

The World Evangelical Alliance's Journal
of Theology and Contemporary Application

EVANGELICAL REVIEW OF THEOLOGY



Volume 46 • No. 1 • February 2022

Evangelical Review of Theology

A Global Forum

Volume 46 • Number 1 • February 2022

Published by



WIPF *and* STOCK *Publishers*
199 West 8th Avenue • Eugene OR 97401
wipfandstock.com

All issues of ERT are available on our website:
<https://theology.worldidea.org/evangelical-review-of-theology/>
To order hard copies, contact orders@wipfandstock.com

ISSN: 0144-8153

ISBN: 978-1-6667-3815-5

Volume 46 • No. 1 • February 2022

Copyright © 2022 World Evangelical Alliance
Global Theology Department

The free pdf of this journal is distributed under the following conditions:

The pdf may not be sold or used for profit except with written consent.

The pdf may be printed only for private use, not for profit.

The only printed copies that may be used in public are those obtained
from the publisher, Wipf & Stock.

General Editor: Dr Thomas Schirrmacher, Germany

Executive Editor: Dr Bruce Barron, USA

Assistant Editor: Francis Jr. S. Samdao, Philippines

Book Review Editors: Geoffrey Butler (Canada),
Dallas Pitts (USA), Abeneazer Urga (Ethiopia)

Further members of the editorial board:

Dr Theresa R. Lua, Philippines

(Director, Global Theology Department, WEA)

Dr Rosalee V. Ewell, Brazil

Dr James O. Nkansah, Kenya

Dr Thomas K. Johnson, USA

Editorial Policy

The articles in the *Evangelical Review of Theology (ERT)* reflect
the opinions of the authors and reviewers and do not necessarily
represent those of the Editors or the Publisher.

The Editors welcome both unsolicited submissions and
recommendations of original or previously published articles
or book reviews for inclusion in ERT. Manuscripts, reviews,
queries and other communications may be addressed
to the Executive Editor at bruce.barron0@gmail.com.

Printed by Wipf and Stock Publishers
199 West 8th Avenue, Eugene, OR 97401
wipfandstock.com

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
The Erosion of Church Growth through Patriarchal Leadership in Russia.....	5
<i>Johannes Reimer</i>	
In Pursuit of Intellectual Virtue.....	12
<i>Elmer John Thiessen</i>	
Such a Heart as This: The Intellectual Implications of Deuteronomy 5:29.....	24
<i>Richard L. Smith</i>	
What Persecution To Endure, To Resist, or To Flee?.....	38
<i>Dennis P. Petri and Ronald R. Boyd-MacMillan</i>	
On the Idea of Contextualization: Cultural Sensitivity <i>and</i> Catholic Sensibility.....	51
<i>Francis Jr. S. Samdao</i>	
Jesus' Discipleship Model of Suffering and Sacrifice:	
Discipleship and Racial Justice.....	62
<i>Israel Oluwole Olofinjana</i>	
Evangelical Identity Formation in Post-colonial Britain	68
<i>David A. Clark</i>	
The 'Sins of Equals' and Racial Justice.....	82
<i>Leah Farish</i>	
Book Reviews.....	85

Such a Heart as This: The Intellectual Implications of Deuteronomy 5:29

Richard L. Smith

Contrary to the frequent Christian tendency to devalue intellectual pursuits, Richard L. Smith finds an emphasis on loving God with the mind throughout the Old Testament. This excerpt from his new book shows how God communicates this message through Deuteronomy.

When someone begins a sentence with the word ‘oh!’ they express something important, a very deep longing or concern. When God Almighty uses this expression, he says something essential.

Three times God utters his earnest desire about human intellectuality with the conjunction *lu*, meaning ‘if’ or ‘oh that.’ These statements follow below. (The important terms are in italics.)

Oh, that they were *wise*, that they *understood* this, that they would *consider* their latter end! (Deut 32:29)

Oh, that my people would *listen to me*, that Israel would walk in my ways! (Ps 81:13)

Oh that you had *paid attention* to my commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea. (Is 48:18)

Each verse expresses divine longing about the mind. Deuteronomy 32 highlights the importance of critical thought and analysis. Psalm 81 underscores a prominent theme in Old Testament epistemology—the absolute necessity of listening to the voice of the Lord alone.¹ Isaiah 48 emphasizes mental discipline that produces obedience. Each verse indicates that acquired wisdom and discernment impact our lives in tangible ways: our future (‘their latter end’), manner of life (‘walk in my ways’) and well-being (‘peace like a river’).

Another instance of divine longing with reference to intellectuality is Deuteronomy 5:29. Let us read this verse in its immediate context:

‘For who is there of all flesh, that has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of fire as we have, and has still lived? Go near and hear all that

Richard L. Smith (PhD, Westminster Theological Seminary) is a senior advisor for Global Scholars and manages the Spanish-language website *Cosmovisión Bíblica*. This article is excerpted with permission from his book *Such a Mind as This: A Biblical-Theological Study of Thinking in the Old Testament* (Wipf and Stock, 2021).

