

Chapter 16

Deuteronomy: “The Second Law”

Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.

Two million Israelites camped at Shittim, just a scant few miles to the east of the Jordan. They had come a long way from their liberation from Egypt. Some had been born after the events of Kadesh-Barnea (Numbers 13—14) and had not witnessed their parents' refusal to enter into the land. Some were up to 19 years old¹ then and all of them had watched their fathers die during the forty years they had spent in the wilderness. They knew not to commit the sins of their fathers for they had witnessed exactly what would happen to them should they reject God and their God-appointed leader, Joshua. Now they were ready . . . they thought. They would later tell Joshua, “All that you say, we will do . . . just as we obeyed Moses, we will obey you . . . “ (Joshua 1:17). Of course, the reader wonders how this generation could be so confident when their parents had actually witnessed the miraculous exodus from powerful Egypt less than five months previous, yet still rebelled at Kadesh-Barnea.

So Moses composed several sermons to exhort them as they prepared for their trek across the Jordan into the land inhabited by the evil Canaanites. These evil pagans were people that were destined to be wiped out by the sword of Israel . . . man, woman, child, baby, dog, cat . . . anything that had breath was to be wiped out.²

The Canaanites were a fearful people. They were large, violent, and worshipped horrendous gods, gods who acted like themselves, only worse. Could Israel have faith in the God of the miraculous Exodus and, unlike their fathers, be victorious and stay faithful . . . and continue to wait on this God?

The Sermons of Deuteronomy

¹ Numbers 32:11.

² "Only in the cities of these peoples that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, you shall not leave alive anything that breathes. (Deuteronomy 20:16)

So Moses began. He would structure his sermons in a treaty form that was well known.³ Essentially the book is broken up into five sections, four main and one minor. These sections would form the foundation for the rest of Israel's history. All of the people, who were in that plain in Moab, would be measured by this covenant as well as all those generations who would come later. All of the kings would be measured by this Law. And, of course, Jesus, Himself, would be measured by these laws.

The Law was the character of God. It was designed to identify one Man, the Christ. Only He could keep it, since only He would have the character of God. Everyone else would come under its mercy (shown in the sacrifices), the very mercy that would be paid by the ultimate Passover Lamb, that same Christ.

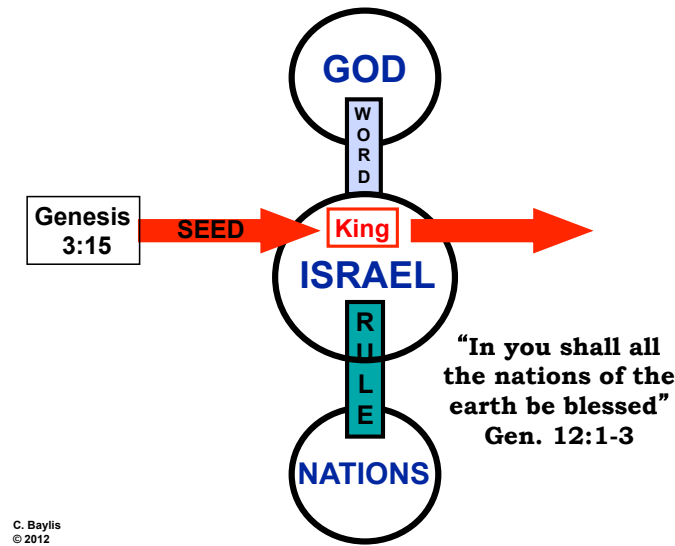
The Love of God

Deuteronomy is "The Love of God." It is here in this book that God describes all that He, as the Great Covenant Blessor, had done, was doing, and would do, for Israel his chosen nation. It was because of this unique blessing in the Seed of the Woman, which they had received, that they would bless the Gentiles (Genesis 12:1-3). Then they, as His unique national representative, would be able to give out what God had given to them. Thus, they would be able to act on behalf of the God of creation. They alone would have this privilege. They alone would be set above all the nations of the earth.

¹⁷ "For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. ¹⁸ "He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. ¹⁹ "So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.

(Deuteronomy 10:17-19)

³ This format is the Hittite treaty form called the Suzerain-Vassal treaty. The Suzerain was the great landholder who was rich and powerful. He would act benevolently to the vassal, who was the poor farmer who could hardly provide food for his family. The Suzerain would then covenant with the vassal and with other vassals so as to provide services for the Suzerain while he protected them and gave the benevolent help.



But Israel did not see the book as a book of God's sacrificial love to benefit Israel, but saw God as a hard Master. Like the third servant in the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:24, Israel and the Pharisee did not see God as giving them something that was "living" and valuable to produce life, but in fact saw God as a judging God who required much from each of his Israelites.

²⁴ "And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, (Matthew 25:24)

The book was indeed setting the high standard of God's character, but within that character the Pentateuch offered the great mercy of God toward Israel and to those to whom they ministered. It was this mercy that exemplified the great character of God. The giving of mercy was also a high standard to which none would be able to achieve, and man would have to realize he was unable to achieve it (i.e., the very giving of mercy) and would ask for mercy in his inability to give it. And then he would sequentially give out the very mercy he had been given.

Unfortunately today the study of the Word has fallen on hard times even to the point of belittling those who do study the Word. Books, movies, self-help, "ten secrets . . ." conferences and video series have all replaced the study of God's word, the desiring to know His character. Tips and tricks to "push the right buttons" to get God to act, prevail, rather than a love for His pure and loving character.⁴

⁴ It is not the "doing of good deeds" that is the reflection of the character of God, but is the giving of the mercy that God has given to them in Christ. Anything that is self-glorifying or self-justifying is not of God, regardless of its benefit to society or others. The love of God is demonstrated solely in self-sacrificial mercy which can only come through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The love of God in Deuteronomy is a self-sacrificing, generous love. It is this character of God that one should desire to know and to “love with all their heart and soul and mind” (Deuteronomy 6:4-6). It is not a love for oneself or a self-esteem that God wants man to have, but a love for YHWH alone, to see oneself as a mercy-receiving representative through the great sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ. It is this love of the Pentateuch that pervaded the Psalmist life.

¹ How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! ² **But his delight is in the law of YHWH, And in His law he meditates day and night.** ³ He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.

(Psalm 1:1-3)

Introduction

There in the Plains of Moab, at a place called Shittim, just a few miles opposite Jericho across the Jordan River, two million Israelites waited. They had made a forty-year journey all the way from Kadesh-Barnea, a journey in which they buried their parents' bodies in the wilderness. Beyond that river lay the land that God had promised . . . their future kingdom. And now they had the same chance as their parents to claim what God had promised. They did not want to fail as their fathers.

So Moses began to speak. The Book of Deuteronomy is the record of the sermons given to the nation there on the east side of the Jordan. Through Moses, God would instruct them so they could be successful in their battles, their victories, and finally could establish God's kingdom in that land. But they would have to walk by faith in what YHWH had said, a faith that required loyalty and allegiance to YHWH, even though their sight would immediately not confirm what they were told by God. They were to wait for God to deliver on His promise . . . a waiting that required endurance.

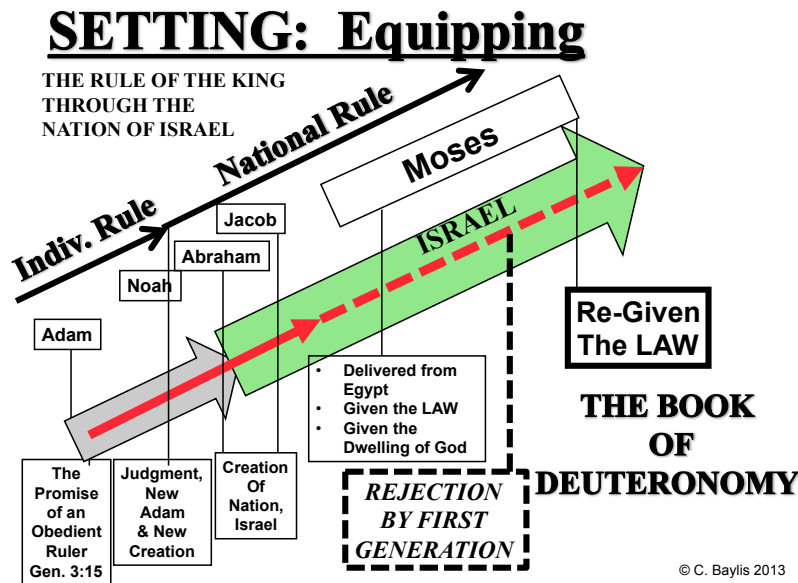
The Place of Deuteronomy in the Biblical Story

The Biblical Story has previously revealed God's choice of Israel as the mediator of the message of the Genesis 3:15 Messiah and the hope of deliverance in Him. Following that, God had equipped Israel with deliverance from Egypt, the Law, and the presence of God with them in the Tabernacle. The first generation had moved on the basis of that Law to Kadesh-Barnea, where Israel rejected God, Moses, and the possession of the land. Now that the first generation had died, a new generation waited, paused at the Jordan River. They would be re-instructed in the Law in Deuteronomy, from that given at Mount Sinai, so that they understood the

character of God whom they were to represent. So Deuteronomy was equipping Israel with the knowledge of the character of God and how they were to act if they were to represent Him to their fellow Israelites and the Gentiles. God's character is sacrificial love. He would give that love to Israel so they could give to their brothers and to the Gentile nations.

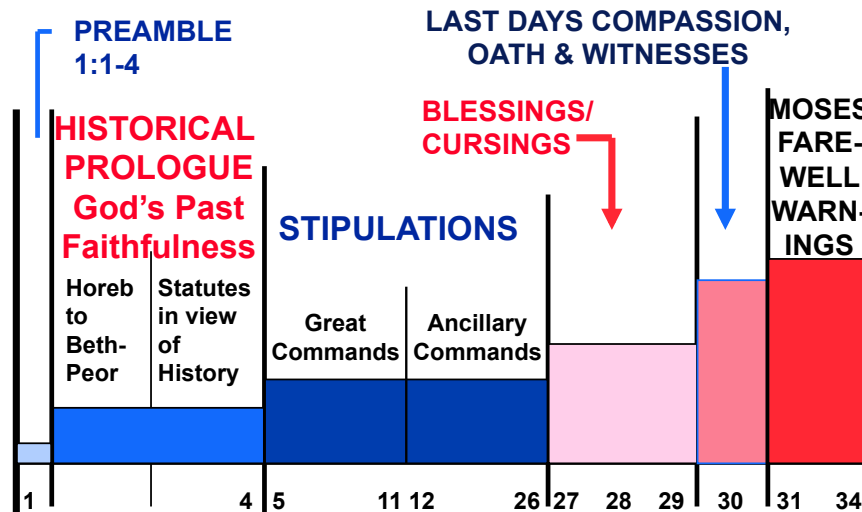
¹⁹ "So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.

(Deuteronomy 10:19)



The Book of Deuteronomy

The book is laid out in a basic Hittite Treaty form where God, as the Great Suzerain, will act on their behalf apart from any abilities of their own (as He did in Egypt). He would then proceed to describe His character desires. They should make their character to mold with His and obey the commandments simply because they desired the same thing as God. Finally, He would tell them of the benefits and liabilities should they obey or disobey. They would be blessed in the land or cursed and eliminated from the land. Finally, Moses transferred the power to Joshua and spoke his final warnings and goodbyes.



