

The Foreigners Living in Your Towns



SABBATH—OCTOBER 23

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Deuteronomy 10:14–16; Deuteronomy 10:17–19; Matthew 7:12; Deuteronomy 16:19.

MEMORY VERSE: “So show your love for the stranger. For you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 10:19, NLV).

LAST WEEK, we read about the Jewish teacher who asks Jesus a question about the law. The teacher wants to know, “Which is the most important of all the commandments?” (Mark 12:28, NlrV). Jesus answers first by saying that God is the only God. Then Jesus tells the teacher to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength” (Mark 12:30, ERV). “This is the first Law” (Mark 12:30, NLV).

Jesus does not stop there. He also talks about “the second most important command” (Mark 12:31, ERV). Do you see that the teacher of the law does not ask Jesus about this second law? But Jesus tells him about this law anyway. Why? Because the second law also is important. So, Jesus says, “The second most important command is this: “Love your neighbor the same as you love yourself”” (Mark 12:31, ERV). Jesus wants to be sure we know that these laws are very important. So, Jesus adds, “No law is greater [more important] than these laws” (Mark 12:31, WE).

No laws more important than these two laws? That is right. That is why Jesus connects love for God and love for our neighbor in one law: love. Our love for other people is a way we show our love for God.



The teacher wants to know, “Which is the most important of all the commandments?” (Mark 12:28, NlrV).

**“ ‘GIVE YOUR HEARTS TO GOD’ ”
(Deuteronomy 10:14–16)**

Deuteronomy 10 talks more about the agreement between God and His people. God says how much He wants to keep the past agreement He made with Israel. For sure, much of Deuteronomy shows us that God wants to continue His agreement. Yes, God wants to keep the agreement with His people after their awful sin at Horeb. Remember what happened at Horeb as soon as Moses left the people alone for a little while? They started to worship the gold cow. But God was not done with His people. Not then, and not now. God continues to love them.

Read Deuteronomy 10:1–11. What is happening in these verses? How does the story here help us understand that God forgives His people for their sin? How do these verses also show the people that God wants to keep the agreement promises He made to their fathers in the past?

Moses smashed the Ten Commandments, which God wrote on “ ‘two pieces of stone’ ” (Deuteronomy 9:17, NLV). The broken stones showed that the people broke the agreement with God. “Moses wanted to show the people how much he hated their crime. So, Moses threw down the stones of the agreement. The stones broke in front of the people. This act showed the people they broke their agreement with God, So, God also broke His agreement with them.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 320, adapted.

Later, the Lord asks Moses to cut two new pieces of stone the same as the first that Moses broke. Then God writes on them the words that were on the first stones. When God writes the law on the new stones, He shows His people that He forgives them.

Read Deuteronomy 10:14–16. What does God say in these verses to His people?

What does God want from His people? He wants their minds and hearts. That is, God wants their trust and their love. The people are stubborn. So often, they do not obey the Lord. That is why Moses says, “ ‘Stop being stubborn. Give your hearts to God’ ” (Deuteronomy 10:16, ERV).

Think about all the times God forgives you. What does His forgiveness show you about His mercy?



God wants to keep the agreement with His people, even after their awful sin at Horeb.

LOVE THE STRANGER (Deuteronomy 10:17–19)

Moses warns the people not to fail to keep the agreement. Moses also tells the people that God is very powerful: “The heavens [the skies] belong to the LORD your God. Even [also] the highest [the most far away] heavens [stars and planets] belong to him. He owns the earth and everything in it” (Deuteronomy 10:14, NIV). Moses shows us that God controls everything. We also see this idea in other parts of the Bible: “The earth and everything on it belong to the LORD” (Psalm 24:1, ERV).

Read Deuteronomy 10:17–19. What else does Moses say in these verses about the Lord? More important, what does the Lord command His people to do because of this announcement?

God is the King of heaven and earth. Moses explains that the Lord also is the “the greatest [most powerful] God of all. He is the greatest LORD of all” (Deuteronomy 10:17, NIV). Is Moses saying there are other gods? Not at all! There are no other gods. Moses uses language in a special way in this verse. He wants to show Israel that God is more than the only God. God is above everyone and everything in heaven and earth, real or make believe. That is why God announces, “ ‘ “Now, see that I, and only I, am God! There is no other God!” ’ ” (Deuteronomy 32:39, ERV).

What else does Moses say about God? “He is the great [powerful] God. He is mighty and wonderful. He treats [judges and loves] everyone the same. He doesn’t accept any money from those [people] who want special favors” (Deuteronomy 10:17, NIV). These verses are part of a bigger message: the Lord is the God of Israel. The people must be sure to obey Him.

Moses wants the people to understand another important idea, too. This same mighty and all-powerful God also cares about orphans, widows, and strangers. God sees when a small bird falls to the ground (Matthew 10:29). So, He knows about the troubles of the needy and the helpless. God wants His people to care for the helpless and needy, too. That is why God makes loving other people part of His agreement.