¹ The preceding two verses of Psalm 81 make this abundantly clear: ‘But my people did not listen to my voice; Israel would not submit to me. So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels’ (vv. 11–12).

the Lord our God will say, and speak to us all that the Lord our God will speak to you, and we will hear and do it.' And the Lord heard your words, when you spoke to me. And the Lord said to me, 'I have heard the words of this people, which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken. Oh that they had such a heart as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever!'

In this passage, Moses recounted God's theophany with Israel at Horeb, when he wrote the Ten Commandments and initiated his covenant (Ex 20:18–21). The people were utterly terrified and feared for their lives when they perceived God's dramatic appearance. Moses explained, though, that God's motive was not destructive, but pedagogical and pastoral. He told them, 'Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin' (20:20).

Now, as the second generation was about to renew the covenant before entering the land of Canaan, Moses disclosed God's approbation of their forefathers' positive mindset at that moment: 'They are right in all that they have spoken' (Deut 5:28b). He also revealed God's great desire for them to retain their godly outlook (v. 29a): 'Oh that they had such a heart as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments.'

Two terms in this verse merit special attention. First, the pronoun 'oh' (*mi*) is quite instructive. Sometimes, this term indicates the optative mood, expressing a wistful desire or future wish, and is translated as 'if only', 'would that', or 'oh'. At other times, *mi* means 'who' and appears in rhetorical questions that indicate unattainable desire, at least from a human perspective. Daniel I. Block explains God's desire with 'an awkward optative question' in Deuteronomy 5:29: 'Who will grant and they will have this their heart?' The query is an idiomatic expression of God's epistemic desire, 'Oh that they had such a heart as this!'² The Lord knew that shortly his people would refuse to heed his counsel. Nevertheless, what is unattainable for man is not for Yahweh. In verse 29, he expressed his goal for human understanding—a mindset that feared God. Block summarizes the Lord's outlook: 'Yahweh acknowledged that he overheard the people's request to Moses (cf. 5:28) and affirmed their response. He also expressed his wish that the Israelites would never lose their present reverential disposition toward him.'³

Second, the word 'heart' (*leb*) in 5:29 is often a stand-in for 'mind' (or mindset). Peter C. Craigie renders 'heart' as 'mind' in the optative mood, 'Would that they were continually of this mind', as does the NRSV, 'If only they had a mind such as this always.'⁴ Indeed, the immediate context of the passage underscores an epistemological setting with the terms 'voice', 'wrote', 'heard', 'seen', 'teach', and 'speak', as well as knowledge vocabulary ('words', 'statutes', 'rules', 'commandments') and argumentation (human in vv. 24–27 and divine in vv. 28–29). Within the broader context of Deuteronomy, terms of cognition also appear in connection with 'heart': 'depart from your heart' and 'forget' (4:9; 8:14), 'know then

2 Daniel I. Block, 'A Place for My Name: Horeb and Zion in the Mosaic Vision for Hebrew Worship', *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 58, no. 2 (2015): 230 note 32.

3 Daniel I. Block, *Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 176.

4 Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 165.

in your heart' (8:5), 'these words' and 'on/in your heart' (6:6; 11:18), 'say in your heart' indicating both spoken and unspoken thoughts (7:17; 9:4; 15:9; 18:21), and a 'heart to understand' (29:4).

The expression 'such a heart [mind] as this', therefore, may be defined as a mentality that presumed godly fear and obedience. Indeed, a pious epistemic posture embraces the threefold counsel of Proverbs 3:7: 'Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.' In the following sections, I summarize five aspects of right thinking from the book of Deuteronomy.

A mind that fears

The divine intent of 'such a heart as this always' is coupled with the conjunction 'that' (*maan*) in 5:29b: 'that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever!' Five times God's intent, as indicated by 'that' (*maan*), focused on acquiring the fear of the Lord (5:29; 6:2; and 'learn to fear the Lord' in 14:23; 17:19; 31:12). In addition, the particle 'that' (*asher*) appears in 4:10 with this significance: 'Gather the people to me, that I may let them hear my words, so that (*asher*) they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and that (*asher*) they may teach their children so.'

Similarly, Deuteronomy 10:12–13 expresses God's didactic purpose. Moses asked, 'And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you?' The answer positions four verbs in apposition with 'fear', so as to associate it with the Lord's overall purpose for Israel, which is thematically akin to Deuteronomy 5:29:

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,
To keep	the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good.