DEUTERONOMY

Dr. C. Baylis
3/95

Deuteronomy 1--4: God had acted on their behalf in the past and thus would in the future

Moses began by telling them the history of how they had come to this place; how God had already fought their battles for them (Deuteronomy 1—4) in order to bring them to this entry point. The fact that God had acted on their behalf solely from His own character by His own choice indicated that He would continue to battle for them if they would simply obey. Since He would act first and give them prosperity, He warned them of thinking that they had accomplished it on their own and forget that it was He who gave it to them. He warned them of turning to the gods of the present occupants as if those local gods were the providers of their prosperity. And He told them that if they did, He would remove them from the land.

John reflects this concept in the New Testament when he talks about how God had given man the new character, called "eternal life," apart from man changing his practices. He would give the character and man would then respond from that character.

¹⁹ We love, because He first loved us. (1 John 4:19)

Deuteronomy 5--26: The Commands

He then gave them the commands that they were to keep (Deuteronomy 5-26). Interspersed through these commands was the repeated exhortation to “love YHWH your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind.” They were not to simply keep the rules, but they were to *love* to keep the rules for they were the desires of the heart of God. And as His unique representative, they were very privileged. If they represented God from their heart, He would reward them beyond their wildest imagination. God’s desires were to be their desires.

Deuteronomy 27--28: Blessing and Cursing

As God’s chosen nation, there was no choice to simply opt out. He had chosen them to be blessed and God would see His promise through. Thus, should they obey Him and represent Him, they would find prosperity beyond their imagination. Should they disobey and rebel against God, they would be cursed. The point of the removal of prosperity was so that Israel would turn to Him as their provider and once again love Him.

Deuteronomy 30:1—9: God’s Compassion in the Last Days to Israel

Ultimately, Israel would receive both the blessing and the cursing of Deuteronomy 28—29. When they find themselves under a curse in a foreign land, as they will one day (the last days), they will decide to return to YHWH. He will overwhelmingly return to them and return them to the land that He wanted them to have. In addition, so that they would never rebel again, He would give them a new heart . . . a heart that would love Him.

Yet in Deuteronomy 30:1-9, God had told them that in their failure, He would bring them back to the land and then He would change their heart to a heart which would obey Him, a heart that loved Him . . . a heart just like His. Only then would they be able to occupy the land and have a kingdom of God. Only then would they be satisfied with their God and He with them. It was in that final return, when He would change them that He would rejoice over them forever.

Deuteronomy 30:11-14: God’s Would Provide All – Israel was to believe

Then God explains to Israel that He is going to do everything that is needed for Israel to prosper and stay in the land. He tells them that they should simply rely

in God and walk according to His provision. They need to have faith, that is, to understand exactly who God is and what He will do for them. They need to testify of the God who will deliver them through this prophesied Messiah, who blesses their path and with whom they walk.

Deuteronomy 30:15-29: The Oath

The oath was made in Deuteronomy 29 in front of the witnesses of “heaven and earth.” The oath indicated that God would insure the terms of the covenant. Should they reject Him they could be sure He would destroy them. Should they obey they could also be sure He would bless them as His peculiar children.

Deuteronomy 31--32: Moses farewell prophecies and The Song of Moses – Their Doom predicted as their Evil Character to be Judged

But as Moses closed out his sermons, he sang a song recorded in Deuteronomy 32. In that song, he prophesied that he knew that they would not change from the same people as their parents. They would ultimately reject God and God would have to judge them. They would ultimately regard themselves as responsible for their prosperity and would forsake God. But in essence, they could not fool God, nor ignore Him. He would make them accountable.

Deuteronomy as the Basis for Identifying God's Character

As was previously discussed in Genesis 1:26, God wanted man to represent His character. In Exodus, He had given the law to that first generation from Egypt so that they would know how to represent God's character. That first generation had failed to love God. Now to the next generation, in this “second law,” He repeats His character to the second generation. They were always to imitate God's character and these were the instructions on how to do so.

Thus, Deuteronomy will serve as the criteria by which all future generations will be judged. Not only will the people be judged on this basis, but especially the kings, the judges, the priests and Levites. Since these were the administrators of God's desires, they especially were to represent His character.

So, in interpreting the books subsequent to Deuteronomy, it is essential that the reader know the Law. Joshua, Judges, the Kings, all will be assessed on the character of God revealed in the Law to see if they will represent Him. Ultimately when the reader gets to the gospels, Jesus will be judged on the basis of the Law as well as the basis on which He would judge others.

Jesus judged the Pharisees on the basis of the Law. Often one hears that the Pharisees kept the Law, but Jesus kept love, as if love was different than the Law. The first point to be made is that the Pharisees did not keep the Law, only the parts they selected.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.

(Matthew 23:23)

And Jesus kept the Law Himself and insisted that He be judged by it.

¹⁷ "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill (Matthew 5:17).

The second thing is that Jesus indeed kept love, but it was the love administered through the Law. To assume the Law did not have the mercy and compassion of God inherent in it is just plain wrong.

then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.

(Deut. 30:3)

³⁶ "For the LORD will vindicate His people, And will have compassion on His servants, When He sees that *their* strength is gone, And there is none *remaining*, bond or free.

(Deut. 32:36)

The Law was made to identify one Person, the Christ. Only He would have the exact character of God. Jesus will keep the Law 100%. This is the proof that the reader will be able to assess and thus conclude that Jesus is the Christ. And, in fact, Jesus kept the Law by acting on the exact character of God, the character that was the basis of the Law. Thus Jesus extended the compassion of God toward His brother. He did not change the Law, lower the bar, raise the bar, nor allow anything short of God's character to be approved. What He did was to die as a substitute for those breaking the Law thus demonstrating the extreme love of the character of God as reflected in Deuteronomy.

So . . . the knowledge of the Law is the knowledge of God's character. It is absolutely essential to understand the Bible. And there is a huge warning. Since the knowledge of God is self-revealed, man cannot know it without revelation. Thus, if man does not understand the unique self-revelation of this God, he will fill in the blanks with human reasoning and will create God in his own image. This is the

warning of Deuteronomy to Israel that they would stray from this unique God to please and justify their own desires.

“Love YHWH your God . . . ”

There is one phrase that details the essence of the Law more than any other. It is that phrase, “Love YHWH your God . . . ” (Deuteronomy 6:4). This is the sole requirement of the representative of God.

When one thinks of being commanded to “love someone,” it seems a little hard. Here is a God who tells you to love Him. In western society we tend to resist anyone telling us that we should have to love them, or else. This type of thinking actually reveals something about this statement that is very important. That is, that one cannot love something that they don’t naturally admire.

There is an example that might help to understand this issue of character love.

I loved my dad dearly. I think I had the best dad in the world. He was a silent man, but strong, the handsomest man I’d ever seen, but most of all he was a fair person. He could see through people’s fluff and immediately pick up their real, though covered-up, character. He could evaluate problems and would respond to people in a fair, true, fashion.

My dad has been with the Lord since 1997 and I miss him greatly. But what is interesting is that I still want to be just like my dad. The reason is because I admired him. I loved who he was, and what he did. My admiration for my dad’s desires made me want to be like him. I loved his character. Thus our love for God should work out that we want to be just like Him, to imitate His character.

That’s it!!! If you don’t admire God and His desires reflected in His commands, you will not love Him. That is what happened to the Pharisees. They did not love the God they found in Deuteronomy. What they did was imagined a God that honored them for their self-achievements, One who was like their character. Thus they became gods, and the true God would be indebted to them for their performance. They did this by reading the parts they wanted to read, and reading them the way they wanted to read them. They did not read them because they wanted to know this God . . . no matter what they found.

The difficulty then with the Israelite was his heart (desires) was different than God’s. His desires were self-glorifying. He desired women whom God did not

desire them to have, and especially the foreign women. Since the Israelite desired material prosperity and physical pleasure (loved, desired), he would recreate a god that would give it to him. Thus he loved gods that advocated immorality, prosperity, self-indulgence and honor.

What he needed was a heart (desires) that was just like God's. If man had the same desires as God, then He would admire God. The only way was for a new heart.

"The Heart:" The Character

When Deuteronomy refers to the "heart" it is indicating the character of man. Sometimes it references it in a synonym, as the "bowels," indicating one's innermost desires. One's character, or heart, is their desires. And man acts on his desires, nothing else. His desires are also a reflection of his wisdom, that is, what he determines is "good" for him.

Thus, Deuteronomy tells man (6:7), "These commands which I am commanding you today shall be on your heart." In other words, the commands were not to be kept out of obligation or guilt, but because one loved to do them . . . because they were their inner desires.

"Circumcise Your Heart" (Deuteronomy 10:16)

"So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer."

In essence, circumcision was the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant in the flesh. The Israelite was to recognize that he belonged to God and as such was to obey Him. Yet the external circumcision did little to make Israel obey (i.e., "love"). The difficulty was not the circumcision but was the character for which the circumcision stood. Thus Israel was to *make* its character obey . . . to make its character desires the same as those of God.

"I will Circumcise Your Heart" (Deuteronomy 30:6)

Ultimately Israel would utterly fail to be able to obey the desires of God from their heart and thus unable to "circumcise their own heart." God would have to do it. It would be in the "last days" that God would do this.

¹ "So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse . . . ² and you return to the LORD your God . . . ³ then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you . . . ⁵ "The LORD

your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed . . .”

⁶ "Moreover the LORD your God will **circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants**, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.”

New Testament Fulfillment

Very often in New Testament times, in the Church Age, people assume they are just more highly motivated than those in the Old Testament due to the death of Christ on the cross. However, it is much, much, more than that. Under the New Covenant, God has not improved the old heart, but has, in fact, given the believer a new heart. It is this very circumcision of heart that has come to the one who believes.

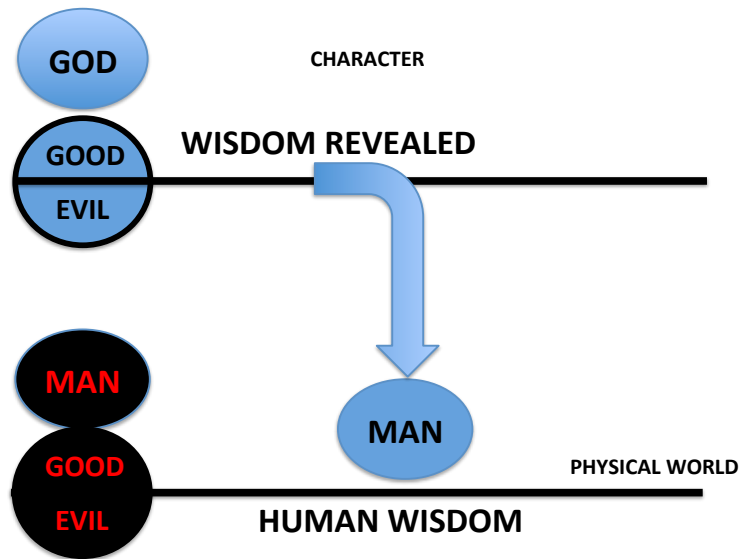
¹¹ and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; (Col. 2:11)

²⁹ But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God. (Romans 2:29)

The Character (Heart) is Wisdom

Frequently the question comes up as to what the “heart” looks like in reality. It has already been defined as “one’s desires.” While this is fairly clear, it is necessary to define it even further. How does one come to their desires? It is through their brain! In other words, one acts on what they see as “good.” The definition of “good” however tends to vary with each person. As has been shown earlier, “good” is only to be defined by God, by His desires.

