

INTRODUCTION 引言

The foundation of any relationship is love. You are willing to sacrifice time, money and resources for the people you love. Loving a person is straightforward, but loving a country seems vague. Some of us became U.S. citizens by naturalization. At the citizenship ceremony, you recited the Oath of Allegiance. You pledged to renounce loyalty to your former homeland, to obey the laws of the United States, and to serve in the military if called. You love this country by showing loyalty and making commitments. Yet today, people criticize how bad this nation is. Some wise folks respond bluntly: “If you don’t like it here, why not move to another country?” The fact is that love is essential to a relationship. Love demands actions. The same is true for our love to God. We must lay aside personal preferences and follow what God asks us to do. We trust that He always has our best interests in mind. Trust, obey and be blessed summarize the covenant God made with Israel. The book of Deuteronomy reflects on the failure of the generation that wandered in the wilderness. They rebelled against God. But God also offered hope. He promised a bright future if His people would return to Him. They could not undo their past, but they could choose a different future. We as Christians face the same choice every day. If we truly love God, we will listen to Him. Therefore, let loving God be the motivation behind our decisions and actions.

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. God’s Attributes 神的屬性

In the passage, Moses reminds the Israelites of the many ways God has shown His love to them. Then he urges his people to love God in return. God reveals His love through His attributes.

A. A Bountiful God 豐盛的神

First, He is a bountiful God. Verse 14 reminds us that everything in heaven and on earth belongs to Him. God is the Creator of all things. It is just as Genesis 1:1 declares: **In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.** Someone stated that if you can believe the first verse of the Bible, the rest becomes much easier to accept. God is the complete opposite to us. We are limited in every way; God is full of power, wisdom and knowledge. We cannot foresee the future; God is timeless. He has our lives and the whole human history in His plans. And after creating the universe, God did not just step back and let it run on its own. He continues to sustain everything by His power. He provides for our physical, emotional and spiritual needs. God also gives us the privilege to pray to Him. He promises to answer in His perfect timing when our requests align with His will. That is how God loves us — by caring for us out of His bountiful riches and endless grace.

B. A Powerful God 大能的神

God is not only a bountiful God. He is also a powerful God. Verse 15 tells us that He demonstrated His power by choosing Israel to be His own people. When you read through the Old Testament, you will realize that Israel was not an impressive nation. They lacked faith, they were often short-sighted, and they complained whenever hardships came their way. So why did God pick them? Deuteronomy 7:7 makes it clear: **“It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples.”** God had determined to love them. That is why people say: love is blind! The same is true for us today. God does not save us because we are good but because He is good to us. He loved us when we hated Him and were lost in sin. He redeemed us and continues to transform us by His power. We should forever be thankful to God. The fact that He can save anyone gives us hope. Continue to pray for your non-believing friends. God can turn them into His children.

C. A Merciful God 憐憫的神

Third, we have a merciful God. Verse 18 tells us that He protects and provides for the orphans, the widows, and the foreigners. In biblical times, these were the most vulnerable people in the society. They had no land, no stable source of income, and no one to stand up for their rights. The Israelites were helpless too when they were slaves in Egypt. They had no freedom, and they were constantly oppressed by slave-masters. But God showed mercy to them. He delivered them when there seemed to be no hope. God shows the same mercy to us when He saves us. Paul writes in Ephesians 2:4–5: **4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.** We were spiritually blind and dead in our sins. Yet God gave us new life in Christ. He brings outsiders in. He calls spiritual orphans to be His children.

D. A Faithful God 信實的神

God is not only bountiful, powerful, and merciful—He is also faithful. Moses reminds us in verse 20 that when the Israelites first arrived in Egypt, there were only 70 of them. Jacob’s family moved there because of a severe famine. Yet over the next 400 years, God multiplied them into more than two million people. In doing so, He fulfilled the promise He had made to Abraham: that his descendants would be countless, like the stars in the sky and the sand along the seashore. Jesus later renewed the covenant God made with Abraham. Those who are not Jews can become Abraham’s spiritual children too. Paul states in Galatians 3:29: **And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.** Being in Christ means we receive God’s blessings and enjoy His everlasting love as His children. Even when we stumble, God’s promises are unbreakable and unchangeable. God is faithful to the end.