In Deuteronomy, then, God-fearers were typified by an intellectual acknowledgement of God's voice: 'my words' (4:10), 'commandments' (5:29), 'statutes' (6:2, 24), and 'all the words of this law written in this book' (28:58). Behaviourally, those who possessed a heart that fears 'serve' and 'swear' by the Lord's name (6:13), 'walk in his ways' (8:6), 'hold fast to him' (10:20), 'obey his voice' (13:4), 'read' God's word (17:19), and 'purge evil' from their midst (21:21). These intellectual and performative criteria amplify the idiomatic expression cited by Moses in Exodus 20:20, 'that the fear of him may be upon your faces' (or 'be before you'). John I. Durham renders the expression as 'be always before you, on your mind'.⁵ The phrase indicates that the fear of the Lord should 'always be before them as a constant preoccupation of mind'.⁶

5 John I. Durham, *Exodus* (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 302.

6 Durham, *Exodus*, 303.

A mind that listens

When God spoke to Israel, the verb *shama* was often utilized, translated as ‘listen to’, ‘hear’, or ‘obey’. The command to pay attention appears in every genre of the Old Testament, with a multitude of objects:

Listen to	‘the words of the Lord your God’ (Josh 3:9), ‘the words of the Lord’ (1 Sam 15:1), ‘all that I command you’ (1 Kgs 11:38), ‘the voice of my teachers’ (Prov 5:13), ‘the words of my servants the prophets’ (Jer 26:5), ‘their judges’ (Judg 2:17), ‘me’ (Ps 81:8)
Obey	‘the voice of the Lord your God’ (Zech 6:15), ‘the voice of his word’ (Ps 103:20), ‘the voice of his servant’ (Is 50:10), ‘the voice of Samuel’ (1 Sam 8:19), ‘your commandments’ (Neh 9:16), ‘my/his/ your voice’ (Judg 6:10)
Hear	‘the instruction of the Lord’ (Is 30:9), ‘the words of your mouth’ (Ps 138:4), ‘the word of the Lord’ (Is 66:5), ‘instruction’ (Prov 8:33), ‘my words’ (Prov 4:10), ‘my/his voice’ (Is 32:9)

The word *shama* appears often with a particular direct object, ‘voice’ (*qol*). Dru Johnson points out that the idiom ‘listen to the voice of’ (*shama qol*) indicates ‘acknowledging someone as having authority and then enacting his or her authoritative instructions’.⁷ The expression ‘listen to the voice of the Lord your God’ communicates his transcendent perspective and authority to his vassal rulers, builders, benefactors and thinkers. In a positive sense, the idiom appears in Exodus 15:26: ‘If you diligently listen to the voice of the Lord your God, and do what is right in his eyes’, then he would ‘put none of the diseases’ upon Israel that the Egyptians suffered. Similarly, the failure to listen to the ‘voice of the Lord’ occurs in a negative sense eight times in contexts of disobedience.⁸

In Deuteronomy, the phrase ‘listen to/obey/hear the voice of the Lord/Lord your God’ appears many times. This expression and its various objects are listed below:

Obey the voice of the Lord/Lord your God	20	Listen to the command of the Lord	1
Obey his voice	6	Listen to my words	1
Obey the commandments of the Lord your God	2	Listen to the voice of a prophet	1
Obey all these words	1	Listen to my words	1
Obey the priest	1	Listen ... to a prophet like me	1
Obey the voice of his father	1	Listen to parents	1
Listen to your voice	1	Hear the statutes and rules	1
Listen to me	1	Hear the voice/of the Lord God	2
Listen to the statutes and rules	2	Hear the voice	3

⁷ Dru Johnson, *Epistemology and Biblical Theology: From the Pentateuch to Mark’s Gospel* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 42.

⁸ See Josh 5:6; 1 Sam 12:15; 15:19, 22; 28:18; 1 Kgs 20:36; 2 Kgs 18:12; Ps 106:25.

Deuteronomy 4:35–40 provides four reasons for listening to God’s voice through Moses that amplify Deuteronomy 5:26–29. The four motivations are in italics:

To you it was shown, *that you might know that the Lord is God*; there is no other besides him. Out of heaven he let you hear his voice, *that he might discipline you*. And on earth he let you see his great fire, and you heard his words out of the midst of the fire. And because he loved your fathers and chose their offspring after them and brought you out of Egypt with his own presence, by his great power, driving out before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land for an inheritance, as it is this day, know therefore today, and *lay it to your heart*, that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other. Therefore you shall keep his statutes and his commandments, which I command you today, *that it may go well with you* and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land that the Lord your God is giving you for all time.

First, the phrase ‘that you might know that the Lord is God’ underscores God’s intent to instruct his people. He also reaffirms his sovereignty over knowledge due to human finitude and fallenness. This passage highlights God’s epistemic grace given for Israel’s understanding through revelation: ‘to you it was shown’ (v. 35), ‘let you hear his voice’ (v. 36a), and ‘let you see his great fire and hear his words’ (v. 36b).

Second, the phrase ‘that he might discipline you’ indicates didactic purpose. The term ‘discipline’ translates the verb *yasar*. In some cases, the word indicates physical punishment for immoral conduct (22:18). But the better context to understand *yasar* in 4:36 is its use in 8:5, ‘As a man disciplines (*yasar*) his son, the Lord your God disciplines (*yasar*) you.’ Discipline occurred within a filial relationship that was intended for good and to produce holiness and understanding, resulting in blessing (8:2–3). In this setting, then, ‘humbling’ and ‘testing’ (v. 2) are approximate synonyms for discipline. God’s motive was to determine ‘what was in your heart’. His discipline was designed to demonstrate the necessity of listening.