Now when God defines “good,” it is His reasoning (wisdom) that defines it. This is called “Wisdom.” In other words, “Wisdom” is what God determines is right or good. Thus, what God does when He changes man’s heart (circumcises it) is to give him the proper wisdom. In other words, this wisdom that is from God will determine what is “good” based on God’s revelation. The man can then act correctly since He knows God’s desires, God’s wisdom, and can confront every opportunity or trial based on this wisdom.



The Knowledge of God through the Scriptures, particularly Deuteronomy

A final word here before entering Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy does not instruct one to pursue God anywhere else but within its pages. It is this Law to which man will be accountable. It is this Law *alone* that will reveal this God. It warns its readers about pursuing God through anything other than this Law. In fact, it will warn readers about reporting that something is from God when it is not. The penalties are very severe for adding to God's revelation.

Thus, the way to know this God is to pursue an understanding of the Scriptures. In today's culture there is an attitude of not studying the Scriptures and replacing them with "good deeds." Yet it is the study of the Scriptures only that will inform the believer about this God and His love. This is the only motivation that is to urge the believer to action and produce "good deeds," that is, deeds that glorify the Savior.

Deuteronomy is about God's character. He wants to give man that character. And as man walks, man should receive mercy from God and give it out, and glorify God and His Son through whom all mercy is given.

EXPOSITION

God had been Faithful to Bring them to this Spot (1:1—4:43)

The first chapters cover the previous acts of YHWH in order to show that the Suzerain was and will be faithful in His protective and providing acts (1-4:43).

From Mount Sinai to the Plains of Moab, Moses reiterated the journey. While the Suzerain, YHWH, had provided and protected them all the way, yet He warned them that when they get to the land they would forget Him and become self-sufficient, never realizing that it was He who had given them everything. They would be exiled and would one day repent and return to YHWH. This described their coming future life. They would be in the land, would reject their Provider, YHWH, be exiled, and finally return to Him and He would restore them to the kingdom.

²⁵ "When you become the father of children and children's children and have remained long in the land, and act corruptly, and make an idol in the form of anything, and do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD your God *so as* to provoke Him to anger, ²⁶ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will surely perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. You shall not live long on it, but will be utterly destroyed. ²⁷ "The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD drives you. ²⁸ "There you will serve gods, the work of man's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. ²⁹ "But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul. ³⁰ "When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice. ³¹ "For the LORD your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them. (Deuteronomy 4:25-31)

Covenant Requirements to Image God (4:44—26:19)

As covenants were, there were stipulations for the vassal to follow by which he would operate on the suzerain's behalf. The second section reviews the Laws of this covenant for the people entering the land, so that they would clearly understand what was required of them (4:44-26:19).

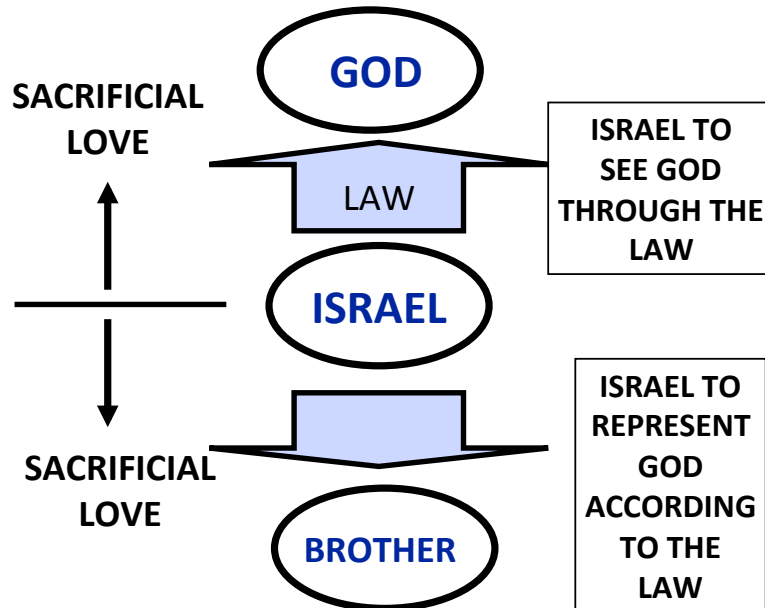
Loyalty to YHWH

This first part introduced the stipulations with an explanation of the most important feature of the agreement, then the vassal's loyalty was required above all. It was this loyal love that would motivate all the other commands. These commands were

the desires of the suzerain and must be kept because of the loyal love that the vassal had for him.

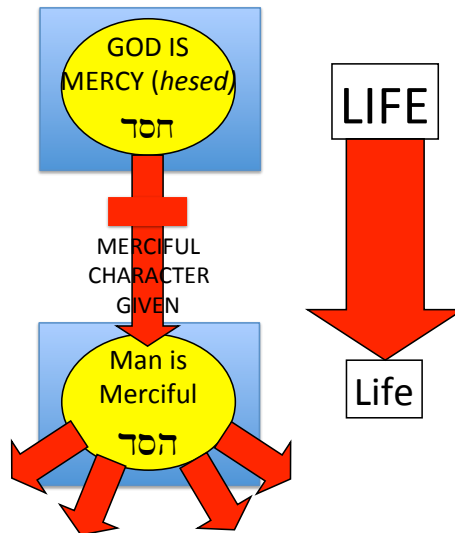
The Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 5)

(These were covered in the notes on Exodus and The Law and the reader is referred to that section instead of repeating them here.)



The first four of the ten were directed toward YHWH and required loyalty and love toward Him. He was the sovereign and only God and they were to not only to respect His revealed character as unique and sovereign, but were to respect the way in which He was to be approached (worship) and the way in which He was to be represented (revelation). To be in awe of YHWH and worship Him always only by means of His prescribed ways as to “Love the Lord with all your heart and soul.” (first four commands)

The last six were the means by which the love of YHWH was to be expressed towards one’s brother. The brother was always to be approached with a desire to watch out for the brother’s interests. Thus one would encourage the brother in his marriage, his goods, his reputation, his life, and generally his good, even to one’s own cost.



Loyalty to YHWH above all (Deuteronomy 6): The HEART

The chapter on loyalty forms a foundation for the rest of the covenant. Here one was to honor God as the only God (“YHWH your God is One”), and was to have a character which was so like the character of YHWH that it would “love YHWH your God with all your heart and all your soul . . .”).

⁴ "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! ⁵ "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. (Deuteronomy 6:4-6)

Identity with YHWH above all: SPEAK

And then one would thus speak it constantly as one’s own desire, particularly toward the physical images that one had brought forth (his children), so that they also would have the image of God in them.

⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. ⁸ "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. ⁹ "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:7-9)

The chapter ends with an illustration of what a parent would say to his children. What he would reflect was the great national and individual salvation of Israel when they were delivered from Egypt by God’s mighty hand through the blood of the Passover lamb. Of course, as was mentioned in Exodus, the Passover Lamb was simply a symbol

of the coming Genesis 3:15 sacrificial Messiah, a fulfillment seen in the appearance of Jesus.

²⁰ "When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What *do* the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments *mean* which the LORD our God commanded you?' ²¹ then you shall say to your son, 'We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us from Egypt with a mighty hand. ²² 'Moreover, the LORD showed great and distressing signs and wonders before our eyes against Egypt, Pharaoh and all his household; ²³ He brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land which He had sworn to our fathers.' ²⁴ "So the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God for our good always and for our survival, as *it is* today. ²⁵ "It will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all this commandment before the LORD our God, just as He commanded us. (Deuteronomy 6:20-25)

Today's church has emitted a strange message. It is not unlike the message of moral pagans. The message that they say is that a parent should teach their children that of morality, ethics, as well as principles of being good and honored before men. The difficulty with this is that it is simply, "self-righteousness." The Israelite was to teach his children about this God, the only One, the One who had delivered them from Egypt with a mighty hand. This was the God who did not need any help from the Israelites to conquer, except for them to receive it, gather up the booty that was being handed to them, and leave. Not one stick, stone, rock, or other weapon was needed . . . only God. It was through the blood of the Passover Lamb that it was accomplished, not by their might, nor even a positive attitude. It was the blood on the doorpost. Without that, no one was leaving.

God does not admire what men admire. What is wisdom to men is foolishness to God. The preaching of the cross is to those who perish . . . foolishness (1 Corinthians 1). Thus it was not good works, not honor, nor riches that Israel was to accomplish. It was a total loyalty to this God, the God who would do all, redeem them from perishing through the blood of a Passover Lamb . . . alone!

Today that Passover Lamb has been fulfilled in Jesus the Christ. Thus, it is Jesus that is to be preached, no more, no less. One must be loyal to Him before the motivation is even present to perform acts of mercy and charity. It was anticipating Jesus in Deuteronomy 6 and it is the fullness of Jesus that is to be taught to children today.

Total Elimination of the Canaanites Lest they Influence Israel (Deuteronomy 7)

One of the problems with Israel was that they had the same character as the Canaanites. It was the one derived from Adam. As such they would be drawn to the desires of the Canaanites, instead of the desires of God in the revelation. Should they follow the Canaanites they also would be eliminated as the Canaanites were. There are some very poignant verses here that are referenced through the Scriptures.

³ "Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. ⁴ "For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you. (Deut. 7:1-4)

Of course this passage is referenced in both 1 Kings 11 with Solomon.

Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, ² from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the sons of Israel, "You shall not associate with them, nor shall they associate with you, *for* they will surely turn your heart away after their gods." Solomon held fast to these in love. (1 Kings 11:1-2)

It was repeated in Nehemiah 13.26 with the intermarriage that happened upon the return under Nehemiah.

²⁵ So I contended with them and cursed them and struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God, "You shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor take of their daughters for your sons or for yourselves. ²⁶ "Did not Solomon king of Israel sin regarding these things? Yet among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless the foreign women caused even him to sin. (Neh. 13:25-26)

Today the church is in the midst of a Gentile pagan society. Yet the church is influenced by its culture so much so that the culture and practice of the pagans has become the guideline for the church instead of the pure gospel. There is so much insistence on becoming like the culture, yet so little insistence on the purity, and the UNIQUENESS, of the gospel. Churches spend much time on music, dress, small groups, large groups, humor, sports, etc., in order to be contemporary, and thus the amount of time spent on what is different or unique to the church (the Word) is avoided. In fact, the difficulty is that in bringing in contemporary influence and seeking to speak and act like the world, it has not stopped with clothing and music style, but has approached God in the same way the pagans do, that is, in a casual manner, making Him a very common God

created in the image of those who want to make Him relevant (as if He isn't). And the theology of the church thus is not much different than the daytime talk shows. The influence of the Canaanites today is not feared, but embraced. Paul warned against this very thing in Ephesians.

¹⁷ So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸ being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; ¹⁹ and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. ²⁰ But you did not learn Christ in this way,

(Ephesians 4:17-20)

Discipline and the Warning Against Self-Reliance (Deuteronomy 8)

Note: Faith is acting on a promise of God when the fulfillment is not presently seen. In other words, one believes because God has spoken, not because one can quickly realize the benefits of what God has stated. There is a delay before the promise is realized. This delay requires that one go without those benefits (or at least cannot physically realize them). That is what is called “suffering” or “enduring” for one’s faith (or suffering for the gospel). Ultimately the faith is realized when the promise is fulfilled and the believer no longer suffers because he has realized the benefits physically.

