**The Lord Our God is One**

*Deuteronomy 6:4-5*

**Introduction**

1. As Israel was soon to inhabit the promised land of Canaan, Moses recited and enjoined upon the hearts of the people the Law God had given them.
2. As the first of the 10 commandments reflects, a primary point of emphasis was the singularity of the true God in a land (Canaan) full of false gods (**cf. Deuteronomy 5:6-7**).
3. The fact that the God of the Israelites was the one and only true God, and that they belonged to Him, brought great responsibility upon the people.
4. **Deuteronomy 6:4-5** – stresses the nature of God and His relation to Israel, as well as the appropriate response God desires from them.
5. **Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11** – reflection on the history of God’s people in the OT should strengthen our resolve to serve Him acceptably and refine our understanding of what that looks like on an everyday basis.
6. The Singularity of God
7. His Exclusivity
   1. **Deuteronomy 6:4** – yhwh (The Lord)/elôhîym (our God)/yhwh (the Lord)/’eḥâḏ (one)
      1. Places the personal name of God (yhwh) with the general word for gods (elôhîym), and stresses that He is exclusive from all others, and is the only true God.
      2. **Cf. 1 Corinthians 8:4-6** – not lending credence to the existence of another/other gods but noting the sinful practice of idolatry.
   2. Exclusivity emphasized:
      1. Spiritual Nature (contrasted w/ idols) – **Deuteronomy 4:12, 15-18**
      2. Unique Power (only experienced in favor by Israel) – **Deuteronomy 4:32-35, 39**
         1. He is the only One – **Deuteronomy 6:4; 7:9; 10:17**
      3. Extended Love to Israel – **Deuteronomy 4:37-38; 7:6-8**
   3. Do not forget it – **Deuteronomy 6:4, 12-15**
8. Israel’s Required Devotion
   1. **Deuteronomy 6:4-5** – the exclusivity/singularity of God demanded the nature of the Israelites devotion to be the same – exclusive/singular/entire.
      1. **All** – i.e. leaving nothing for anyone/anything else – nothing halfway.
      2. **Heart** – seat of the emotions (especially love), will – not to be reluctant, or insincere.
      3. **Soul** – principle of life itself.
      4. **Strength** – all your energy of body and soul.
   2. Love was to be shown by walking according to the commandments of the Lord:
      1. Christ’s explanation as to why it is the greatest of commands – **Matthew 22:40** – obey commands from love, but love by obeying commands.
      2. Prior to “Shema” – **Deuteronomy 6:1-3**
      3. Following “Shema” – **Deuteronomy 6:6, 16-17** – (**v. 6** – in heart, not reluctant rote observation, but sincere devoted love)
      4. **Deuteronomy 10:12; 11:1, 13, 22** – love, obedience, fear, whole heart.
      5. In every aspect of life– **Deuteronomy 6:6-9** – i.e. His word/commandments are always before you.
   3. Such love required remembrance of God’s word, and rejection of all else – **Deuteronomy 8:1-3; 13:1-4**
9. Israel’s Benefit
   1. The commandments are for their good – **Deuteronomy 6:20-25**
      1. Past record of God’s beneficence – **(vv. 21-23)** – exodus, intention to bring to promised land.
      2. Commands for good – **(v. 24)**
      3. Will stand righteous before God – **(v. 25)**
   2. Blessings promised upon obedience – **Deuteronomy 28:1-14**
10. The Preeminence of Christ
11. His Exclusivity
    1. **Colossians 1:18** – He has the preeminence.
       1. Preeminence – *prōteuō* – to hold the highest rank in a group, be first, have first place (BDAG)
       2. ***“that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.” (NASB)***
    2. Preeminence in Existence – **Colossians 1:15a**
       1. Called ***“the Son of His [the Father] love” (v. 13)***.
       2. He is ***“the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person” (Hebrews 1:3).***
       3. **John 8:23-24, 58** – He is the “I AM” – eternal one.
       4. Bodily – **Colossians 2:9** – “The person is ever the eternal Son of God. Our poor intellect vainly seeks to conceive what the Scriptures state in this simple way. It will ever be beyond human conception even as in the whole universe no other being that has two such natures in one person exists.” (Lenski)
    3. Preeminence in Creation – **Colossians 1:15b-17**
       1. Firstborn over creation – not the first created thing. Explained 🡪
       2. **(v. 16)** – for He created all.
          1. Cannot mean He is first created being with this explanation.
          2. Figurative – privilege, rank, status.