Third, the expression ‘lay it to your heart’ conveys an epistemological nuance. The verb rendered as ‘lay it to’ is *shub* (‘turn’, ‘return’, ‘restore’, ‘bring back’). In this setting, the meaning is ‘do not let your mind forget’, ‘call them to mind’ (30:1), or simply ‘remember.’ This significance is similar to 11:18, ‘You shall therefore lay up (*sum*) these words of mine in your heart and in your soul.’ In this context (v. 39), the idiom indicates that remembering or re-listening to God’s word is motivated by repentance in the midst of chastisement.

Fourth, the clause ‘that it may go well with you’ indicates God’s intention to prosper his people in the land of Canaan according to his promise—on condition of covenantal compliance.

Blessing was the fruit of obedience and the appropriate application of heeding God’s voice. Moses told Israel, ‘Therefore you shall keep his statutes and his commandments, which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land that the Lord your God is giving you for all time’ (4:40). Indeed, the long list of blessings derived from obedience in Deuteronomy 28:1–14 defined what ‘that it may go well with you’ really meant: an optimal life in the post-fall world.

A mind that learns

Yahweh wanted Israel to perceive reality. He desired them to discern their true condition: their dependency and vulnerability as finite and fallen creatures. He wanted them to understand essential ontological and redemptive truths. He valued knowledge acquisition and utilized the verbs 'know' (*yada*) and 'hear' (*shama*) to communicate theological content. For instance, he taught the Hebrews monotheism: 'To you it was shown, that you might know that the Lord is God; there is no other besides him' (4:35). He contrasted himself with the local divinities (henotheism): 'The Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other' (4:39; see also 6:4). He also explained covenantal realities such as his loving faithfulness (5:6; 7:9), fatherly discipline (8:5) and law (5:1).

One especially important truth was the transcendental necessity of divine revelation and sustenance in 8:1–3. Verse 3b expresses Yahweh's pedagogical aim (italicized):

The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the Lord swore to give to your fathers. And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but *man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.*

In this passage, Moses underscored the great lesson God taught Israel through their wilderness journey and his miraculous supply of food and water. But he reminded them that 'man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord' (v. 3b). The historical context indicates discursive and non-discursive communication, both words and deeds. Regarding the latter, Yahweh communicated through his 'discipline' in the wilderness (v. 5) by means of 'humbling', 'testing', and sustenance ('clothing did not wear out', v. 4). Raymond C. Van Leeuwen points out that the Lord spoke through 'the realm of history (exodus [in v. 14]) and in nature (water from rock [in v. 15])'.⁹ In fact, the expression 'his mouth' sometimes indicates communication without words. For instance, from his mouth come wind (Job 15:30), a 'rumbling' (Job 37:2), 'devouring fire' (Ps 18:8), and his 'breath' that kills (Is 11:4). Lamentations 3:38 asks, 'Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come?'

On the other hand, the phrase 'his [the Lord's] mouth' is frequently associated with speech. From 'his mouth' (Moses speaking for Yahweh) come 'my words' (Deut 18:18), 'instruction', and 'words from his mouth' (Job 22:22), as well as 'wisdom' with 'knowledge' and 'understanding' (Prov 2:6). Job 23:12 is thematically similar to Deuteronomy 8:3: 'I have not departed from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food.' In the broader context of chapter 8, God spoke through Moses his 'commandment' (vv. 1, 2, 6),

⁹ Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, 'What Comes Out of God's Mouth: The Theological Wordplay in Deuteronomy 8', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 47 (1985): 57.

‘rules’ and ‘statutes’ (v. 11), and his ‘covenant that he swore to your fathers’ (v. 18). In fact, Moses warned that Israel would perish if they did not ‘obey the voice of the Lord’ (v. 20).

The verb ‘live’ (*hayah* in 8:1) conveys a dual significance. On one hand, the term refers to physical existence and survival. Supply of food and water (vv. 15–16), protection (v. 15), sustenance (v. 4), and deliverance from oppression (v. 14) presume God’s power. On the other hand, the term ‘live’ refers to a quality of existence that occurs by keeping ‘the commandments of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him’ (v. 6). In fact, verses 7–10 depict Canaan as a new Eden, where Israel would flourish—if they obeyed.¹⁰

Thus, the mindset that the Lord desired for his people included the realization that everything revealed by God in words spoken (Torah) and unspoken (redemptive deeds) was the presupposition of their existence—in fact, the necessary preconditions for their very understanding. God’s voice enabled Israel to thrive and also held them to account for disobedience. A principal purpose of the wilderness experience, therefore, was to acquire this critical knowledge gained through privation and disorientation: listen to God’s voice and obey in order to thrive and flourish.

A mind that is vigilant

A vigilant mind shares God’s passion for his instructions and objectives. Such an outlook listens acutely and implements resolutely. Epistemic vigilance implies a mindset that is zealous, attentive and thorough with respect to oneself, family, community and those outside the covenant. A vigilant mind presumes situational awareness. It discerns dangers in one’s thinking, desire and behaviour, as well as internal threats within the community and external threats from other worldviews.