In this chapter God speaks of the Israelites and His testing of them. He had already told them that He would deliver them to the Land of Canaan. That would require faith in His promise. Thus when they did not have food or water, they should have realized that God would provide since He had promised. This is what is called “testing.” That is where God allows one to go without so as to show that they will trust Him to provide as He decides.

God tests Israelites’ Faith (8:1-6)

God always tests His children (believers) to see if they will trust in Him. Following the test of faith (after a delay), it is then that God brings forth His promised fulfillment (8:1-6).

² "You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. ³ "He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the

mouth of the LORD.⁴ "Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.⁵ "Thus you are to know in your heart that the LORD your God was disciplining⁵ you just as a man disciplines his son.

(Deuteronomy 8:2-5)

New Testament

"Discipline:" The word discipline is used here in Deuteronomy 8:5, as in Hebrews 12. The point is not that the child has done something wrong and is being chastised, but that he is being trained by allowing him to demonstrate his faith (confidence) in God through a trial.

⁵ and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; ⁶ FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES." ⁷ It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline? ⁸ But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

(Hebrews 12:5-8)

In 1 Peter, he describes how one has to suffer here on earth, awaiting the Second Coming of Christ, when He will remove the suffering and we will receive the reward visibly.

⁴ to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, ⁷ so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ⁸ and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:4-9)

Of course, one would be remiss to not mention the Temptation of Jesus by Satan on the Mount of Temptation. Jesus quotes this verse in Deuteronomy 8 in a response to

⁵ Note here the definition of "discipline" is synonymous with "testing." In other words, the discipline that a son goes through is not necessarily where one gets a spanking, but is when one must go without to trust that God will come through. It is the period of delay before the promise is implemented.

Satan's tempting Him to make bread from stones to feed Himself. Jesus is thus, like the Israelites, tempted to not wait for God to provide. Yet Jesus quotes Moses (and God) that He will wait for the faithful God to provide. In other words, this temptation by Satan was to see "what was in your heart" (Deut. 8:2), and Jesus passed the test of faithfulness.

When one undergoes suffering as a believer there may be three causes of that suffering (i.e., trial or temptation).

- The first is what is seen here in Deuteronomy 8 and is the most common. God is testing (or letting one go without immediate results) in order to allow the believer to demonstrate his confidence in God.
- The second, which is still applicable today, is that God is chastising the believer with sickness due to a sin against His church or another brother, or even a sin directly against God. Usually the chastisement is for the sake of obtaining the believer's repentance and reconciliation (see Matthew 18), but may simply be judicial where the believer is removed from life so that others may fear and obey (Acts 5:1-11), or simply to remove one from influencing the body of Christ, the church (1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 11:30). The difficulty with this discipline is that it also requires insight in order to make this judgment and thus an awareness so that one can repent. It requires Biblical elders to evaluate it (Matthew 18:15-20), bring the judgment, and the same to assess the repentance and then to remove it. However, if Biblical elders do not do it, then God may administer it Himself. This is the case referenced in Matthew 18, 1 Corinthians 5, 9-11, James 5. However, again note that the chastisement is for the protection of the believers in the body and the purity of doctrine, and thus one may not be assured of the possibility of an opportunity to repent and return (1 Corinthians 11:30, "many sleep").
- The third is that God is showing His glory through the believer. These cases are Hannah (childless), where God shows His glory as He brings down the arrogant (Peninah and Eli) and raises up the humble (Hannah and Samuel). Of course, this is seen in the Bible due to divine insight and cannot be made today without the same insight. That insight will wait until God judges in the eschaton as today the wicked may prosper and the humble may suffer. The blind man in John 9 was another one of those cases. The man was blind so that Jesus could come and heal him and show the glory of God in Jesus.

Warning against Self-reliance (8:7-14)

God knows that when they get to the land and become wealthy that they will think that they have done this for themselves and will forget that God has provided. Thus when the delay of testing is over, man becomes self-reliant.

¹⁴ then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

(Deuteronomy 8:14)

Judgment on Self-reliance (8:15-20):

God would enable Israel to be blessed in the work of their hands. Yet they would feel they had accomplished it through their own skills and abilities and would forsake God. If they did this they would perish. This is repeated throughout Deuteronomy; if they claim their own self-abilities like the nations before them, they will perish like the nations before them.

¹⁷ "Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' ¹⁸ "But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day. ¹⁹ "It shall come about if you ever forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish. ²⁰ "Like the nations that the LORD makes to perish before you, so you shall perish; because you would not listen to the voice of the LORD your God.

(Deuteronomy 8:17-20)

New Testament

This is probably the biggest failure in the New Testament with those who claim to be “children of God.” The Pharisees were constantly enchanted with their wealth, honor, health, etc., in the sense that they thought they had accomplished through their own self-abilities and thus were honored before men. They felt that God wanted them to be successful in order to glorify Him, but in truth it was to work the other way around. They were to glorify God for what they had received.

Jesus warns them of this in Matthew 6 where He shows that the Pharisees are wrapped up in their image and respect before men, primarily in the area of wealth. Thus in the end of the chapter He states that one cannot serve God and mammon (riches). The selfish ambition of the Pharisees was not a godly trait, but one of the flesh, the character derived from Satan.

Probably the most specific book that deals with this is the Book of James. Here the believer (2:1) is modifying his faith in Jesus so as to justify his bias toward those who have accomplished (e.g., the rich, cf. 2:2ff.), and thus are to be honored in the assembly. He lists the wisdom from below as earthly and demonic and is seen in the character traits of jealousy (achievement as compared to others) and selfish ambition (achievement for oneself as being a godly trait). Note the use of the word “death” in James when referencing this practice of selfish ambition.

¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and *so* lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. ¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

(James 3:14-16)

¹⁹ My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, ²⁰ let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

(James 5:19-20)

Warning against Self-righteousness (Deuteronomy 9)

Chapter 9 again details what is about to happen to them as God sends them into the land where there are peoples who are mightier than they. They will destroy these people but it will be solely because of the hand of God. Yet they will assume that it is because of their righteousness that they are gaining the land. But God emphasizes over and over that it is not the (self) righteousness of the Israelites that causes Him to do this, but the wickedness of the Gentiles. In other words, God is judging the Canaanites because of His holiness and the Canaanites wickedness. The Israelites are simply the instruments that God is using. They need to be sure to recognize this and humble themselves before God. For God says, it is not their righteousness, for they are a rebellious people. If it were not for His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (*chesed*), He would destroy them as well, since the implication is that they are wicked as well.

⁴ "Do not say in your heart when the LORD your God has driven them out before you,

'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land,'
but *it is* because of the wickedness of these nations *that* the LORD is
dispossessing them before you.

⁵ "It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land,
but *it is* because of the wickedness of these nations *that* the LORD your
God is driving them out before you, in order to confirm the oath which the
LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

⁶ "Know, then, *it is not* because of your righteousness *that* the LORD your God is
giving you this good land to possess,

for you are a stubborn people.

⁷ "Remember, do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness; from the day that you left the land of Egypt until you arrived at this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD.

(Deuteronomy 9:4-7)

New Testament Fulfillment

This, along with the previous chapter on self-reliance, is the core of the New Testament problem with self-righteousness. One assumes that they get things or have accomplished things based on their own goodness as opposed to seeing the benefits as a gift of God, who causes His rain to fall on the just and the unjust (Matthew 5).

**The Love of God (sacrificial love)
is to be demonstrated to, and by, the Israelite (Deuteronomy 10)**

Probably one of the chapters that is most endearing is the section in Chapter 10 that talks about the awesome God of Israel, His care for the widow and orphan, and the great mercy that He has given to Israel, that is to be shown to their brothers and aliens.

These are Ruth's favorite verses. It was here that she learned about YHWH, a God who loved widows and aliens, two categories in which she qualified. His character was One who showed sacrificial mercy toward them. Her mother-in-law, Naomi, was a widow (probably when she met her), and soon she became one herself following the death of her own husband, Mahlon. This God YHWH that she heard of from her mother-in-law was clearly more awesome than her god, Chemosh (and likely others), but the care that this God showed for the hopeless was something that caught her heart and she wanted Him for her own.

The sovereignty and greatness of God is the first thing that comes to notice here in Deuteronomy 10, and of His choice of Israel and benevolence toward them.

¹⁴ "Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it. ¹⁵ "Yet on your fathers did the LORD set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, *even* you above all peoples, as *it is* this day. ¹⁶ "So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer. ¹⁷ "For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. ¹⁸ "He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing.

(Deuteronomy 10:14-18)

This passage describes God's sacrificial love toward Israel. He chose to love them and deliver them. When it says that God is the great, awesome God, it places Him higher than one can picture Him, yet His high character extends itself all the way down to the smallest hopeless person, that is, the widow and the orphan. The reason that those two are chosen is because neither has a defender, since neither has any status, nor any provider in Israel. In addition they cannot pay back one who takes care of them. God does not "show partiality," which means He helps all who need Him and ask for Him. He helps the hopeless. That is the type of love that comes from God. That is the basis on which God gives . . . that one needs Him and asks (Matthew 7:7). The arrogant, rich and honorable, do not ask since they are self-sufficient and they get nothing from YHWH's character. They do however get general mercy which He showers on both the righteous and the unrighteous.

This is a very important point. The arrogant, the rich, the honored, all think that they are blessed by God because of their self-importance, i.e., that God is fortunate to have them on His side. Yet it is indeed the opposite. God does not

need them, nor does He give His blessing to them since they do not need Him nor ask Him for mercy.

Since then Israel has received this love as a hopeless alien in the land of Egypt, she now needs to give what God gave her, mercy, to the alien within their land. Thus the love of God toward the hopeless, the widow, orphan and alien, is to be shown by Israel, not by giving out their own, but by giving out what God had given them.

¹⁸ "He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. ¹⁹ "So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.

(Deuteronomy 10:18-19)

New Testament Fulfillment

James speaks clearly of this character of God that should be in the believer operating toward the widow and the orphan, the same group that God had pursued in Deuteronomy 18.

²⁷ Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress (James 1:27)

[Fulfillment in Ruth: Refer to the Article on Ruth, "Naomi in the Book of Ruth in Light of Deuteronomy 30," which gives additional information on Ruth's response to YHWH's love of widows and aliens in Deuteronomy 10. It may be accessed in the "Articles" section of www.BiblicalStory.org]

The Chosen Place of Worship - Jerusalem (Deuteronomy 12)

It should be becoming overwhelmingly obvious when one studies Deuteronomy that this God is not only protective of His character (inspired self-revelation) but is very specific about how that revelation is to come (inspired process). So now God moves to the single unique place where worship is to take place when they get to the land. For now it shall be unnamed, but ultimately it will quickly be seen when David arrives, that the place is Jerusalem.⁶

Note very well that it is very specific, that no other place will do, only the place that God reveals. There His Name will dwell and no other. Here in this chapter is also the statement that they should not do what is “right in their eyes.” Recall the contrast between what the Lord determines as “good” (“right in the eyes of the Lord”) and what they determine from their evil character (“right in their own eyes”). Here is the warning that they must do what YHWH states, no more, no less. He is the self-revealing God.

⁵ "But you shall seek *the LORD* at the place which the LORD your God will choose from all your tribes, to establish His name there for His dwelling, and there you shall come.

⁸ "You shall not do at all what we are doing here today, every man *doing* whatever is right in his own eyes;

¹¹ then it shall come about that the place in which the LORD your God will choose for His name to dwell, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution of your hand, and all your choice votive offerings which you will vow to the LORD.