2. Men's Tributes 人的敬意

After highlighting God's attributes, Moses goes on to explain how the Israelites should pay tribute to God. Keep in mind they were renewing the covenant with God. Think of it like a peace treaty between two nations—both sides agree to certain terms. In the same way, God established a mutual relationship with His people. He promised to bless them, and in return, they were called to love Him. Moses was specific about what the Israelites should do: how they should honor God, how they should conduct their life, and how they should treat others around them.

A. Religious Life 信仰的生活

First, regarding their religious life, Moses tells the Israelites in verse 12 to fear God and to love Him. Fearing God does not mean being scared of Him. It is about showing Him respect. Parents expect the same response from their children. Little kids know there are consequences when they misbehave. In the same way, God loves us enough to discipline us when we go astray. Our fear of God goes hand in hand with our love for Him. We love God by doing what pleases Him. I once went from hating celery to loving it simply because the girl I was dating asked me to try some. Besides fearing and loving God, Moses also calls the Israelites to serve Him. In the Bible, serving God can mean fulfilling duties for Him and worshipping Him. That is why we call our weekly gatherings a Sunday service. But it is not limited to formal worship—washing dishes, sweeping the floor, or caring for others can be ways to worship God too. The fourth action Moses mentions about their religious life is taking oaths. In Biblical times, people took oaths to prove they were telling the truth. Today, we do the same in court. The key is honesty. Even if we might fool other people, God knows everything, and He will hold us accountable if we lie.

B. Reformed Life 更新的生命

God called the Israelites to show their love through their religious life. However, they should not be weekend believers. Their devotion had to come from a reformed life. Let us start with the warning. In verse 16, Moses says: **“Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.”** He was not telling them to go through heart surgery. It is symbolic. It means cutting away the sins and attitudes that keep them from obeying God. Think of it like removing plaque from vessels to restore normal blood flow. Similarly, when our spiritual life is healthy, it naturally leads to active obedience. Moses urges his people to walk in God's ways, much like driving on the right highways and streets to reach our intended destination. And what does that look like? Verse 13 explains that God expects obedience to both His commandments and His statutes. Those are two different kinds of laws. Commandments are strict obligations. Take the Ten Commandments, for example—we must not worship other gods. Statutes, on the other hand, are more like instructions for daily life. Dietary laws, for instance, tell the Israelites what they can and cannot eat. God set those rules because He loves His people. His laws may seem restrictive, but they are meant to be protective.

C. Relational Life 與人的關係

Besides focusing on their religious and reformed life, Moses also talks about their relational life, especially how they should care for the poor. He gives two reasons for this. First, the Israelites themselves were once foreigners in Egypt, so they knew what it felt like to be treated as second-class citizens. Second, God had rescued them in their time of distress. Because of this, they should show God's love to those in need. This idea connects closely with Jesus' teaching in Luke 6:31: **“And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.”** This is what we call the Golden Rule. You will be willing to help others if you put yourself in the same situation. Suppose your car breaks down on the street, your phone dies when you need to make an urgent call, or you accidentally drop a plate and spill food everywhere. You definitely hope that someone will step in to help. That is exactly how God wants us to treat others in need. God's children should be compassionate and kind. And sometimes, helping someone can even open up a conversation about the gospel. My former church has a student ministry. Some parents of foreign students tell their kids to ask church people for help if they run into trouble. Many young people became Christians through those acts of kindness.