A vigilant thinker fulfils God’s commandments with utmost thoroughness. He cares for his soul ‘diligently’, so that he does not ‘forget’ all that God did for Israel (4:9). He ‘strictly obeys’ what the Lord has communicated (15:5) and ‘diligently keeps’ his law (6:17). He teaches his children ‘diligently’ (6:7). He serves the Lord and advances his cause with total devotion, with ‘all of the heart and soul’ (4:29; 6:5; 10:12; 11:13; 13:3; 26:16; 30:6, 10). Vigilance also applies to specifically intellectual tasks such as investigations concerning covenant violation and apostasy (13:14; 17:4; 19:18). Similarly, vigilant minds proactively ‘remember’ that they ‘were slaves in the land of Egypt’ (5:15), ‘what the Lord did to Pharaoh’ (7:18), ‘the whole way God has led you’ (8:2), that God gives ‘power to get wealth’ (8:18), and how they ‘provoked the Lord your God to wrath’ (9:7).

Furthermore, the word ‘all’ (*kol*, as well as the variations ‘with all’, ‘in all’, ‘to all’, and ‘that all’) occurs frequently, indicating the full scope to which vigilance must extend. Temporally speaking, listening to the Lord’s voice and observing his law

10 The Old Testament depicts the Promised Land as a potential new Eden, a sacred precinct in the midst of vast profane territory. Like Eden, which was a ‘good land’ blessed by God (Gen 1:10, 12), Canaan was a ‘good land’ promised to the Hebrew tribes by their Redeemer (Ex 3:8; Deut 4:21; Josh 23:13). It was a place of peace and plenty where everyone could ‘eat and be full’ (Deut 8:10, 12; 14:29; Ps 104:28; Is 66:11–13). It was also a land of prosperity where all enjoyed the bounty of God and ‘lived in safety, each man under his own vine and fig tree’ (1 Kgs 4:25).

must continue ‘all the days of your life’ (4:9; 12:1; 16:3; 17:19). The required actions include ‘all the things that you should do’ (1:18), teaching children and grandchildren (4:9–10), ‘walking in all the way the Lord your God commanded’ (5:33), paying tithes and offerings (12:11), attending festivals (12:18; 16:3, 16; 17:10), and ‘all that you undertake’ (12:18). Conceptually, this included knowing and doing ‘all my commandments’ (5:29), ‘statutes and rules’ (11:32), ‘the words of this law that are written in this book’ (28:58), and ‘what is right and good in the sight of the Lord’ (6:18; 12:25). Significantly, vigilance applies to the depth and breadth of God’s commands: the ‘whole commandment’ (5:31; 8:1; 11:8; 31:5) and ‘whole way’ (8:2).

Similarly, words derived from *shamar* appear as the injunctions ‘take care’, be ‘careful’, and the adverb ‘carefully’, indicating a mindset that is focused and attentive. One must ‘learn’ and ‘be careful to do’ God’s statutes (5:1), so that one does not ‘forget’ (4:23) and become ‘ensnared’ by idolatry (12:30). Likewise, *shamar* coupled with idioms of the ‘heart’ urges careful self-observation lest God’s words ‘depart from your heart’ (4:9), ‘your heart be deceived’ (11:16), or the people harbour an ‘unworthy thought in your heart’ (15:9) or fail to ‘take to heart’ the Lord’s commands (32:46). Especially critical was the obligation to be ‘careful’ about revelation and never ‘add to’ (syncretism) or ‘take from’ (diminish) God’s word (12:32).

Mental vigilance and the prevention of idolatry are contrasted with forgetting and disobedience. This can be displayed by the following diagram summarizing the use of *shamar* plus *pen* in Deuteronomy 4:

<i>Verse</i>	<i>Shamar</i>	<i>Pen</i>	<i>Theme or Action</i>
9	take care keep	lest lest	forget the things your eyes have seen they depart from your heart
15	watch very carefully		since you saw no form
16	beware (implied)	lest	act corruptly by making a carved image
19	beware (implied)	lest	lift your eyes to heaven, be drawn away, bow down, serve them
23	take care	lest	forget the covenant make an image

Clearly, the vigilant mind resists the tendency to ignore what is most important (God’s voice) and embrace what is most destructive (idolatry). But even when one falls into idolatry and suffers exile (4:28), true worship can occur again through repentance with due diligence: ‘if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul’ (v. 29).

Furthermore, the vigilant mind interprets current challenges in light of the big picture and within its proper theological context (4:31–40). First, Israel understood its moment in history within God’s story beginning with creation (v. 32), his promise to the fathers (vv. 31, 37), the covenant at Sinai (vv. 33, 38) and the deliverance from Egypt (v. 34). The thoughtful mind remembered where they had come from, where they were now, where they were going, and why. In fact, shortly before Moses died,

he restated Israel's need to think about the present and future with reference to the past. He said, 'Take to heart all the words by which I am warning you today, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law. For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess' (32:46–47). In this regard, Ryan O'Dowd comments:

The implication for Israel is that the knowledge of Yahweh, of his activity in history, and of his universal uniqueness are the foundation of her knowledge of the world. ... That this same union of creation and salvation events is used to justify Yahweh's uniqueness in 32:39–43—and his concern for the testimony of the nations (32:27)—reinforces the fact that epistemology is grounded in the ontology of divine presence and divine power and the ethics of obedience.¹¹

Second, those with attentive mindsets understood divine election as conditioned by obedience and disobedience. Nathan McDonald comments, 'The two sides of election are summarized in YHWH's nature as both the 'jealous el' [God] and the 'merciful el' (4:24, 31; cf. 7:6–10).'¹² He describes the inevitable result when Israel did not listen to the voice of the Lord: 'When a different vision is accepted, Israel is unable to obey the guiding voice of YHWH.'¹³

Third, the vigilant mind viewed the spiritual marketplace in Canaan from an elenctic perspective (4:32–38). It interpreted the conquest and settlement as a clash of worldviews—between monotheism and henotheism (vv. 35, 39).¹⁴ Indeed, the nation discovered that their election was rooted in this polemical objective: 'To you it was shown, that you might know that the Lord is God; there is no other besides him' (v. 35).

Fourth, they interpreted covenant renewal and entrance into the land with this theoretical construct: indicative ontological fact produces imperative ethical obligation. Verses 39 and 40 summarize the rationale: 'Know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other. Therefore you shall keep his statutes and his commandments, which I command you today.'

A mind that loves

The creedal nucleus of Deuteronomy is the *Shema* of 6:4–5, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone! Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with your whole heart, and with your whole being, and with your whole strength' (New

11 Ryan O'Dowd, *The Wisdom of Torah: Epistemology in Deuteronomy and the Wisdom Literature* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 42.

12 Nathan McDonald, 'The Literary Criticism and Rhetorical Logic of Deut 1–4', *Vetus Testamentum* 56, no. 2 (2006): 218.

13 McDonald, 'The Literary Criticism and Rhetorical Logic', 222.

14 Craig C. Bartholomew and Ryan O'Dowd summarize Deuteronomy's elenctic impact in light of the fear of God: 'Throughout the rest of the Old Testament, the "fear of Yahweh" similarly represents total devotion to God as the heart of Israel's "true" religion. ... What must be recognized is that above all else about this phrase—the fear of Yahweh—is the radical nature of Israel's ethical monotheism among her polytheistic neighbors.' *Old Testament Wisdom Literature: A Theological Introduction* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2018), 25.

American Bible Revised Edition). The theological significance of this text cannot be overstated, but the epistemological import is also critical. The *Shema* depicts with upmost clarity ‘such a mind as this’—the mindset that God desires for his servants. The text shows the centrality of the mind in Old Testament spirituality and reveals how thinking covenantally impacts every area of life.

In Deuteronomy 4–6, and in 6:4–5 particularly, an emphatic ‘Hear, O Israel’ summons the people to listen and obey. The pattern of indicative truth and imperative response may be summarized in this way:

<i>Indicative</i>	<i>Conjunction</i>	<i>Imperative</i>
there is no other (4:35, 39)	Therefore	keep his commandments (v. 40)
I am the Lord (5:6)	(implied)	no other gods before me (v. 7)
the Lord alone (6:4)	Therefore	love the Lord with your whole heart (v. 5)

Verse 5 specifies the expected response to the declaration in verse 4—love (*ahab*). From the perspective of ancient Near Eastern suzerainty treaties, ‘love’ was a legal term indicating the covenantal loyalty of a vassal state. Love was a demand imposed by the superior and required a decision by the inferior: a pragmatic choice based upon careful assessment of the vassal’s political, military and economic vulnerability. Love was also a commitment not to undermine the suzerain by affiliating with opposing powers. However, love involved an affective dimension. The reigning power attempted to win the hearts and minds of subjugated peoples through ruling theocracy, its pantheon and its ideology.¹⁵ Most became enablers who facilitated the extension of the suzerain’s rule over other backward and wayward nations through conquest and annexation.

From the perspective of the Old Testament, though, covenantal love assumed similar but also contrasting dimensions. On one hand, given the divine indicative and the testimony of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt, love was a demand for loyalty and obedience to the transcendent suzerain’s demands. Faithfulness to Yahweh meant that Israel would not divert allegiance to other gods and their national domains. It meant that the Israelites would not learn to think like Canaanites. Love, therefore, entailed a rational decision to choose faithfulness over apostasy, life over death, and blessing over woe (28:1–2, 15; 30:19).