¹³ "Be careful that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every cultic place you see, ¹⁴ but in the place which the LORD chooses in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you.

¹⁸ "But you shall eat them before the LORD your God in the place which the LORD your God will choose, you and your son and daughter, and your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God in all your undertakings.

(Deuteronomy 12:5-18)

⁶ Like God had prepared a Garden in Genesis 2 for Adam to rule over the world, now Israel is given a locale from which they are to rule the world for God and where the King will establish His center of rule. Like Adam was exiled from the garden, so also Israel will be exiled from their domain of rule.

The Chosen Source of Revelation (no other gods) (Deuteronomy 13)

As God moves to control His self-revelation, He discusses the issue of other gods. Recall that there are only two sources of revelation. God is One and He determines “good” and “evil.” Other sources of revelation are “other gods,” which are, very simply, one’s imagination sourced from the evil character. Man’s evil character determines “good” and “evil” for itself. Thus, it should be very clear that there is only one source of understanding the character of this God . . . the Scriptures, and more specifically, the Torah of God, followed by His prophets, priests, kings, and prophets (which will be discussed in Deuteronomy 16—18).⁷

Thus, the penalty for accessing other gods (or other revelation) is death. In fact, the test of a prophet is not that he does supernatural miracles, as they can come true and be demonically sourced, but that he conforms to the Torah!

Thus, very clearly, the only test of truth (and therefore a prophet) is their conformance to the Torah, and that whatever they prophesy or validate, must come true (see notes on Deut. 18).

"If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, ² and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' ³ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. ⁴ "You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him. ⁵ "But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the LORD your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from among you.

The importance of serving YHWH alone and not seeking revelation (or actually information) elsewhere is so important that if it was even one’s wife or closest person, they are to be killed, and the eyewitness is to be so zealous for God that he would turn them in and be the first to stone them.

⁶ "If your brother, your mother's son, or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or your friend who is as your own soul, entice you secretly,

⁷ For more on this read the article “The Knowledge of Good and Evil,” located in the “Articles” section of www.BiblicalStory.org.

saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods ' (whom neither you nor your fathers have known, ⁷ of the gods of the peoples who are around you, near you or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other end), ⁸ you shall not yield to him or listen to him; and your eye shall not pity him, nor shall you spare or conceal him. ⁹ "But you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. ¹⁰ "So you shall stone him to death because he has sought to seduce you from the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ¹¹ "Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such a wicked thing among you.

(Deuteronomy 13:1-11)

New Testament

The first section of Deuteronomy 13, dealing with the going after other gods, has its fingerprints all over the New Testament. One of the most direct references is found in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5—7) where Jesus describes the judgment of the false prophets on the day that they stand before Him seeking entry into the kingdom. One might picture Jesus sitting on His throne just outside of the Eastern Gate (or the Beautiful Gate), high up above the Kidron Valley, directly across from the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane.



The Kidron Valley from the North (with the Eastern Gate to the Right)

As they approach this great King, they argue their case as to why they should be

allowed to enter.

²² "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'

(Matthew 7:22)

Notice the clear similarity to the “prophet” of Deuteronomy 13:1-2. He does “signs and wonders” and they come true. Note that these men are pleading the same case. But it clearly doesn’t work as in the next verse, Jesus, the King, states that He never “knew them.”⁸ The point was that they should have known Jesus as this King, the only God, not the performance of great deeds. To do so was to “go after other gods” or other revelations of God. Jesus was God and they had not recognized Him as such prior to the judgment.⁹

There are other references in the New Testament, typically to false prophets who

⁸ This does not indicate that they had at sometime thought they had trusted in Christ but it turned out that they only had head knowledge. They are saying this at the end of time in the judgment day. Jesus is clearly God (“YHWH” or LORD) and the Ruler (“Adonai” or the King) and they will obviously be acknowledging Him as such. Also they are not saying that they believed in Jesus, but are addressing Him as YHWH or Adonai, since He is obviously such. Refer to 25:44 where those who are to depart into eternal fire, refer to Him as Lord.

⁹ The phrase, “Lord, Lord” is a double use of “Lord” here (*Kurios* = *Lord*; *lit. “Kurie”*) in the Greek. It poses a question as to why Jesus would have a double use of this term. On the face of it, one might suppose (reader intent) that Jesus is emphasizing that these are in essence very seriously attempting to gain His favorable response to their request to enter the kingdom. However, on an investigation into the Old Testament and the knowledge that “*Kurie*” is used for “YHWH”, “Adonai” (Ruler), “Master” or “Sir” it is discovered that this use is not uncommon in the Old Testament. When the phrase “YHWH Adonai” appears in the Old Testament it is translated by the Septuagint frequently using a double of the form “*Kurios*”, which is the case here in Matt: 7:21. It is used like this in places like Psalm 8:1,10 and Psalm 110:1. When it is reversed as in “Adonai YHWH” then the Septuagint tends to translate it with “*Despota Kurie*” which would be Master Lord or Ruler YHWH. So, if the Septuagint is to be followed here, it would appear that it is the use of both YHWH and Adonai in the form of a title. If one examines the use in the OT of the exact form in Matthew “*Kurie, Kurie*”, then it appears that it typically reflects the terms “YHWH Adonai”. Thus the indication is that this Ruler at the judgment seat is being titled both the Covenant God of Israel (YHWH), and the Ruler of Psalm 8 and Psalm 110; the Second Person of the Trinity who is to rule the universe. It would seem best to take this as a reference to Old Testament usage as in Psalm 110, thus designating Him as YHWH Himself (the covenant God of Israel), as well as Adonai (The Second Person of the Trinity who will rule on David’s throne, representing the Father).

advocate another gospel than that of imputed righteousness. Paul references them in Galatians 1 asking that they be accursed. Matthew 18 references them and states it would be better for a millstone to be hung around their neck and thrown into the depths of the sea. This chapter along with Deuteronomy 18 and the false prophets there, threatens the ultimate penalty of death for anyone who enters into these scenarios.

The Anointed One(s) of God to Apply the *Torah* of Righteousness (Deuteronomy 16:18—18:22)

The section beginning at the end of Deuteronomy 16 continues through Deuteronomy 18. It regards the representation of God through Judges, Priests, Kings, and Prophets.

The purpose of these anointed ones was to render judgments on the basis of the Pentateuch. The Pentateuch was the revelation of the character desires of God and the judge was to administer these to each case that came before him.

The Judge and the Responsibility

Appointment of Those who will Judge the Nation (16:18)

¹⁸ "You shall appoint for yourself judges (שֹׁפְטִים) and officers in all your towns which the LORD your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment (מִשְׁפָּט־צְדִקָּה).

The Judge not to be biased (partiality) but to judge for God (16:19)

¹⁹ "You shall not distort justice (מִשְׁפָּט); you shall not be partial, and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous (צְדִיקִים).

The Righteousness of God Revealed in the Pentateuch is the Standard (16:20)

²⁰ "Justice, *and only* justice (צְדִקָּה צְדִקָּה), you shall pursue, that you may live and possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

The Judgment of The Worship of Other Gods

This representation was previously noted in Deuteronomy 13 where the warnings to all people concerned “going after other gods.” These gods were other revelations of YHWH beside what He alone had authorized. Other gods were the gods that were created from man’s own imagination, man’s own depraved character. They were inventions that “saw” (determined) a god of good and evil which conformed to their own perception of good and evil. Since their perception of good and evil was determined from their depraved character these gods were always reflections of their own desires. Thus immorality and tribute requirements were always the case as they made the person feel better about himself and his relationship to the god. In other words, the created god gave him success under the person’s own terms. But note well that the god was a creation of his own mind.

Worship of Idols (other gods)

²¹ "You shall not plant for yourself an Asherah of any kind of tree beside the altar of the LORD your God, which you shall make for yourself. ²² "You shall not set up for yourself a *sacred* pillar which the LORD your God hates.

Worship of Self by Giving God the Worthless

17:1 "You shall not sacrifice to the LORD your God an ox or a sheep which has a blemish *or* any defect, for that is a detestable thing to the LORD your God.

Worship of Creation in Lieu of the Creator

² "If there is found in your midst, in any of your towns, which the LORD your God is giving you, a man or a woman who does what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, by transgressing His covenant, ³ and has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, or the sun or the moon or any of the heavenly host, which I have not commanded,

The judgment for rendering other revelations was death. And, in fact, if it was anyone even close such as a wife or a friend, they were to be turned over to the elders who were to execute them on one's own eyewitness testimony. The eyewitness testifier would cast the first of the stones.

New Testament Allusion

In John 8, Jesus is confronted with a woman caught in adultery, eye-witnessed by the Scribes and Pharisees. Jesus tells them to cast the first stone referencing the Law, for they, as eyewitnesses, were the ones required to cast the first stone.¹⁰

"He who is without sin among you, let him *be the* first to throw a stone at her." (John 8:7)

Now the connection continues into Deuteronomy 16 where the authorized speakers for God are introduced. It begins with Judges, continues through Priests, Kings and then Prophets. Following that, in Deuteronomy 18, it issues the warnings against any unauthorized seeking of God's word, or even the attempt to seek extra-Biblical revelation. Here one is to absolutely reject witches, seekers, divination or the seeking or reading of omens. God's revelation was so protected by God since His sovereignty and

¹⁰ For a further discussion of this pericope in light of the Old Testament see my article in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, "The Woman Caught in Adultery: A Test of Jesus as the Greater Prophet," 1989. This may be accessed under "Articles" at www.BiblicalStory.org.

revelation would not be granted to inventions of men at all costs so much so that the penalty was death. And it was not a probationary thing, nor “three strikes and you’re out!” One occurrence of saying that God had spoken when He had not, and the pronouncer was put to death!

Deuteronomy 16:18-20: Judges and other appointees

¹⁸ "You shall appoint for yourself judges and officers in all your towns which the LORD your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. ¹⁹ "You shall not distort justice; you shall not be partial, and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous. ²⁰ "Justice, *and only* justice, you shall pursue, that you may live and possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

(Deut. 16:18-20)

This is an introductory section to the portion to follow. There will be “given” Judges (*mishpot*) and other appointees who will bring righteous (*tzedeq*) judgment (*mishpot*). This righteous judgment is the character of God and thus is to be exercised on the people. In other words, the word is given in the Scripture (Pentateuch or *Torah*) and is applied by the Judges. While they will reveal specific application (e.g., circumstances), the foundational judgment and character are from the Law. Thus the Judge or appointee would be the mediator of God’s character from the Law. If he failed to mediate the Law, instead basing his judgment from his own perception, then he would sin and righteousness would not be enabled in the land. Thus the requirement that he was perfectly applying the Law was essential.

The distortion of justice based on partiality, or a bribe, is simply that judgment would be biased for one’s own personal benefit. Thus the poor would lose to the rich, the dishonored to the honored, etc., since the Judge would find he had something to gain from those for whom he could render a positive verdict. In other words, there were two bases for judgment, one was that the Judge ruled from God’s perspective (The Law) on behalf of God and the opposite alternative was to rule from his own perspective on behalf of himself to be benefitted from others.

