

## Sample Response for Deut 4:1–40

**Context:** Deuteronomy 4:1–40 is the final call of Moses’s first sermon (1:6–4:40). It marks a transition from Moses’s focus on historical retelling to more direct exhortation (though still incorporating historical retelling!). This final call in Deut 4 precedes Moses’s retelling of the events at Horeb in Deut 5 and the specific instructions the LORD gave there (the “ten commandments”). Here, in Deut 4:1–40, Moses summarizes key commands and warnings, along with articulating key motivations for heeding these commands and warnings.

### Structure

**4:1–8** *Israelites, listen to the LORD’s instructions since your life and uniqueness as a people derives only from his presence among you and special revelation to you; so, hold fast to him!*

**4:9–31** *So, don’t forget the LORD by holding fast to anyone or anything other than the LORD, who spoke to out of the midst of fire, or else you will forfeit your unique relationship with him.*

**4:32–40** *As if that weren’t enough: the unique salvation and covenant that the LORD has granted you are rooted in his own uniqueness and his mercy to speak to and discipline you; so listen to his instructions that it may go well with you!*

1. Emphasis on Motivation to Obey (4:1–8): **You are uniquely blessed by God!** God’s grace evidenced in his unique offer of covenant life and wisdom to Israel.
  - a. 4:1–4 Why: Your very life is at stake; the reality of the promise is set before you; past experience of consequences for not listening to the LORD (via idolatry at Beth Peor)
  - b. 4:5–8 Why: Your uniqueness is at stake; doing the LORD’s instructions will display among other nations your uniqueness as a nation and the uniqueness of the LORD’s instruction
    - Rhetorical question:* For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD your God is to us, who, whenever we call upon him?
    - Rhetorical question:* What great nation is there that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you?
2. Emphasis on Warning (4:9–31): Forgetfulness, especially in form of idolatry
  - a. **Do not neglect the law** (4:9–14)—“Keep your soul diligently”
  - b. **Do not worship idols** (4:15–31) {heaven and earth as witness}
    - i. Grounds for rejecting idolatry (4:15–24)
      1. Idolatry is a distortion of Mount Sinai (“you saw no form”)
      2. Idolatry is an inversion of creation
      3. Idolatry violates reality that you are his image and his inheritance
      4. Idolatry violates reality that God is jealous and a consuming fire
    - ii. Consequences (4:25–28)
      1. Loss of land (dispersion; scattering)
      2. Loss of people (destruction; “few in number”)
      3. Loss of presence (divine absence; worship gods of stone)
    - iii. Grace beyond the consequences (4:29–31)
3. Emphasis on Motivation: **God is unique and, in mercy, has uniquely acted on your behalf!** Uniqueness of God and uniqueness of his actions/gifts toward Israel.
  - a. *Rhetorical question:* Did any people ever hear the voice of a god speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and still live? [Unique relationship: revelation and discipline]
  - b. *Rhetorical question:* Has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation by trials, signs, by wonders, and by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great deeds of terror, all of which the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?
    - i. Unique relationship: salvation
      1. Election: God’s actions toward Israel grounded Abrahamic promise (“because he loved your fathers and chose their offspring...”)
    - ii. Unique and only God: There is no other god: vv. 35, 39 {grounds the entirety of the exhortation}

## Sample Response for Deut 4:1–40

### Unifying Theme

Covenant believer, *you have every reason* to heed God's revealed words to you and worship him alone:

- your enjoyment of abundant life depends on it;
- God is giving you unique privileges by giving you these revealed instructions and abiding with you;
- your obedience will display to a watching world God's character, nearness, and mighty works;
- worshiping anyone or anything other than God will lead to destruction and will dishonor God;
- God's mercy is so immense that he provides for your complete redemption and transformation, long before you existed and even when you treat him like your enemy after he has delivered you;
- these words in God's Word are those of the one and only God, who has made himself known to you for your good.

### Author's Aim

Moses aims to bring his first sermon to a close by reminding the Israelites of the enormous privileges of grace that the LORD has lavished on them so that they will listen to the LORD's instructions and keep their covenant with the LORD by worshiping him alone.

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4:1–8 **Summary Call:** "Listen to the LORD's instructions and take the land, that you may live!"

4:9–14 **Remember Horeb (warning):** "Don't forget what you've seen and heard when the LORD revealed his covenant to you at Horeb!"

4:15–24 **Core command at Horeb:** "So, don't make a carved image to worship or worship any created thing!"

4:25–31 **Future Consequences & Prospect Relating to Horeb (warning; future hope):** "If you worship images, you will perish from the land!": destruction, dispersion, devotion to dumb idols

4:32–40 **Climactic Call:** The one true God let you hear his voice that he might discipline you, so keep his instructions, that you may live!