CONCLUSION 結論

Because God is love, He calls us to be people of love. Let loving God be the motivation behind our decisions and actions. Otherwise, if we love ourselves more than we love God, His commands start to feel demanding. We might even think, “Why does God have to be so serious?” But it would not be fair for us to take it easy while expecting God to always bless us. Actually, many things in daily life follow strict rules. Flights will not wait if you are late. Banks charge penalties if you pay bills late. Running a red light puts you in danger. Rules are there to benefit us. Similarly, God gives us His commands because He loves us. We will have a desire to please God if we love Him. Showing up to church on time, picking up your Bible instead of your phone when you get up in the morning, or setting aside money for an offering will no longer be heavy burdens. Rather, they become privileges we freely enjoy as God's children. However, obeying rules will not create a relationship. Doing all the “Christian things” will not save you. Salvation is about an eternal relationship with God. The good news is that God invites you to be His child. First, admit your sins. Second, believe that Jesus died for you. Third, commit your life to Jesus, receiving Him as your Savior and Lord. Once you are in God's family, His commands are no longer harsh requirements, but they become house rules for His beloved children.

INTRODUCTION 引言

愛是任何關係的基礎。你願意為你所愛的人犧牲時間、金錢和資源。愛一個人是直接的，但愛一個國家卻似乎比較抽象。我們當中有些人是轉換國籍成為美國公民的。在入籍典禮上，你宣讀了效忠誓詞。你承諾放棄對原來祖國的效忠，遵守美國的法律，並在被徵召時服兵役。你藉著表達忠誠和作出承諾來愛這個國家。然而，今天有些人批評這個國家有多麼糟糕。一些有智慧的人直接回應說：「如果你不喜歡這裡，為什麼不搬到別的國家呢？」事實上，愛是關係中不可缺少的。愛需要帶出行動。我們對神的愛也是如此。我們必須放下個人的喜好，遵行神的吩咐。我們相信祂總是以我們的最大益處著想的。「信靠、順服、蒙福」總結了神與以色列所立的約。申命記回顧了在曠野漂流那一代人的失敗，他們悖逆神。但神同時也賜下盼望，應許只要祂的子民歸向祂，他們就會有光明的未來。他們無法改變過去，卻可以選擇不同的未來。我們作為基督徒，每一天都面對同樣的選擇。如果我們真心愛神，就會聽從祂。因此，讓愛神成為我們做決定和行動的動機。

EXPLANATION 解釋

1. God's Attributes 神的屬性

在這段經文中，摩西回顧了神如何向以色列人彰顯祂的愛，接著他勸勉百姓要以愛回應神。神透過祂的屬性顯明祂的愛。

A. A Bountiful God 豐盛的神

首先，祂是一位豐盛的神。第 14 節提醒我們，天上地下的一切都屬於祂。神是萬有的創造主。正如創世記 1:1 所宣告的：**起初，神創造天地**。有人說，如果你能相信聖經的第一句話，那麼其餘的內容就更容易接受了。神與我們完全不同。我們在各方面都有限；神卻充滿能力、智慧和知識。我們無法預知未來；神卻是超越時間的。我們的生命以及整個人類歷史都在祂的計劃之中。在創造宇宙之後，神並沒有離開，任由萬物自生自滅。祂仍然以大能維護萬有。祂供應我們身體、情感和屬靈上的需要。神也賜給我們權柄向祂禱告。當我們的祈求符合祂的旨意時，祂便按著祂完美的時間回應我們。這就是神愛我們的方式——祂以祂豐盛的供應與無盡的恩典看顧我們。