On the other hand, love also entailed an emotional aspect. First, love arose from gratitude for the abundant grace bestowed on Israel as God’s treasured possession. Block writes:

The Lord, their divine Suzerain, who by grace had rescued them from the bondage of Egypt, and who by grace had called Israel to covenant relationship with Himself, and who by grace was calling on them to represent Him to the

15 With reference to the propaganda mechanisms and the mentality of empire of later imperial powers in the ninth to the sixth centuries BC, see Shawn Zelig Aster, ‘Transmission of Neo-Assyrian Claims to Judah in the Late Eighth Century BCE’, *Hebrew Union College Annual* 78 (2007): 1–44; Douglas K. Stuart, ‘David’s Costly Flirtation with Empire’, in *Empire in the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Cynthia Long Westfall (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), 17–53.

world, retained the exclusive right to define the appropriate response to the grace He had lavished on them. Total acceptance of the will of the divine Benefactor would be the correct and reasonable response.¹⁶

Second, love was a response in kind, a form of divine imitation.¹⁷ The Lord had clearly demonstrated his affection for and faithfulness to Israel through their calling, deliverance, sustenance and law (4:37; 7:13; 10:15). Moreover, he carefully planned their well-being, so that they would flourish in Canaan. He demonstrated benevolent intentionality toward Israel as their suzerain. He had saved them from bondage and did not subjugate them by brute force, unlike the nations that attacked one another for spoils and glory. Thus, Israel's duty was to mimic Yahweh's intentionality as stewards and image bearers, seeking his glory on earth and the best interests of their countrymen as a testimony to the nations (4:6). To do this, they need to reason like covenant servants.

The word 'heart' (*leb*), as we have seen, denotes more than emotions and often refers to the mind.¹⁸ Indeed, the heart functions, as it were, as an epistemic rudder for the soul. Michael Carasik depicts the heart as the 'organ of knowing and understanding'.¹⁹ It includes the mental capacity to receive, inventory and evaluate data. When it functions well, the heart acquires critical understanding. In epistemological terms, it 'knows that' (i.e., facts about God and the world), 'knows how' (learning in relationship), 'knows why' (teleology and obligation), 'knows who' (knowledge derived from and oriented to God), and 'knows where' (knowledge situated by God through creation and covenant). With reference to the *Shema* (in 6:4–5 and chapters 4–8 generally), 'such a heart as this' discerns an essential ontological fact: there is only one God—Yahweh Elohim—and that thinking must be conditioned by covenantal love.

The term 'soul' (*nepesh*) appears in the Old Testament with a range of meanings, depending on the context. *Nepesh* includes the imagination and curiosity. In many settings, however, such as the *Shema*, it also refers to desire—physical, psychological and spiritual. As such, the 'soul' is associated with longing, motivation and passion. The soul curates one's deepest motives (often hidden or unknown), real aspirations, and what one is willing to do (rightly and wrongly). For this reason, Paul Overland adds that "'to love God with the soul" means to advance one's devotion to God beyond all longings of a mental or physical sort."²⁰

'Strength' (*meod*) in this context conveys an economic nuance: stewardship of wealth, capacity or resources. The Israelites were obligated to use all with which God had endowed them—material assets, economic prowess, physical capacity, social capital, personal gifting and intellectual ability—for his honour and human well-

16 Block, 'The Grace of Torah: The Mosaic Prescription for Life (Deut 4:1–8; 6:20–25)', *Bibliotheca Sacra* 162 (2005): 8.

17 O'Dowd, *Old Testament Wisdom Literature*, 45–46.

18 Its provenance is difficult to capture in English, for as Bruce K. Waltke explains, 'No other English word combines the complex interplay of intellect, sensibility, and will.' In fact, there is no Hebrew term for 'mind'. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 91.

19 Michael Carasik, *Theologies of the Mind in Biblical Israel* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 106.

20 Paul Overland, 'Did the Sage Draw from the Shema? A Study of Proverbs 3:1–12', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 62 (2000): 429.

being alone. Thus, loving God with all one's might meant that nothing could be withheld for egoistic or secular motives or rededicated to an illicit religious affiliation.

The threefold 'all' (or 'whole' *kol*) indicated that every aspect of life should be fully engaged in loving God with covenantal fidelity. To love God according to the *Shema* entailed a life dedicated to *divina imitatio*: imitating God's thoughts, motives and beneficence in accord with creational and covenantal norms. Similarly, to love others required God-oriented thinking, desire and conduct.

Scholars have noted, however, a phenomenological pattern associated with 6:4–5.²¹ The process implies listening, learning and application. A mind informed by revelation generated godly motivation (the fear of God) and fostered stewardship that demonstrated love in action. In other words, the *Shema* shows the centrality of the mind and how thinking covenantally impacts every area of life. The mind, desire and capacity—in that order—should be dedicated to the Lord. This principle can be illustrated by the following diagram:

mind/heart → motive/soul → capacity/might

In summary, in chapters 4–8 vassals of Yahweh's kingdom learned about their suzerain and what he expected from them intellectually and existentially. They discovered how to use their minds profitably as apprentice rulers, architects, economists and philosophers in Israel. They learned what walking in his ways, keeping his statutes and heeding his voice meant epistemologically. In these ways, they nurtured minds that served the one and only Lord with every motive and every resource provided to them.

Conclusion

Intellectually speaking, Israel possessed a North Star. They knew in which direction they should orient themselves ontologically. They possessed a Global Positioning System by means of the covenant, providing a path to their destination. They also possessed a gyroscope to maintain equilibrium amidst turbulence and uncertainty. The fear of the Lord balanced their minds amidst disorienting messages from the other nations. Most importantly, they perceived the intrinsic value of the epistemological map provided to guide them on their spiritual pilgrimage—Scripture.

