusting Him to supply. Rather, they were doubting His goodness and His kind intention. They were demanding and tempting Him to anger. Massah means tempted. Oh, if we would only believe God's kind intention toward us!

What are the 2 exhortations or commands given in Deuteronomy 6:17-18? What are the 2 purposes given in verse 18 for those commands? And what does God promise to do in verse 19? Metaphorically, in the spiritual realm of our hearts, this is also what God wants to do for us. This is His kind intention toward us, His purpose behind every command.

Let us return one final time to Deuteronomy 6:13: Fear, serve, take oaths. Read Genesis 17:1. What does God tell Abraham to do? This, I think, is the essence of the fear of the Lord: Walk before Me – and be blameless. This is why Jesus could say not to take oaths at all. Just live before God, in the continual awareness that you are in His Presence, in complete honesty and integrity: be blameless in word and deed. Live in the fear of the Lord.

Take some time in prayer, asking God to help you review the words of your mouth. Have you said you'd do something and not followed through? Is your word reliable because you walk in the fear of the Lord? Matthew 12:36-37 does not mention the fear of the Lord, but it certainly contains the fear of the Lord. Pray over these verses.

Are you serving Him only? Or are you distracted by the things of the world? Pray Psalm 86:11-13. There's a song based on this verse that says, "Give me a totally undivided heart."

Add to your Fear of the Lord list what you have learned from this verse study.