B. A Powerful God 大能的神

神不僅是豐盛的神，祂也是大能的神。第 15 節告訴我們，神彰顯自己的能力，揀選以色列成為祂的子民。當你讀舊約時，你就會發現以色列並不是一個優越的民族。他們缺乏信心，常常目光短淺，並且在遭遇困難時發怨言。那麼，神為什麼揀選他們呢？申命記 7:7 說得很清楚：「**耶和華專愛你們，揀選你們，並非因你們的人數多於別民，原來你們的人數在萬民中是最少的。**」神早已定意要愛他們。難怪人們常說：愛是盲目的！今天神對我們也是如此。神拯救我們，不是因為我們有多好，只是因為祂向我們施恩。當我們恨惡神、在罪中迷失時，祂已經愛我們。祂救贖我們，並且繼續以大能更新我們。我們應當永遠向神感恩。祂能拯救任何人，這個事實帶給我們盼望。我們應該不斷為那些尚未信主的朋友禱告，神能把他們轉變成祂的兒女。

C. A Merciful God 憐憫的神

第三，我們有一位有憐憫的神。第 18 節告訴我們，祂保護並供應孤兒、寡婦和寄居的人。在聖經時代，他們是社會中最脆弱的群體。他們沒有土地，沒有穩定的收入來源，也沒有人為他們伸冤。以色列人在埃及作奴隸的時候也是如此無助。他們失去自由，時常受工頭的壓迫。然而，神向他們施憐憫。在他們毫無盼望的時候，祂拯救了他們。神在拯救我們時，也以同樣的憐憫對待我們。正如保羅在以弗所書 2:4-5 說：**4 然而，神既有豐富的憐憫，因他愛我們的大愛，5 當我們死在過犯中的時候，便叫我們與基督一同活過來。(你們得救是本乎恩。)**當我們靈裡瞎眼、死在罪中時，神在基督裡賜給我們新生命。祂使局外人成為家人，祂呼召屬靈的孤兒成為祂的兒女。

D. A Faithful God 信實的神

神不只豐盛、大能且有憐憫，祂也是信實的。摩西在第 20 節提醒我們，當以色列人到達埃及時，只有七十個人。雅各的家族因為嚴重的饑荒而遷移到那裡。然而，在接下來的四百年間，神使他們增長成超過二百萬的人。藉此，神成就了對亞伯拉罕的應許：他的後裔將如天上的星星、海邊的沙那樣無數。耶穌後來更新了神與亞伯拉罕所立的約。縱使不是猶太人的人，也可以成為亞伯拉罕的屬靈子孫。保羅在加拉太書 3:29 說：**你們既屬乎基督，就是亞伯拉罕的後裔，是照著應許承受產業的了。**在基督裡意味著我們可以領受神的祝福，並作為神的兒女享受祂永恆的愛。就算我們跌倒，神的應許仍然堅定不變。祂的信實直到永遠。

2. Men's Tributes 人的敬意

在描述完神的屬性之後，摩西接著說明以色列人應如何向神表達敬意。請記住，他們是在與神更新所立的約。我們可以把它想像成兩國之間簽訂的和平條約—雙方都同意遵守特定的條款。同樣地，神與祂的子民建立了一種互動的關係。祂應許要賜福給他們，而作為回應，他們要去愛神。摩西具體列出以色列人應該做的事情：他們應如何尊崇神，應如何生活，並且應如何對待周遭的人。

A. Religious Life 信仰的生活

首先，關於他們的信仰生活，摩西在第 12 節告訴以色列人要敬畏神並愛祂。敬畏神並不是害怕祂，而是對祂表示尊重。父母也希望孩子對自己有同樣的尊重。小孩子都知道，如果行為不當會有後果。同樣地，神因愛我們而在我們偏行己路時管教我們。對神的敬畏與對祂的愛是相輔相成的。我們透過行為討神喜悅來表示愛祂。我曾經從討厭芹菜變成喜歡吃芹菜，原因是我當時交往的女孩子建議我嘗一口。除了敬畏神和愛祂之外，摩西還呼籲以色列人要事奉神。在聖經中，事奉神既可以指完成祂吩咐的任務，也可以指敬拜祂。因此我們稱每週的聚會為主日敬拜。但事奉神並不限於正式的敬拜—洗碗、掃地或關心別人都是敬拜神的方式。摩西提到的信仰生活第四個行動是起誓。在聖經時代，人們透過起誓來證明自己說的是實話。今天，我們在法庭上也做同樣的事情。重點在於誠實。縱使我們能欺騙人，神卻無所不知，如果我們說謊，祂必然會追究我們的責任。

