



## Vaetchanan

*Devarim* (Deuteronomy) 3:23 - 7:11

As *Vaetchanan* begins, Moses continues his first discourses. He tells the Israelites how his plea to enter the Promised Land had been rejected, how he had viewed the land from Mount Pisgah, and how Joshua had been charged to carry out the conquest of Canaan.

To become a great and wise nation, the Children of Israel were exhorted to scrupulously observe G-d's statutes and ordinances. "You shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish it." They were not to forget the lesson of the Ten Commandments at Sinai, where the entire community heard the voice of G-d.

The second of the three speeches that comprise the Book of *Devarim* began with the Ten Commandments, slightly amended from their original form. The Book of *Shemot* commands us to "remember the *Shabbat*" while the Book of *Devarim* commands us to "observe the *Shabbat*." Moses then recalls the circumstances under which the Ten Commandments had been revealed. After repeating the story of Sinai, Moses proceeds to declare the *Shema*: "the other great foundation of the *Torah*" emphasizing G-d's oneness and Israel's undivided loyalty to Him.

This loyalty was to be achieved through observance and teaching of His Commandments, which were to be remembered by means of a "sign" upon the hand, "frontlets" between the eyes and "inscribed" on the doorposts of one's house.

The people were warned that when they've entered the Promised Land and enjoyed all its blessings, they were not to forget G-d or his wondrous acts in delivering them from Egypt.



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