November 22, 2026 – "Listen Long And Prosper" – Deuteronomy 6:1-25

In 1967 the *Star Trek* character Spock first said the Vulcan blessing, "live long and prosper". German philosopher Fredrich Nietzsce wrote,

> The essential thing in heaven and earth is…that there should be long obedience in the same direction; there thereby results, and has always resulted in the long run, something which has made life worth living. (quoted by Eugene Peterson in ***A Long Obedience in the Same Direction***, IVP, 2000 13)

Today we examine Deuteronomy 6. Our sermon is "**Listen Long And Prosper**." We are concerned with a "long listening" to God's commands, not veering to the right or left in our response to God (Deut 5:32).

But this is problematic if we believe obedience is "personal performance". The Ten Commandments are humanly impossible to obey! But they are realized in Jesus - the Law "tutors" us to Him! (Gal 3:11,24)

Proposition

This is the final sermon in our series is "**Walking in the Way of God**". We have focused on Deuteronomy 1-6 and the way that Moses prepared God's people to cross over into Canaan. Moses preached three sermons which comprise most of the book. What we encounter as we shift from Deuteronomy 5 to 6 seems like the process of an horn.

Air comes into the system	*Air is pressurized and over reed*	*Air blasts out in sound*
"Ten Words" – 5:8-21	"Shama" – 6:4-5	"Commands, decrees, laws" – 6:1ff
Inspiration	**Concentration**	**Dispersion**

[1] Inspiration – vv. 1-3

Chapter 6 starts with a summary that links to the Ten Commandments. Moses obediently brought God's Law to Israel. These were God's commands (***mitsvah***), statutes (***choq***), and judgments (***mishpat***).

- ***a. So that Israel would live obediently in the land of promise – v.1***
- ***b. So that Israel's obedient living would be generational – v.2***
- ***c. So that Israel's generations would increase and be blessed – v.3***

God's gift of possessing the land is connected to His choice of Israel as His possession. They were redeemed from Egypt to be "*the* "*people of His inheritance*" (***nachalah*** "possession; property" 4:20). Only as people possessed **by** God could Isreal possess blessings **from** God! A. B. Simpson writes of this:

I have learned the wondrous secret of abiding in the Lord; I have found the strength and sweetness of confiding in His word;
I have tasted life's pure fountain, I am trusting in his blood, I have lost myself in Jesus, I am sinking into God.
I am crucified with Jesus, and he lives and dwells in me, I have ceased from all my struggling, 'tis no longer I, but he;
All my will is yielded to him, and his Spirit reigns within, And his precious blood each moment, keeps me cleansed and free from sin.
For my words I take His wisdom, for my works His Spirit's power, For my ways his gracious Presence, guards and guides me every hour
Of my heart he is the Portion, of my joy the ceaseless Spring Saviour, the Sanctifier, Keeper, Glorious Lord and coming King

[2] Concentration – vv. 4-5

After air comes in the air horn, it is compressed and moves over a diaphragm. In Deuteronomy 4, God's commands – the first of the ten in particular – is compressed into the ***Shama***. This is a special term which

"*moves beyond act of detecting sound; it unites hearing, attentive consideration, responsive obedience; embraces physical hearing, intellectual grasp, and moral response such as submission or obedience*." (Bible Hub) ***Shama*** was used often in Deuteronomy 1:45; 2:25; 3:26; 4:1,6,35; 5:1; 6:3. (see Bible Project Video)

The ***Shama*** is a powerful, beloved prayer-declaration of God's **unrivaled singularity** (v.4; 4:35,39) and that He deserves **complete devotion**. All of our **heart**, **soul**, and **strength** are involved. This is Law in concentrated form! When a Jewish teacher asked which was the greatest command, Jesus intensified further in Mark 12:29-31: He added the dimension of intellect and the responsibility to love others.

It is no different for believers today than it was so many centuries ago. To obey God fully, we need to love Him fully. Even spectacular spirituality is a train wreck when it is absent of love – see I Corinthians 13!

[3] Dispersion – vv. 6-25

Once air moves across a diaphragm, sound disperses widely through the bell of the horn. What about the commands of God? How does the follower of Jesus **disperse** His instructions?

a. Repetition – vv. 6-9

To repeat diligently (v.7) "*paints the picture of something honed to a keen edge. Whether the object is a blade, an arrow, a tongue, or even the inner conscience, the verb signals deliberate sharpening so that the point will strike true*." (Bible Hub) This involves one's heart, speech, and daily activity. Reminders were to be affixed to the hand, forehead, doorposts, and gates. This is intensive and intentional.

b. Remembrance – vv. 10-12

It was reasonable for Israel to expect to enjoy all the promises of the land: "*splendid cities…houses full of all good things…cisterns…vineyards and olive trees*." (vv.10-11). This came with a caution: "*be careful that you do not forget the Lord.*" (v.12) Israel did not build, carve, or plant! God gifted these good things to them in Canaan. We must remember that God is the **redeemer** and we are merely **receivers**!

c. Regulation – vv. 13-19

In these verses we find four instances of "*you shall"* and two instances of "*you shall not".* If we are going to comply with the command "fear only the Lord your God" we will need some **spiritual regulation**. Just like healthy emotional regulation, in our journey with God we will need to be responsive to opportunities for healthy **action** and healthy **restraint.** As we are assured, this is "*so that it may go well for you"* (v.18).

d. Redemption – vv. 20-25

As recipients of God's gracious deliverance from slavery, Israel was not doing any redeeming. But they were called to remain rooted in the redemption given them by God. These verses describe a normalized and habitual explanation what God had accomplished: "*He brought us out of there in order to bring us in*" (v.23). Is it part of our routine to consider, communicate, and celebration redemption in Christ.

Conclusion – Digging Deeper

Eugene Peterson wrote his book ***A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*** as a discipleship exploration of the "Songs of Ascents" (Psalms 120-134) He quotes William Faulkner about this Scripture "songbook".

> They are not monuments, but footprints. A monument only says, "At least I got this far," while a footprint says, "This is where I was when I moved again". (22)

You might not think of Deuteronomy as a songbook! But it documents where Israel was when God moved them into the Land of Promise. Where are you? What is the next step to which God is calling you? It is essential we are diligent at documenting the work of God in our lives so that we can share with others.