God sees when a small bird falls to the ground. So, He knows about the troubles of the needy and the helpless.

What is the message of Psalm 146:5–10? How does this message show us the Bible truth about God in Deuteronomy? What does this message in Psalm 146 mean to us today?

**BECAUSE YOU WERE STRANGERS IN EGYPT
(Deuteronomy 10:19)**

What message does Moses give in Deuteronomy 10:19 to the Israelites? What message is there for us, too?

Hundreds of years earlier, God told Abram: “ ‘You can be sure of what I am about to tell you. For 400 years, your family who comes after you will be strangers in another country. They will become slaves there and will be treated [the way people feel about you and the things they do to you because of their feelings] badly’ ” (Genesis 15:13, NIV; read also Genesis 17:8; Acts 13:17). Everything God tells Abram happens exactly as God says. In Exodus, we read the surprising story about how God saves and frees the Israelites from the Egyptians (Exodus 15:13; Exodus 14:13). This story is a word picture for the mercy God shows us in Jesus. In Deuteronomy 10:19, God wants His people to remember what He saved them from. God also wants them to remember what they used to be: foreigners in another land.

In other words, God wants His people to remember what the Egyptians did to them. The Egyptians were stronger than the Israelites. Often, the Egyptians were not fair or kind. They used their strength to hurt the people of God. That is why God wanted His people to remember how they felt when they were slaves. Yes, God chose Israel to be His special people and a kingdom of religious leaders (Exodus 19:6). So, God separated His people from other people. But that is where the separation ended. For sure, Israel was different from other people in many things. But God expected His people to be as fair and nice to other people as they wanted God to be to them.

Read Matthew 7:12. In what way does this verse show us how the Lord wanted the Israelites to be kind and fair to other people?

People in Old Testament times were not very nice to other people who did not belong to their group, country, or religion. How did people during that time act and feel about strangers? As if the strangers were animals, and sometimes worse than that.

God did not want Israel to behave this way. God wanted Israel to show the people around them a better way to live. God planned for this better way of life to be a powerful witness to other people about God and their faith.



The Egyptians used their strength to hurt the people of God.

“ ‘ALWAYS BE FAIR’ ” (Deuteronomy 16:19, ERV)

God wants us to show everyone His love. How do we do that? Paul explains: “My little children, I am in pain again over you, like [the same as] a mother giving birth [when her child is being born]. I will feel this pain until people can look at you and see Christ [Jesus]” (Galatians 4:19, ERV). Before sin, we showed Jesus and His love: “So God created [made] humans in his own image [a copy of Himself]” (Genesis 1:27, ERV). Later, sin destroyed our connection to God. That is why God made His agreement with humans. His agreement made the way possible for His people to be examples of His love again. Moses explains how this love will cause humans to behave. Love causes us to be fair. That is why Moses said God does not trade His favor for money. So, we should do the same as God does.

What is the same message in each of the verses below?

Deuteronomy 1:16 _____

Deuteronomy 16:19 _____

Deuteronomy 24:17 _____

Deuteronomy 27:19 _____



People with money, power, and connections often escape punishment.

We all know stories about judges who are not fair to the poor and needy. We see that people with money, power, and connections often escape punishment. The Lord says that His people must not let this evil happen in Israel. The Israelites always must be fair in all their decisions. Everyone in Israel should get a fair decision in court.

God wants His people to be fair for another reason, too. When we show we are fair, other people see God and His love. God tells His people, “ ‘Be holy, because I am holy’ ” (Leviticus 19:2, NIV). The Israelites knew who God was. They knew the right way to worship God and the correct offerings to bring Him, too. But what good does that knowledge do them if they are not fair to the poor?

Read Amos 2:6; Amos 4:1; Amos 5:11; Isaiah 3:14, 15; Isaiah 10:1, 2; and Jeremiah 2:34. What warnings do these verses give the Israelites about not hurting the weak and helpless? How should these verses cause us to live today?

THE RELIGION GOD ACCEPTS (James 1:27–2:11)

Read Deuteronomy 24:10–15. What important rules do these verses show us about how we should be nice to the people who are under our control?

Again, these verses show us that God expects us to be nice to people. What if someone owes you something? God expects you to show this person some respect. Do not barge into his house and order him to give back the loan. Wait outside and let him come and give you the loan. Deuteronomy 24:12, 13 also shows that you should be nice to a poor person who owes you something. What if he gives you his coat as a promise that he will pay back a loan he borrowed? Fine, you may take his coat. But you must not keep his coat overnight. You must give it back to him so that he can keep himself warm. The other verses in this chapter show us that we must be nice to the poor who work for us. Do not hurt the poor in any way. In the eyes of God, hurting the poor is an awful sin. Again, God wants Israel to be His witnesses. He wants Israel to show His love to the people on the earth who worship false gods and practice evil and sin. But how can Israel show the love of God if they are not nice to people that are poor and helpless?