B. Reformed Life 更新的生命

神呼召以色列人要透過信仰生活來表達對祂的愛。然而，他們不能只是表面上的信徒。他們的敬虔必須基於更新的生命。讓我們先從警告看起。第 16 節中，摩西說：「**所以你們要將心裡的污穢除掉，不可再硬著頸項。**」他並不是要他們做心臟手術。這是象徵性的，意思是清除那些阻礙人順服神的罪和態度。我們可以把它想像成清除血管中的斑塊，以恢復正常的血液運送。同樣地，當我們的屬靈生命健康時，就自然會導致積極的順服。摩西勸告百姓要行在神的道路上，就像開車時走對了高速公路和街道，才能到達預定的目的地。那具體應該怎麼做呢？第 13 節說明，神期望他們遵行祂的誠命和律例。這是兩種不同的律法。誠命是嚴格的義務。例如十誡要求我們不可拜其他神。而律例則更像日常生活的準則。例如食物的條例告訴以色列人可以吃什麼、不能吃什麼。神設

立這些規定，是因為祂愛祂的子民。神的律法看起來諸多限制，但實際上是出於保護的用意。

C. Relational Life 與人的關係

除了專注於他們的信仰生活和更新的生命之外，摩西還談到他們與人的關係，特別是如何關心窮人。他給出了兩個原因。首先，以色列人自己曾經是埃及的外邦人，所以他們知道成為二等公民的滋味。其次，神曾在他們困苦的時候拯救了他們。因此，他們應該向有需要的人顯出神的愛。這個論點與耶穌在路加福音 6:31 的教導密切相關：「你們願意人怎樣待你們，你們也要怎樣待人。」今天我們稱這個為黃金定律。如果你把自己放在別人的處境，你就會自然願意伸出援手。想像一下：你的車在街道上拋錨，你急需打電話時手機沒電，或者你不小心打破盤子，食物撒了一地。你肯定希望有人會幫助你。神希望我們以同樣的方式對待有需要的人。神的兒女應該是充滿憐憫和良善的。有時候，幫助別人甚至能開啟福音的對話。我以前的教會有一個學生事工，一些海外學生的父母會告訴孩子，如果遇到困難，可以向教會的人求助。許多年輕人正是透過這些善行而成為基督徒。

CONCLUSION 結論

因為神是愛，祂呼召我們成為充滿愛的人。讓愛神成為我們做決定和行動的動機。否則，如果我們愛自己過於愛神，祂的命令就會顯得繁重。我們甚至可能會想：「神為什麼要這麼嚴謹？」然而，如果我們對信仰看得隨便，卻期望神一直祝福我們，那是不公平的。事實上，日常生活中有許多事情都有嚴格的規則。飛機不會因為你遲到而等你；若是不按日期繳費，銀行會收取罰款；闖紅燈會讓你處於危險之中。規則的存在是為了造福我們。同樣地，神給予我們命令，是因為祂愛我們。當我們愛祂時，就會渴望討祂喜悅。準時到教會聚會、起床後先拿起聖經而不是拿手機、或為奉獻預留金錢，都不再是沉重的負擔，而是作為神的兒女可以自由享受的特權。然而，遵守規則無法建立關係。你做了所有基督徒應該做的事並不能使你得救。救恩是關乎與神建立永恆的關係。好消息是，神邀請你成為祂的兒女。首先，你必須承認自己的罪；其次，相信耶穌為你而死；第三，將生命交託給耶穌，接受祂成為你的救主和生命的主。當你成為神家庭的一員時，祂的命令不再是嚴厲的規定，而是祂愛的兒女遵守的家規。