New Testament Allusion

My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with *an attitude of personal favoritism*. ² For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, ³ and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool," ⁴ have you not made distinctions among

yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? (James 2:1-4)

The “wise” (cf. James 1:5) were those who had the wisdom from above. Their “eyes” were how they perceived and determined what was good and evil. The words of the righteous were the words of God from the Law. Any bias toward self or others would change their wisdom and their words. They would no longer be wise, nor righteous, but would be fools and wicked. In James 2, they have judged the rich man as more worthy than the poor man simply on his appearance. Thus James concludes that when they judged based on their own biased perception, they ended up being the one who was judged.

⁹ But if you show partiality, you are committing sin *and* are convicted by the law as transgressors. (James 2:9)

Should Israel depart from this wisdom in the Law, they would be expelled from the land (Deuteronomy 28).

Application: Note that God speaks through the Law. There was no source for God other than that. The Judge had the ability to apply the Law in each case without bias, but he did not have the ability to bring new character traits of God other than the Law. So even here, only the appointed were allowed to speak for God, and then only on a limited basis.

Note: This God, YHWH, is only known through His self-revelation. No other sources are allowed, and no other interpretations or perceptions are to be included.

Cases of Rejection of God’s Word or God’s Anointed

²¹ "You shall not plant for yourself an Asherah of any kind of tree beside the altar of the LORD your God, which you shall make for yourself. ²² "You shall not set up for yourself a *sacred* pillar which the LORD your God hates.

The Asherah were other gods as well as pillars where men would come to seek a word from the god(s). Again these were inventions of men’s own imaginations where they were trying to determine, not only the character of other gods, but of their future, and to try to manipulate the god so they could be prosperous.

Deuteronomy 17:1 "You shall not sacrifice to the LORD your God an ox or a sheep which has a blemish *or* any defect, for that is a detestable thing to the LORD your God.

The nature of offering a defective animal was again a selfish act, defrauding God

for one's own gain. While it might have seemed that they were prospering by saving the best for themselves, in fact they were bringing themselves judgment. God was not to be treated lightly.

² "If there is found in your midst, in any of your towns, which the LORD your God is giving you, a man or a woman who does what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, by transgressing His covenant, ³ and has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, or the sun or the moon or any of the heavenly host, which I have not commanded, ⁴ and if it is told you and you have heard of it, then you shall inquire thoroughly. Behold, if it is true and the thing certain that this detestable thing has been done in Israel, ⁵ then you shall bring out that man or that woman who has done this evil deed to your gates, *that is*, the man or the woman, and you shall stone them to death. ⁶ "On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness. ⁷ "The hand of the witnesses shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. (Deut. 16:21-17:7)

This is to emphasize the whole issue of trying to imagine other gods and then worshipping them and trying to get success by manipulating them or developing other things beside God. This was of a great issue here and is a repeat of Deuteronomy 13:1-12 to show the severity of the problem of seeking or pursuing other means than God had issued.

Nota Bene: The issue here is not whether everything is named that they could possibly do, e.g., named the sun, moon, heavenly host, but did not mention an animal, the point is well made; nothing but the revealed word. Anything else that comes from one's own imagination is to be rejected and the pursuer is to be executed.

Cases to be decided by the authorities are to be executed precisely as from God

⁸ "If any case is too difficult for you to decide, between one kind of homicide or another, between one kind of lawsuit or another, and between one kind of assault or another, being cases of dispute in your courts, then you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God chooses. ⁹ "So you shall come to the Levitical priest or the judge who is *in office* in those days, and you shall inquire *of them* and they will declare to you the verdict in the case. ¹⁰ "You shall do according to the terms of the verdict which they declare to you from that place which the LORD chooses; and you shall be careful to observe according to all that they teach you. ¹¹ "According to the terms of the law which they teach you, and according to the verdict which they tell you, you shall do; you shall not turn aside from the word which they declare to you, to the right or the left.

(Deut. 17:8-11)

Note here that the emphasis is that no one could make a judgment except for this Levitical Priest or Judge in office. One had to come to them and one had to come to the place assigned (ultimately Jerusalem). When the verdict was decided by this righteous Judge or Priest, then there was no exception to its obedience. One must follow it.

Now notice that this Judge's verdict is Law itself. This provides a difficulty if the Judge is not righteous and uses his own perception rather than that of the Law. And this will be the case throughout the Times of the Judges, the Levitical Priests, and even the kings, as can be seen in the case of Saul and David and the other kings as well. Yet, the difficult thing was that this Judge or Priest or King was anointed by God, appointed, and thus the Israelite had no other ability but to obey. He could not choose to disobey should he not like the judgment or determine by himself that it was not right.¹¹

In addition, a man could not choose, should the Judge or Priest or King commit a death sin himself, to execute the anointed one himself, since he could not judge of his own volition. Only God could execute a Judge, priest or king since they were the highest authority and answered only to God.

¹² "The man who acts presumptuously by not listening to the priest who stands there to serve the LORD your God, nor to the judge, that man shall die; thus you shall purge the evil from Israel. ¹³ "Then all the people will hear and be afraid, and will not act presumptuously again.

(Deut. 17:12-13)

The penalty for not listening was death. The penalty for taking the law into one's hand and judging the Judge was also death. Thus one could not touch God's Anointed. Only God could do this. This is why prophets will come on the scene. The King would be God's ultimate ruler and no one could touch him or execute judgment on him but God. Thus God would send a Prophet to the King and try to get him to judge himself and to repent. This is the case most clearly in Nathan's entry on the scene to tell David a parable over which David would judge. After David had then judged this hypothetical instance, Nathan then applied David's judgment to David himself, "You are the man!" Thus this illustrated the difficulty of judgment on the one who had the right to judge. Note well: These judges who interpreted and applied the Law were unique, untouchable, appointed and validated in the eyes of the people. The people were not anointed, but were to respond in obedience and respect for these anointed ones who represented God.

¹¹ There do appear to be exceptions to this, and that is when the king or judge required one to actually not honor God, or even not honor the king. In other words, one had to remain faithful to the Seed of the Woman promise and would not deny it regardless of the instructions of the judge. Thus, it appears that Uriah perceived that David was the representative of the Seed of the Woman and would not treat him as common by going down to his house and sleeping with his wife instead of being in battle as was his desire to honor David.

New Testament Allusion

In Acts 5, Ananias and Sapphira hide what they have sold from the Apostle Peter, God's Anointed one to make these judgments. They lie regarding it and thus treat him as a common man, and both die. At the end of these judgments, a reference is made to Deuteronomy 17:13 in Acts 5:13.

¹¹ And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things. (Acts 5:11)

The King (Deuteronomy 17:14-20)

¹⁴ "When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, and you possess it and live in it, and you say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me,' ¹⁵ you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses, *one* from among your countrymen you shall set as king over yourselves; you may not put a foreigner over yourselves who is not your countryman. ¹⁶ "Moreover, he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor shall he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, since the LORD has said to you, 'You shall never again return that way.' ¹⁷ "He shall not multiply wives for himself, or else his heart will turn away; nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself. ¹⁸ "Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. ¹⁹ "It shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes, ²⁰ that his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left, so that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom in the midst of Israel.

(Deut. 17:14-20)

The king was the ultimate of these judges who would represent the righteousness of God to the people. He would not come on the scene until they had entered the land. God indicated to them that although a king was God's ultimate desire for Israel, Israel would not be content during the time God had planned for them to be without one. They would turn back to their own desires where they lusted over the Gentiles and their ways and their women. This desire would result in their desire to have a king like all the Gentile nations. Yet this desire was more than just to have a king, it was to have a king, who was like themselves, as were the kings of the Gentiles. It was to have a king whose judgments were pleasing to them. These kings would render judgments like the kings of the other nations who rendered them for their gods according to man's imagination.

But God restricts their desires and insists that it be an Israelite, not a Gentile (not a reversal of the rule of Abrahamic Covenant). Man was not to use the kingdom to satisfy his own desires of riches and success, which was represented by having many horses (war) and many wives (power) nor silver and gold (riches). He was not to pursue the Gentiles for his riches as in returning to Egypt to benefit from that nation, from which God had delivered them in the Exodus.

However, this king was to be righteous and to give righteous judgments. To do this he was to saturate himself in the Law (only) so that He would learn of God and apply it to his countrymen in righteous judgment. The difficulty with his position was that he would become lifted up with self-centered glorification (as the people would do to him) and would not apply the Law to himself and be humble before God for himself.

David and Solomon both will disobey this command. David will multiply wives as will Solomon. Solomon will gather great wealth, women, and horses for himself. Gideon will gather many wives, and will deny himself the kingship, thinking that if he were not king he would not have to keep that command. But the command was for the king and he was the example for others.

The Priests (Deuteronomy 18:1-8)

Deuteronomy 18:1 "The Levitical priests, the whole tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel; they shall eat the LORD'S offerings by fire and His portion. ² "They shall have no inheritance among their countrymen; the LORD is their inheritance, as He promised them. ³ "Now this shall be the priests' due from the people, from those who offer a sacrifice, either an ox or a sheep, of which they shall give to the priest the shoulder and the two cheeks and the stomach. ⁴ "You shall give him the first fruits of your grain, your new wine, and your oil, and the first shearing of your sheep. ⁵ "For the LORD your God has chosen him and his sons from all your tribes, to stand and serve in the name of the LORD forever. ⁶ "Now if a Levite comes from any of your towns throughout Israel where he resides, and comes whenever he desires to the place which the LORD chooses, ⁷ then he shall serve in the name of the LORD his God, like all his fellow Levites who stand there before the LORD. ⁸ "They shall eat equal portions, except *what they receive* from the sale of their fathers' *estates*.

(Deut. 18:1-8)

The priests were also to judge the Law particularly with regard to the sacerdotal functions at the tabernacle and the Temple. Purification and sacrifice would be their area of judging righteously.

The Command to Not Imitate the Pagan rituals to Access their gods (Deut. 18:10-14)

¹⁰ "There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, ¹¹ or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. ¹² "For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you. ¹³ "You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. ¹⁴ "For those nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you *to do so*.

(Deut. 18:10-14)

Within the context, God has stated that only the anointed few are to “hear” from God, which is simply applying the Law to each case. Thus God has spoken here, but does not authorize additional revelation at this point or in this section, but clearly, other than the appointed, authorized and validated people, has not validated any attempt to reach Him by other means. His self-revelation is part of His character and it must be authorized by Him, prompted by Him, and sovereignly protected by Him with the threat of death to all else.

Notice here the breadth of things that one is not to imitate of the pagans; divination, witchcraft, omen seeking and interpreting, sorcery, spells, mediums, spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.

Divination and Omens

Generally, “divination” is the attempting to find things related to God apart from God authorized channels through men’s imagined processes. It is always “tempting” (forcing) God to speak when He has not, or will not speak.

“Divination attempts to gain supernatural knowledge, usually either to understand why something has occurred or to predict the future. Magic attempts to use supernatural powers to influence people, events or other supernatural beings. Biblically approved practices emphasize divine initiative and divine prerogative. Magic and divination are human efforts to understand, control or manipulate the divine realm by methods believed to practically guarantee the desired results. These tend to be the satisfaction of immediate human needs, such as healing, protection, sustenance or knowledge.”¹²

Omens are the means by which “divination” is accomplished. In other words, one will read signs, physical indications, to determine what God is doing, has done, or will do. Again, it is a presumptuous sin, as it requires God to act in a way in accordance with

¹² O’Mathúna, D. P. (2003). Divination, Magic. In *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (p. 193). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

the human determination. It also assumes presumptuously that it is God's desire to reveal to a man what the man wants to know, not what God wants the man to know.