          3. ***“through Him and FOR HIM”*** – He is the fulfillment of creation – created to glorify Him!
       3. **(v. 17)** – sustainer – owe existence in all ways – past, present, future.
    4. Preeminence in Spiritual Creation – **Colossians 1:18**
       1. **(v. 18)** – His resurrection from the dead was the impetus for the rise of the eternal kingdom – the body of the redeemed. (**Cf. Colossians 1:13**)
          1. Reason for new creation – **2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:10**
       2. **Colossians 1:19-22** – reconciliation to God is only through Him.
          1. **(vv. 19-20)** – reconciliation only in Him because of peace by the blood.
          2. **(vv. 21-20)** – only at peace with God because of what Christ’s death accomplished for you.
       3. United w/ death and resurrection of Preeminent one in baptism – **Colossians 2:12**
12. Our Required Devotion
    1. The appropriate response to the preeminence of Christ is to give His word free course in our lives – **cf. John 8:24, 31-32, 37**
    2. Paul made strenuous effort for the Colossians lest they allow some to distract them from, and rob them of the true substance in Christ:
       1. **Colossians 2:1-3** – treasure of wisdom and knowledge in Christ.
       2. **(v. 4)** – not deceived by persuasive words.
          1. Wrong in substance.
          2. Convincing in thought – to those untrained.
       3. **(v. 8)** – not philosophy, tradition of men.
          1. Philosophy that boasts of much but is vain (empty) – deceptive.
          2. Tradition of men – seeking substance with what is from man instead of God. (**cf. Matthew 15:3)**
       4. Rather, in Christ:
          1. **(v. 5)** – faith in Christ.
          2. **(vv. 6-7)** – walk in Him , the faith as taught.
          3. **(vv. 9-10)** – Complete in Christ.
    3. The appropriate response to the preeminence of Christ – entire love and devotion.
       1. **Love is the consecration and consummation of human energy.**
          1. Consecration – all our capability given by God is set apart for the purpose of love.
          2. Consummation – of all things we have the ability to do, love is the greatest and fullest realization of the capacity of human ability.
       2. **John 14:15; 1 John 5:3** – keep commandments.
       3. The appropriate response to the singularity of Jehovah – **Deuteronomy 6:4-5** – Love with ALL… - devoted keeping of the commands.
       4. So it is with Christ – ENTIRE – ALL, HEART, SOUL, STRENGTH.
    4. Practicality of such:
       1. Set minds on things above where Christ is – **Colossians 3:1-3**
       2. Word dwells in you richly – **Colossians 3:16**
       3. Entire life, in all areas, activities, relationships, do what Christ dictates by His word – **Colossians 3:17** – AND BE THANKFUL, not resentful.
       4. **Colossians 3:18-4:1** – wives, husbands, children, fathers, bondservants (employees?), masters (employers, bosses?).
          1. NOTE – ***“fitting in the Lord,” “pleasing to the Lord,” “fearing God,” (v. 23), “knowing that you also have a Master in heaven”***
       5. **DO NOT COMPARTMENTALIZE YOUR LIFE – These principles aren’t just for the church collectively, nor for what we might categorize as merely “religious observance.”**
          1. **Romans 12:1** – living sacrifice.
          2. **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** – belong to Him, use such to glorify Him.
          3. We don’t consult human wisdom, philosophy, etc. for any area of our life! We “do all in the name of the Lord!”
13. Our Benefit
    1. In this devotion we will be presented blameless before God – **Colossians 1:22-23**
    2. All of this – Christ living in us through His word – is in hope of glory – **Colossians 1:27**
    3. We will appear with Him in glory – **Colossians 3:4**
    4. NOT by giving some of our life to Him, NOR even MOST of our life to Him.
    5. THIS IS ONLY HOPE FOR THOSE WHO REFLECT THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST IN THEIR LIVES – i.e. He has first rank in your heart, and is a part of everything you think and do.

**Conclusion**

1. **Deuteronomy 6:4-5** – we know the history and understand the gravity of these words.
   1. The Israelites were not given room for compromise, nor a less than entire devotion to God.
2. We are not called to a lesser standard than they. We are called to a greater standard!
3. If you know the Lord is one, and Christ is the preeminent one, are you living in such a way to reflect that in your life?