DEUTERONOMY

Chapter 10

*Tablets Like the First Ones*

**At that time the Lord said to me, “Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones and come up to me on the mountain. Also make a wooden chest. 2 I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. Then you are to put them in the chest.” 3 So I made the ark out of acacia wood and chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I went up on the mountain with the two tablets in my hands. 4 The Lord wrote on these tablets what he had written before, the Ten Commandments he had proclaimed to you on the mountain, out of the fire, on the day of the assembly. And the Lord gave them to me. 5 Then I came back down the mountain and put the tablets in the ark I had made, as the Lord commanded me, and they are there now. 6 (The Israelites traveled from the wells of the Jaakanites to Moserah. There Aaron died and was buried, and Eleazar his son succeeded him as priest. 7 From there they traveled to Gudgodah and on to Jotbathah, a land with streams of water. 8 At that time the Lord set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister and to pronounce blessings in his name, as they still do today. 9 That is why the Levites have no share or inheritance among their brothers; the Lord is their inheritance, as the Lord your God told them.) 10 Now I had stayed on the mountain forty days and nights, as I did the first time, and the Lord listened to me at this time also. It was not his will to destroy you. 11 “Go,” the Lord said to me, “and lead the people on their way, so that they may enter and possess the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.”**

**10:1–11** Cf Ex 34. (TLLSB)

**10:1–3** *chest … ark.* Both words translate the same Hebrew word, which means “chest” or “box.” After initially translating “chest” for clarity, the NIV reverts to the more traditional and familiar rendering “ark.” (CSB)

**10:1** *two stone tablets.* See note on Ex 31:18. (CSB)

**10:2** *put them in the chest.* See notes on Ex 16:34; 25:16. (CSB)

Moses had smashed the first tablets in anger over the golden calf. After forgiving the Israelites, God inscribed two new tablets. (TLSB)

**10:3** Ex 34–37 shows that the order of events here is different from that in Exodus (see Introduction: Structure and Outline). Moses seems to be telescoping two events: the preparation of the tablets and their being placed later into the ark of the covenant, or he may be referring to a temporary chest in which the tablets were kept. (CSB)

Moses constructed a container to house God’s Law. This was perhaps only a temporary housing for the two tablets of the Law until the more permanent ark of the covenant was built (Ex 25:16, 21; 40:20). (TLSB)

**10:6–9** A historical parenthesis, apparently stemming from Moses’ prayer for Aaron and the Israelites (9:26–29) and the reference to the ark (vv. 1–5). (CSB)

Refers to events that happened after Israel’s departure from Sinai. They show that God had indeed forgiven His people. (TLSB)

**10:6** *There Aaron died*. God might have struck Aaron dead at Mount Sinai, but thanks to Moses’ intercessory prayer (9:26–29), Aaron survived. God graciously restored the priesthood to Aaron. (TLSB)

**10:7** Listed here are the places where the Israelites camped after departing Kadesh-barnea. Some places were not recorded in Nu 33:37. (TLSB)

**10:8** *carry the ark.* See note on Nu 1:50. *to minister.* See note on 21:5. (CSB)

**10:9** See Nu 18:20, 24. (CSB)

**10:10** Refers to Moses’ second period of fasting (9:25–29). (TLSB)

*unwilling to destroy you*. Although God wanted to destroy the Israelites, He responded to Moses’ intercessory pleas and relented (Ex 32:14). (TLSB)

**10:11** God’s forgiveness is complete. The Israelites are granted permission to enter the land God had promised their ancestors. (TLSB)

**10:1–11** Moses reminds the Israelites of their idolatry at Sinai. Only Moses’ prayer of intercession spared them. God inscribed two new tablets with His precious commands and promised to lead the Israelites into Canaan. Today, pray for yourself and others who face temptation. Take comfort in the promise that Jesus intercedes for you and will be with you amid all struggles. • Lord, have mercy on us and hear our cry for greater faith and greater faithfulness. Amen. (TLSB)

*Fear the Lord*

**12 And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to observe the Lord’s commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good? 14 To the Lord your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. 15 Yet the Lord set his affection on your forefathers and loved them, and he chose you, their descendants, above all the nations, as it is today. 16 Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer. 17 For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. 18 He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. 19 And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt. 20 Fear the Lord your God and serve him. Hold fast to him and take your oaths in his name. 21 He is your praise; he is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes. 22 Your forefathers who went down into Egypt were seventy in all, and now the Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky.**

**10:12** *fear the Lord*. See note on Ge 20:11. (CSB)

*love him.* See notes on 4:29, 37; 6:5. (CSB)

**10:13** *for your own good.* See 6:24; see also note on 6:2. (CSB)

**10:14** *heaven of heavens*. The highest heaven. (TLSB)

**10:15** *chose*. God’s chosen people are sinners. They bring no special qualities to merit God’s favor, yet He chose them to be His people. God still initiates the relationship of faith today (Rm 5:8; 1Jn 4:10). (TLSB)

**10:16** *Circumcise your hearts.* See note on Ge 17:10. (CSB)

The call to circumcise the heart indicates that the human heart is by nature stubborn and rebellious toward God. A circumcised heart is a heart responding in faith to God’s grace. On the symbolism of circumcision, see note, Gn 17:12. (TLSB)

*stiff-necked.* See 9:6, 13; 31:27; see also note on Ex 32:9. (CSB)

**10:17–18** A creed-like statement. Many of God’s names found here are repeated elsewhere in Scripture (e.g., Ps 136:2–3; 1Tm 6:15; 2Sm 7:22; 1Ch 16:25; Ne 1:5; 8:6; Ps 48:1; Jb 36:5; Is 9:6; Jer 32:18; Ps 68:35; Dn 9:4). Isaiah uses the name “Mighty God” to describe the coming Messiah (Is 9:6). (TLSB)

**10:20** *Hold fast.* As a man is “united” to his wife (Ge 2:24), and as Ruth “clung” to Naomi (Ru 1:14). See 4:4; 11:22; 13:4; 30:20. (CSB)

Hbr *dabaq*, “cling”; the same word used of Adam and Eve (Gn 2:24) and of Ruth and Naomi (Ru 1:14). (TLSB)

**10:21** *He is your praise*. God desires that He alone be the focus of worship, for it is He who has rescued and forgiven His people. (TLSB)

**10:22** *seventy.* See notes on Ge 46:26–27; see also Ex 1:5. (CSB)

Jacob and his descendants, 70 in all, traveled to Egypt to join Joseph, who was already living there (Ex 1:1). By His grace, God grew these Israelites into a mighty nation. (TLSB)

*as the stars in the sky.* See note on 1:10. (CSB)

Hyperbole. A reminder of God’s faithfulness in fulfilling His promise to Abram. (TLSB)

**10:12–22** God desires that those who love Him realize that He has the awesome power to forgive sins. In respect of this power, and in honor due His holy name, the Israelites are to reflect God’s love back to Him in their words and actions. In so doing, they witness God’s love to the nations around them and to the foreigners among them. Reflected here is God’s desire that all should be saved and learn of His coming Messiah, Jesus. By God’s grace, we repent of our stubborness. Through Baptism, we are made new creatures (Rm 6:4), counting ourselves dead to sin and alive to God (Rm 6:11). • Precious Lord, almighty Father, we thank You for the abundant mercy You show to those who repent and turn away from their sins. Forgive us for the sake of Your dear Son. Amen. (TLSB)