Now this list is not exhaustive. The point is that the pagans are superstitious. They use coincidences, signs, omens, etc., just like pagans do. God's point is that no one is to use extra-Biblical means of attempting to get God to speak or to determine what God has not revealed, in His own time and methods, to reach Him.

Only the appointed ones are to give the Word of God. In the Old Testament, prophets, kings, etc., wrote in the Hebrew canon the Word of God. There is no other source. In the New Testament, Jesus spoke as the ultimate word from God, through apostles. These alone are the authorized speakers. There are no others. As the author of Hebrews states,

“God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son . . .” (Hebrews 1:1-2)

“The Greater Prophet” than Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15-18)

Having discussed the limited people through whom God would give the interpretation of the Pentateuch, God moves to the ultimate revelation of His character, the ultimate Prophet, the Greater Prophet than Moses. As Moses told the Word of God which led them out of Gentile control in Egypt, so also the New Moses would lead them out of their future exile.

¹⁵ "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. ¹⁶ "This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.' ¹⁷ "The LORD said to me, 'They have spoken well. ¹⁸ 'I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. (Deuteronomy 18:15-18)

This One has God's Words in His mouth and when He speaks it is the word of God. However, this One is more than just a speaker for God. He is the ultimate Deliverer from Gentile dominance.

New Testament:

Throughout the Gospel of John¹³ there are multiple allusions to Jesus as the Greater Prophet. An example of Jesus claim to Moses' speaking of Him, particularly in this passage in Deuteronomy 18:15, 18 is,

⁴⁶ "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. ⁴⁷
"But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" (John 5:46-47)

The signs of Jesus also allude to His being this Greater Prophet than Moses as He changes water to wine (Moses changed it to blood), multiplies bread and fish (Moses brought manna), and walks on the sea (Moses walked through the Red Sea on dry land).¹⁴

Prohibitions of Speaking for God When God has not Spoken (Deut. 18:20-22)

²⁰ 'But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.' ²¹ "You may say in your heart, 'How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' ²² "When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him. (Deuteronomy 18:20-22)

Following the prophecy of the Greater Prophet than Moses, there is the warning against anyone representing themselves as coming from God by saying God is speaking through them. Jeremiah is rife with false prophets who told the people and the king what he wanted to hear, that was, that Babylon was not coming, that prosperity was just around the corner. Yet Jeremiah spoke against them, and was persecuted for his truth.

The test of prophecy is if the thing spoken of does not come true, or according to Deuteronomy 13:1-6 that it does not match up with the revelation of YHWH in the Pentateuch. Thus Jesus spoke exactly as the Old Testament had stated, and fulfilled it exactly (it came true). Yet the Pharisees disagreed with the Word of God and thus were labeled "false prophets" by Jesus.

Today, it is common for people to say that God has spoken through them. While many would not say they heard an audible voice, they explain God's revelation in more

¹³ Refer to the Gospel of John Notes by this Professor on the website, www.BiblicalStory.org for a further development of how John follows the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Greater Moses who will bring the New Exodus.

¹⁴ For a full discussion of this read my article in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1989, "The Woman Caught in Adultery; A Test of Jesus as the Greater Prophet."

subtle ways, “the leading,” “the will of God,” “God’s directing,” etc. Yet regardless of how it is camouflaged, it is still a claim of God’s indication of what they should do, apart from the revelation through the anointed ones from Deuteronomy 16—18, and as such is a serious matter and to be rejected by those who know the Scriptures.

This is the doctrine of “sufficiency,” which is part of the Westminster Confession and is held by most orthodox Evangelical churches and schools. When one moves to more charismatic circles then these strict standards become loosened somewhat. Yet “sufficiency” basically says that God’s final revelation is in the Scriptures and nothing else is needed for life and godliness.

Provision for Crimes Against Brothers (19)

The cities of refuge (19:1-13).

The provision of the cities of refuge was an act of mercy toward one who had killed his brother but did not have evil intent (he did not hate his brother in his heart).

Should a man accidentally kill his brother, he would immediately flee to one of the cities of refuge. Once he had made it to the gate (the place where the council sat), he would be safe. If he was not guilty of murder (intent), he could then stay in the city until the priest died, and then would go free. Should he be found guilty, then he would be thrown out of the city and the manslayer would be able to execute him.

The sanctity of one’s property (neighbor’s boundary) (19:14)

Again the intent of the heart was important and so one was to regard the property of one’s brother. To move his boundary was to steal, to sacrifice one’s brother’s good, what God had given to him, for one’s selfish purpose.

Protection against false witnesses (the malicious witness) (19:15-21)

To lie against one’s brother (bear false witness) was again taking advantage of a brother for one’s own benefit. A lie would render one’s brother guilty and would then benefit the false witness who had something to gain from his evil speech. Thus, the protection was that one witness was not enough. There had to be two or three. If there were found witnesses that were false, then they in fact would be guilty, and the trial would turn on them. They would receive the very punishment that they had proposed for the accused.

New Testament (John 7:53—8:11, The Woman Caught in Adultery)¹⁵

During the presentation of the woman before Jesus, the Pharisees say that they caught her “in the very act” of adultery. They are claiming that they are witnesses to her crime and are asking Jesus, as the Greater Moses, to make a judgment. They, of course, are not trying the woman, so much as they are testing Jesus (He is on trial) as John says, “they did this to test Him.” So, they are presenting it as if they are trying her, but are subtly trying to trap Jesus.

Jesus’ response that they should in fact stone her, “. . . cast the first stone,” is indicating that they as witnesses should cast the first stone, which was the duty of witnesses. Yet, Jesus adds, “he who is without sin.” Thus, Jesus is asking them to perform their duty as witnesses and execute the judgment on her, if they are qualified as witnesses (e.g., without the sin of a witness, that is, be non-malicious).

Since in fact they were trying to trap Jesus it was obvious to all they were not interested in trying the woman as setting the situation up to trap Him. Thus they were malicious in that they were not straightforward, trying to trap Jesus without a direct accusation and witnesses against Him. Because of this Law that then required that they, as false witnesses, would then get the stoning that they had proposed for her, they left.

The Judgments on the Nations – Warfare (20)

Provisions for not going to War (20:1-9)

Going to war for the king was an enviable honor. Thus to be excused was not something that one should pursue if he had a desire to identify with YHWH and His conquering (judging) the Seed of the Serpent, the Canaanites in the land, and the Gentiles outside of the Land.

However, it was important that God’s blessing be realized in certain areas, and thus if a man was under this blessing he would be required to enjoy it, lest he die in battle and it be seen as a curse.

- If he had built a house, he was excused, so that he might not die and another man occupy his house (a curse, cf. Deut. 28).
- If he had planted a vineyard, he was excused, lest he die in battle and another man eat of its fruit (a curse, cf. Deut. 28)

¹⁵ See the Commentary in John by this professor at the website www.BiblicalStory.org for a detailed development of the impact of this verse in Jesus’ response to the Scribes and Pharisees.

- If he had married then he was to stay home one year so that he could enjoy the blessing of marriage (Genesis 2:24), be fruitful and multiply, lest he die in battle and another man take his wife (a curse, cf. Deut. 28).
- If he was afraid, he was then to leave the battle, as it showed a lack of faith in YHWH. YHWH wanted men like Caleb who realized that God worked in ridiculous situation where they were outnumbered against larger foes. If a man was afraid he would not go into battle, and YHWH would not get the amazing victory. Thus one was to have faith in YHWH, as opposed to fear.

Israel feared at Kadesh-Barnea and were judged by God through death in the wilderness.

Gideon sent men home who were afraid, yet Gideon stayed and the text says he was afraid.

New Testament Allusion: Luke 14:16-24

Here Jesus talks of a man (i.e., God) who gives a dinner (the kingdom) and invites many (i.e., the Jews). They all however make excuses (bought land, oxen, or married a wife). These were basically the same excuses used in Deuteronomy 20 for not going to war. The point in Deuteronomy was that a man was to be blessed in the land, and fruitfulness and a wife were part of that blessing. Thus, in order for the man to enjoy, at least for a time, this blessing, he was not to go to war lest he be killed and not enjoy God's blessing.

However, these men in Luke are seeing these items as their identity, something they had earned and was theirs. Thus, when God offered them the kingdom (the feast) which came from His hand, they rejected it for their own self-obtained things. The excuses from war were simply to enjoy what God had given them, not to reject what God had given them for their own glorified identity.

Judgments on Cities outside the Boundaries of Canaan (20:9-15)

When Israel approached a Gentile city which was outside of the boundaries of Canaan, they were to treat it as follows:

- Approach the city gate and offer them terms of peace (peace with YHWH by coming under the provisions of Israel by YHWH)
- If they accept (are converted to YHWH), they will become servants.
- If they reject the city is to be besieged, the men are to be utterly destroyed. The women and children will be preserved along with the animals and the remaining booty.

Nineveh was a Gentile city outside the boundaries of Israel. Jonah approached the city and offered them terms of peace (“repent”) and they accepted and were delivered.

Cities inside the Boundaries of Canaan (20:16-18)

Within the boundaries of Canaan everything that breathes is to be destroyed, man, woman, children, animals. They will deceive the Israelites if they are left to live and dwell among them.

The Gibeonites (Joshua 9) were inside the boundaries of Israel and knew they would be wiped out without mercy. Thus they pretended that they had come from a far country so they would be offered mercy. Joshua was deceived and offered them terms of mercy, thinking they were outside the boundaries and then later found they were only living few miles from them. However, Joshua’s oath could not be changed.

Instructions not to cut down fruit trees (20:19-20).

One of the blessings of the land was that Israel was going to eat what another had planted. From day one Israel would have food in the land without having to wait for crops to grow. The Canaanites had planted them, in essence, for Israel, long before they had occupied the land.

Miscellaneous laws (21:1-25:19).

Instructions on finding a dead person in the road with no one around to take the blame, and how to be forgiven so guilt does not come on the land (21:1-9).

Foreign wives and sons (21:10-21).

If a man desired to marry one of the captives (from the Gentile captives outside the land), then there would be a process by which he could take her as wife. (21:10-14).

The right of the firstborn was to be held, regardless of if a man had multiple wives and one was unloved. (21:15-17).

A rebellious son was to be executed by stoning. As per the Law, respect of one’s parents was a reflection of the authority that God had given to them. To disrespect them was to disrespect God, and thus the penalty was the same, execution. (21:18-21).

- Restriction against letting a corpse hang on a tree all night (21:22-23).
- Instructions to aid the animal owned by a countryman which you find in the way (22:1-4).

- Restriction against sexes cross-dressing (22:5).
- Restriction against taking a nest of young birds with the mother (22:6-7).
- Instruction to build a house with a parapet so that no one might fall from your roof (22:8).
- Restriction against mixing seed, yoked animals, or cloth (22:9-11).
- Make tassels on the four corners of the garment which you dress (22:12).

Marriage Laws (22:13-22:30).

This chapter contains the marriage/divorce instructions in the Law. The essence was that divorce was never allowed. Once one had passed the wedding night and had affirmed his wife's virginity he could not divorce her all his days. There was no exception. For any extra- or pre- marital sexual activity, the result was either stoning, or in the case of two unengaged persons, they would be required to get married, and then could not divorce all their days.

The Normal Marriage Contract

Typically the man and woman were under a contract to get married (like the engagement). Prior to the night of consummation (the wedding night), the bride would have been engaged to be married, yet would be at her father's house which would provide a period of time where she would be examined to insure fidelity.

