**Deuteronomy 4:36-40**

[*https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/deut/deut-4/deuteronomy-436-40/*](https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/deut/deut-4/deuteronomy-436-40/)

*Since God is unique among the gods, Moses calls the Israelites to obey God’s precepts in order that they may live long in the Promised Land.*

In the previous sections, Moses asked three rhetorical questions to demonstrate the uniqueness of God. (A rhetorical question is a question that one asks to make a point rather than to get an answer). In asking these questions, Moses presented three important truths. First, God is unique because what He has done has never been reproduced by any human being or any gods. Second, no other nation (besides Israel) has ever heard the voice of God speaking “from the midst of the fire” and has “survived.” Third, no other god (besides Yahweh) was powerful enough to take a nation for himself and to make her special among the nations. Therefore, Moses concluded that God’s powerful acts demonstrate His uniqueness. He alone is God and “there is no other besides Him” (v. 35). This makes it clear that Yahweh is a worthy Suzerain, the greatest of all powers. No other ruler could be as worthy to serve.

Having demonstrated the uniqueness of the true God, Moses moved on to elaborate on the three rhetorical questions from the prior verses. He said, “*Out of heavens He [God] let you hear His voice to discipline you; and on earth He let you see His great fire, and you heard His words from the midst of the fire*.” Moses told the Israelites that the LORD’s purpose in speaking to them was to *discipline* them, that is, to provide them with the necessary training that would allow them to live in obedience to Him. The LORD spoke from heavens but manifested Himself on earth in the form of fire to give the people a sense of who He is.

Moreover, God chose the Israelites as His treasured possession not because they “were more in number than any of the peoples,” for they were the “fewest of all peoples” ([Deuteronomy 7:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+7.7&t=NASB95)). Rather, God *chose* them based upon His love for Israel’s ancestors. Moses argued, “*Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power, driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in and to give you their land for an inheritance, as it is today*.” God, the Great Suzerain, could demand obedience by His power. But He does much more: He loves.

God redeemed the Israelites from bondage in Egypt “with a strong hand and an outstretched arm” ([Psalms 136:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalms+136.12&t=NASB95)) and led them through “the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions”([Deuteronomy 8:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+8.15&t=NASB95)). He also drove many great nations before the Israelites and settled them in their place. All these mighty acts demonstrate God’s power over His created universe as well as His love for Israel’s ancestors.

Therefore, Moses concluded his exhortation with a strong call to covenant submission. He asked the people to recognize God’s sovereignty over the whole creation. God is a worthy Suzerain who should be obeyed. Moses told Israel that*the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other*. The words “heaven” and “earth” are employed as a figure of speech which combines two contrasting things to refer to an entirety. Here it shows that God is omnipresent; He is everywhere at the same time. Since God alone can be present everywhere, Moses urged the Israelites to keep God’s precepts. He declared, “*So you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today.”*

The great and powerful Suzerain Yahweh is to be obeyed. But this Suzerain also has made a covenant that if Israel will live in obedience, they will be blessed, *and that*they*may live long on the land which the LORD*their*God is giving*them*for all time*.” This is the “deal” in the covenant. If the Israelites keep the law, they will be blessed and live in the land. If they do not, they will be expelled from the land and be chastised. Keeping the LORD’s ordinances will guarantee Israel’s success because they and their children would live long in the Promised Land and would enjoy all its benefits.

**Biblical Text:**

**36 “Out of the heavens He let you hear His voice to discipline you; and on earth He let you see His great fire, and you heard His words from the midst of the fire. 37Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power, 38driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in *and* to give you their land for an inheritance, as it is today. 39Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the Lord, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other. 40So you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may live long on the land which the Lord your God is giving you for all time.”**