Intellectuality in ancient Israel precluded many of the epistemological maladies of modern Christianity: sloth and shallowness, anti-intellectualism and ignorance, syncretism and neutrality. Godly fear engendered wisdom and discernment, as well as worldview awareness and self-knowledge. In fact, mental piety appears in heartfelt prayers for intellectual self-awareness and they presume habitual repentance. David implored the Lord, 'Prove me, O Lord, and try me; test my heart and my mind' (Ps 26:2). Psalm 139:23 states, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!' Psalm 19:14 declares, 'Let the words of my mouth and the meditation

21 See S. Dean McBride, 'The Yoke of the Kingdom: An Exposition of Deuteronomy 6:4–5', *Interpretation* 27 (1973): 303–4; Daniel I. Block, 'How Many Is God: An Investigation into the Meaning of Deuteronomy 6:4–5', *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47, no. 2 (2004): 202–3.

of my heart be acceptable in your sight.’ Perhaps the most poignant expression of intellectual piety is Psalm 131:1–2:

O Lord, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me.

Finally, Deuteronomy teaches that we will not honor God with our minds or reflect his glory if we lack knowledge and discernment. John M. Frame explains that Christians have a God-given ‘stewardship of the mind and intellect’, adding, ‘It is remarkable that Christians so readily identify the lordship of Christ in matters of worship, salvation, and ethics, but not in thinking. But ... God in Scripture over and over demands obedience of his people in matters of wisdom, thinking, knowledge, understanding, and so forth.’²² Indeed, Deuteronomy—and 5:29 in particular—show that we are designed for thinking and that God desires a particular mindset for his servants—‘such a mind as this’.

For all these reasons, we must bring our brains to God. We should learn from our ancient brethren. Clearly, a Christian mind is a terrible thing to waste.

Pragmatic postscript

How should we respond to Deuteronomy’s message? How can we learn to love God with our mind today? I suggest two preliminary steps.²³

Repentance: Aspiring thinkers must turn back to the Bible as an act of worship. They should evaluate whom they listen to and where they learn. They must turn away from negative speakers and false messages. They should discern our intellectual context (Eph 2:1–3). They must distinguish between the trivial and the momentous. They must reinvest their intellectual capacity in the true, good and beautiful. They should develop intellectual virtues—such as curiosity, discipline, creativity and humility—in accord with the Scriptures.

This most difficult step entails growth of intellectual self-awareness. Carefully and honestly, assess how your family background, economic status, education (formal and informal), racial and ethnic status, and gender inform your worldview and deepest priorities. Evaluate where you obtain information. Calculate how much time you invest watching television or scanning Facebook and YouTube. Who and what determines how you think about yourself, your purpose, time, passions, spending, lifestyle and your responsibility to society? Ask yourself if you are truly a good steward of your mind.²⁴ If you are not, under the Spirit’s guidance and the teaching of Scripture, repent in the fear of the Lord. Turn from biblical ignorance and anti-intellectualism.

Learning: Apprentice thinkers acknowledge with their whole mind, soul and strength this essential truth: ‘Man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by

22 John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2015), 5.

23 The following material is adapted from *Such a Mind as This*, 393–94.

24 See Steve Wilkins and Mark L. Sanford, *Hidden Worldviews: Eight Cultural Stories That Shape Our Lives* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009).

every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord' (Deut 8:3). Together with fellow thinkers, build an educational infrastructure that fosters the fear of God as the foundation of knowledge.²⁵ Learn the history, people, themes and vision of the Bible. Study the cultures of the ancient Near East and Palestine. Practice intertextual reasoning and learn to think like the biblical authors.²⁶ Listen to the global Christian community and learn from the theological traditions of the church.

In all these ways, develop discernment and grow wisdom. Develop your intellectual curiosity about the topics that interest you and learn to think about them with the biblical worldview. Form Bible studies, reading groups and movie discussions. Bring your questions and doubts to the Word of God. Learn to interpret and engage popular culture with scriptural creativity.²⁷ Above all, personally and collectively, discern your true epistemic posture and listen to the counsel of Lady Wisdom: 'Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk in the way of insight. ... The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight' (Prov 9:6, 10).

25 A helpful source is Celina Durgin, 'Are You Bible-Literate? How about Bible-Fluent? These Terms, Explained', <https://worldea.org/yourls/ert461rls1>.

26 For reading recommendations on the Old Testament, see my *Such a Mind as This* website at <https://worldea.org/yourls/ert461rls2>. Also, consult the list of learning resources at <https://worldea.org/yourls/ert461rls3>, the Bible Literacy Coalition at <https://worldea.org/yourls/ert461rls4>, and the Washington Institute at <https://worldea.org/yourls/ert461rls5>.

27 See Ted Turnau, *Popogetics: Popular Culture in Christian Perspective* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2012); Ted Turnau, E. Stephen Burnett and Jared Moore, *The Pop Culture Parent: Helping Kids Engage Their World for Christ* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2020); Brian Godawa, *Hollywood Worldviews: Watching Films with Wisdom and Discernment* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011).