On the wedding night, he would have one chance to identify her virginity before entering the final phase of the contract from which there was no "out." Should he suspect her of unfaithfulness he would bring her to the elders, who would ask for the evidence of her virginity. Should he be wrong, he would be chastised and fined, would be then required to continue in the marriage without the ability to divorce her (no matter what).

Should he be right about her not being a virgin, she would be stoned.

This then is the standard wedding contract. The issue is that once they pass the wedding night and no issues are raised, then they cannot divorce all their days.

Situation: Wife not a virgin discovered prior to entry into the final marriage phase . . . result – stoning. If wife is a virgin, then the man cannot divorce her all his days (22:13-21).

Situation: The Situation of a Man in an extra-marital relationship with a Married Woman – Death

Situation: Rape of a Virgin – Death of the attacker (22:22).

Situation: An unengaged Man and a Virgin in an pre-marital relationship – required to get married with not possibility of divorce (29)

One is restricted from taking one's father's wife (22:30)

Laws regarding the entering of the assembly of the Lord (23:1-8).

This section restricts some from entering the assembly and offers some after the tenth generation to enter.

Various Laws (23:9-25:19).

- Instructions to keep the camp clean during army movements (23:9-14).
- Escaped slaves to live among you (23:15-16).
- No prostitution, nor interest to be in Israel (23:21-23).
- One must perform vows to the Lord. Better not to vow than to vow and not perform it (23:21-23).
- Rules on eating your neighbor's grapes and grain (23:24-25).
- Law against remarrying a wife who has been remarried since the divorce (24:1-4).
- Man not required to go to battle if he has married a new wife (24:5).
- Laws of life value (24:6-7).
- Leprosy requirements (24:8).
- Requirements on receiving back a loan (24:9-13).
- Requirements on treating hired servants (24:14-15).
- Everyone to be put to death for their own sin (24:16).
- Do not pervert justice (24:17-18).
- Requirement to leave some of the fruit for the widow, etc. (24:19-22).
- Requirement for no more than 40 stripes for a wicked man (25:1-3).
- Do not muzzle the ox when he is threshing (25:4).
- Instructions for a Levirate marriage (25:5-10).
- Punishment for a wife who grabs another man's genitals in a fight with her husband (25:11-12).
- Rules against illegal measure (25:13-16).
- Instructions to destroy Amalek for what they did to Israel (25:17-19).

Presentation of tithes and offerings on entering the land (26:1-15).

- Instructions on how to rejoice with the first of all your produce which you receive from the land (26:1-11).
- Declaration of one who has tithed properly (26:12-15).

Summary:

Promise that the Lord will set you on high if you obey His commandments (26:16-19)

Covenant Ratification:

Blessing and cursing, instituted at Shechem (27:1-28:68).

Moses now enters the ratification portion of the recovenancing process. As they enter the land they are to mark their foundation for entry by writing the Law on the stones when they cross over the Jordan (27:1-8).

Moses charges the people with a list of curses on those who do various things to their brothers (27:9-26).

The ramifications: Blessing and Cursing (28:1-68).

From that point to the end of chapter 28, Moses lists the blessings and curses that they will incur for either obedience or disobedience.

- Moses lists all the prosperity that will come their way if they obey the Lord (28:1-14).
- Moses lists the curses that will come their way if they disobey, disease, loss of possessions, famine, and war (28:15-68).

Summary: Moses speaks of the Palestinian Covenant (29:1).

Review of the Covenant:

The purpose, its success, their choice (29:2-30:20).

Exhortation to obey the Covenant (29:2-29:21).

Now Moses in his third sermon lists the purpose of the covenant, its chances of success, and gives them the choice. First he points out that those who are entering the covenant with God at this point are those who should have learned from the past experiences of the previous generation. Then he clearly points out that those who disobey this covenant will have no hope of a future with God.

He points out that the trials and victories were so that they would know that God is the Lord (29:2-9).

Israel has seen (1-3)
Israel does not have a heart to truly see (4)
God's has been faithful in the past, they need to obey (5-9)

OATH 29:9-29

Moses addresses those who are to enter into covenant with God (29:10-13).

Moses addresses all those who are there and those who are absent, so that anyone who pursues evil among Israel will be blotted out of the book (29:14-21).

Statement: 9-15
Threat of violation 16-21
Warning of future violation 22-28
Responsibility for the oath 29

Secret things are beyond man's knowledge (what generation, when, etc.)

Man is responsible for God's revelation in the Law.

The reason for the unavoidable failure; those who walk by the land and observe the curse due to Israel when it disobeys will know that Israel has forsaken the covenant (29:22-29).

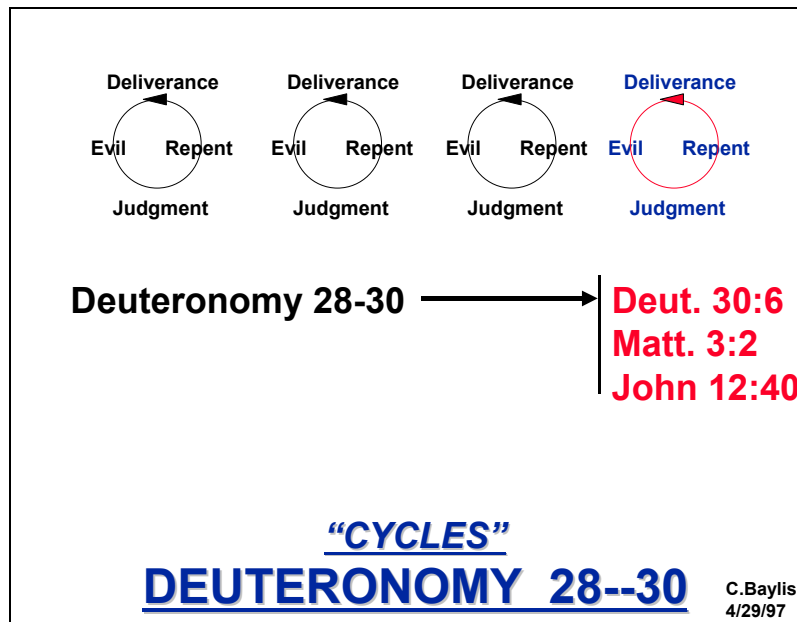
This is probably the most applicable part of the book for a New Covenant believer. Having described all the requirements for success under the Old Covenant, Moses announces that they are doomed for failure. He announces that a day will come when people will identify the clear reason for Israel's elimination from the land - they forsook the covenant.

The ultimate restoration; the New Covenant (30:1-10):

[This passage is one of the most referenced passages by later writers. The usage of this passage by later writers is referenced in the Article, "Repentance in Acts in Light of Deuteronomy 30," and its use in the Book of Ruth in "Naomi in the Book of Ruth in Light of the Mosaic Covenant," both located at www.BiblicalStory.org . In addition, this passage is used as a foundation for the story of the "Lost Son" of Luke 15, which may be referenced, "The Story of the Lost Son" under "Commentaries," "Luke," at www.BiblicalStory.org]

It outlines the need for Israel to call out to YHWH when they find themselves under a curse due to disobedience. YHWH then restores them with total compassion. However, Israel is in a cycle of – doing evil – being cursed – repenting – being restored,

which is set up here and is illustrated best in the cycles presented in the Book of Judges (see the notes on the Book of Judges).



When prophets (Daniel, Nehemiah, Malachi) call for repentance of the nation, it is normally this passage that they reference as a basis for restoration if the nation repents.

⁸ "Remember the word which You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful I will scatter you among the peoples; ⁹ but *if* you return to Me and keep My commandments and do them, though those of you who have been scattered were in the most remote part of the heavens, I will gather them from there and will bring them to the place where I have chosen to cause My name to dwell.' (Nehemiah 1:8-9)

¹¹ "Indeed all Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him. ¹² "Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity; for under the whole heaven there has not been done *anything* like what was done to Jerusalem. ¹³ "As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth. ¹⁴ "Therefore the LORD has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for the LORD our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice. (Daniel 9:11-14)

Israel to be restored when they return to God and they will be restored to their land, and God will circumcise their hearts (30:1-10).

However, Moses gives the doom prophecy a happy ending, the pronouncement of the New Covenant. Here the returning Israel will be given a happy ending for God will circumcise their hearts.

30:1 "So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call *them* to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you, 2 and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, 3 then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. 4 "If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. 5 "And the LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. 6 "Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live. 7 "And the LORD your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. 8 "And you shall again obey the LORD, and observe all His commandments which I command you today. 9 "Then the LORD your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the LORD will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers; 10 if you obey the LORD your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul.

The choice (30:11-20).

Moses points out that the effort required is not that of a long journey into heaven nor hell, but the fulfillment of the Law is in their hearts, i.e. in their attitude of faith and practice of the faith walk. Based on this walk of obedience they may have a choice, life and prosperity, or death and destruction.

Faith in God to perform what He said so that they may obey the Law is within their reach (30:11-14).

- 30:11 The Law is understandable (difficult), and is available (out of reach)
- 30:12 accessibility – God had spoken and given it to Moses, so there was no need for the people to exert themselves to obtain another revelation.
- 30:13 clear - Moses had not had to cross the ocean to find out about or research and learn. It was clear and understandable.
- 30:14 in mouth – the character of their heart was to be demonstrated in their testimony of YHWH (and His Seed)

in heart – Deuteronomy 6:4-6, the Law was to be in their heart, that is, their character desires were to be YHWH's, so they would desire to express them.

Moses offers them a choice; life and prosperity or death and destruction (30:15-20). To follow the commands of YHWH (mercy through the Law to others) would give them life (YHWH would ensure their longevity in the land). But to reject YHWH and become self-righteous and self-centered would result in death (disease, famine, exile from the land).

Moses' transfer of power and death (31:1-34:12).

This section is devoted to the transition from Moses to Joshua. Moses insists that the people should follow God right up to his dying moment. He commissions Joshua as God's chosen leader, but confides that he knows Israel will act corruptly following his death.

Moses prophesies that Israel will rebel but return in his son (31:30-32:43) and warns the people to observe the Law and then he looks over into Canaan, for there he dies.

Thus the preparation for God's people to enter the promised land is complete. Moses has brought them from salvation through sanctification and they are ready to be God's priests to the world. As one leaves Deuteronomy, the expectation is not, 'will they fail?', but 'how long will they last before they fail?'

The transition from Moses to Joshua (31:1-29).

- Moses tells the people to follow God and introduces Joshua as the one they should follow (31:1-8).
- Reminder to read the Law to all when they are gathered at the Feast of Booths every seven years at the remission of debts (31:9-13).
- Moses is told by the Lord it is time to die, that the nation will forsake the Lord when they enter the land, and that he should sing a song (31:14-22).
- Moses commissions Joshua (31:23).
- Moses commands the Levites to keep the Law in the Ark of the Covenant and tells Israel that he knows they will act corruptly after his death (31:24-29).

The song of Moses:

Moses prophecy of their rebellion and return (31:30-32:43).

Moses warns the people to observe the Law that they might preserve their days (32:44-47).

Moses death (32:48-34:12).

- Moses told to go up to the mountain and look over to Canaan, but there he was to die (32:48-52).
- Moses blesses the tribes of Israel (33:1-29).
- Moses sees the land of Israel and dies (34:1-8).
- Joshua takes over for Moses. Moses eulogized (34:9-12).