Read James 1:27–2:11. What does James say here? How do his words show the same thing the Lord tells His people in Deuteronomy 24? Do you see that James talks about the Ten Commandments when he talks about how people hurt the poor? Why do you think James connects the two ideas together?

Sure, the Ten Commandments do not talk about the rich and the poor exactly. But James wants us to see that we break the law when we hurt the poor or needy. We cannot keep the law if we behave in this awful way. Our faith is worth nothing if we hurt anyone. So, you must love your neighbor. Then you will show people the real meaning of the law of God. This love is present truth now, just as it was in the time of Moses and James. As we saw, present truth is the Bible truth people need most for their time.

As Seventh-day Adventists, why must we not hurt the poor and needy? How does James help us see that our helping the poor and needy is part of obeying the law?



You must love your neighbor.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: During the best of times, the people of God often were not nice or fair to poor and helpless people.

God warns His people that He will punish them for not showing mercy to the poor:

“ ‘You walk on [hurt] poor people.

You force them to give you grain.

You have built fancy houses of [from] cut stone.

But you will not live in them.

You have planted beautiful vineyards [grape gardens].

But you will not drink the wine from them.

It is because I know your many crimes.

I know your terrible [awful] sins.

You hurt people who do right.

You accept money to do wrong.

You keep the poor from getting justice [a fair chance] in court’ ” (Amos 5:11, 12, ICB).

God also sees every evil thing His people do against the poor. God sees when His people steal from the poor, too:

“The LORD judges the leaders and rulers [chiefs] of His people: ‘It is you who have destroyed the grape-field. What had belonged to the poor is in your houses’ ” (Isaiah 3:14, NLV).



Jesus wants us to be nice to other people.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

① Israel needed to remember that they were foreigners in Egypt. God wanted His people to be nice to foreigners in the way they wished the Egyptians were nice to them. In the same way, Jesus wants us to be nice to other people. When we look at the cross, we see that Jesus did so much for us. Why should this thought help us to be nice to other people?

② We can worship on the right day. We can understand Bible truth about death, hell, and the beast (also known as the wild animal power), and his mark. But how does that knowledge help us if we are mean and nasty to other people or are not fair when we judge a problem? Why must we be careful not to think that our knowing Bible truth is all that God asks of us? Why is this thinking a trap for us?

TEXT MESSAGES ABOUT JESUS

Kim Hye-sun is a Christian in South Korea. Hye-sun loves Jesus. She wants to learn more about the Bible. So, she joins a Bible study with friends. But Hye-sun has trouble understanding the study. So, she stops going.

Hye-sun has a car and drives herself everywhere. But today, she decides to take the bus. She waits at the bus stop in front of her house. Two women next to her are having a conversation. They are very excited. One woman shows her cell phone to her friend and says, "Read this message! Someone sends me a message every day. I love them!"

"Really?" the other woman says. "Let me see."

Hye-sun wants to see the message, too. She does not often talk to strangers. But she is curious about the message. "May I see the message, too?" she asks.

Hye-sun reads the message on the cell phone. The message says: "Every flower that opens and all the new grass show us that 'God is love.' Everything in nature tells us about the love of God. The lovely birds tell us that 'God is love' when they fill the air with their happy songs. The flowers with their beautiful colors and perfume tell us that 'God is love,' too. The tall trees in the forest also tell us that 'God is love.' All nature tells us that God cares for us. He is our Father. He wants to make His children happy."—*Steps to Christ*, page 10, adapted.

"Wow!" Hye-sun thinks to herself. "This is what I need!"

Soon, Hye-sun starts to get the daily messages, too. After some time, Hye-sun texts the person sending her the messages. Hye-sun asks for more information. The person mails her *The Great Controversy* and other books. Hye-sun answers every message she gets. She says thank you for the messages and the books.

The text messages come from Lim Myung-Sook, a Seventh-day Adventist. Myung-Sook prays that Hye-sun and other people will continue to read the messages and grow close to Jesus. Myung-Sook says, "I do not know how many people read these messages and whose lives are changed because of them. I just plant seeds about Bible truth. But I believe God will make the seed grow."

This story shows Mission Purpose number 1 of the "I Will Go" plan for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Purpose number 1 is: "Pastors and church members will share the Good News about Jesus with other people worldwide. We will show that sharing Jesus is a way of life. We will do whatever God asks us to do to share Jesus with other people." Learn more at IWillGo2020.org. This quarter, your 13th Sabbath offering will support church work in South Korea.

INSIDE
Story
by YOUNGSUK CHAE



"May I see the message, too?" Hye-sun asks.

