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Deuteronomy 5 - 6



Deuteronomy - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg provides an insightful analysis of Deuteronomy chapters 5 and 6 in this discussion. He touches on the Ten Commandments, Sabbath keeping, and the importance of teaching God's laws to children. He emphasizes the importance of internalizing God's laws rather than simply following external rules. Steve also discusses the dangers of external circumstances affecting one's spirituality and the need for Israel to remain distinct from the pagan peoples around them.

Transcript

Alright, returning to Deuteronomy chapter 5 in this session. This is the beginning of the second of Moses' discourses in the book of Deuteronomy. There are a total of three or four discourses of Moses, and the only reason for the uncertainty is not knowing exactly how to classify the last several chapters, which could be seen as one discourse on a miscellaneous topic, or it could be seen as individual appendices to the book.

There are at least three separate discourses identified, and of course even the material after the third discourse is spoken by Moses, so it could be considered a discourse also. Like I say, it depends on how you count them up. But the second discourse is by far the longest and most complicated, and involves history review.

It involves the giving of more laws and ordinances, as well as repetition of some of the old ones. It occupies chapters 5 through 26 and starts at chapter 5, where we actually get a review of the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are first given in Exodus chapter 20, and then this is the only other place that they are listed in the Bible.

And here they follow pretty close to the exact wording of the original listing of the Ten Commandments, so there are a few differences. Most of them are not significant differences, they are substantial. Certainly none of the commandments have changed, it's just some of the explanatory material is a little different in this rendering.

In verse 1 of chapter 5, it says, And Moses called all Israel and said to them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today that you may learn them and be careful to observe them. Yahweh, our God, made a covenant with us

at Horeb. Yahweh did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who are here today, all of us who are alive.

Now before we go any further, I just want to point out this figure of speech. You may remember in some earlier classes I mentioned a figure of speech called a limited negative, which I've made reference to in my teaching for probably 30 or 40 years, almost, because I heard somebody else refer to this figure of speech as a limited negative, and then someone asked me where that term came from, and I looked it up online and couldn't find a single reference online to it, so I made it up. Now I know I didn't make it up.

I know that someone else must have made it up, because I got it from someone else a long time ago. I don't remember who. But when I speak of a limited negative, and I think it's still the right term for it, even if it's a term that no one has used besides me, referring to a certain figure of speech, which is constructed to say not A but B, but in fact it means not only A but also B. It's just that many times it sounds absolute, but it's limited in its negativity.

Not this. But it really means not only this, but also that. And we have a number of cases in Jesus' teaching and other places in the Bible where such a figure of speech is used, and I've identified some of them in the past.

We won't take the time now because we have to get through Deuteronomy, but this is clearly an example where it's a not A but B construction, but it means not only A but also B. What he means is the Lord did not make this covenant only with our fathers, but also with us. He's not denying that God made this covenant with their fathers, because it was in fact their fathers who came out of Egypt. It was their fathers who came to Mount Sinai, and it was their fathers with whom God made this covenant.

The group that is there now were under 20 years old at the time and were considered children, and therefore were not really parties to the covenant in a responsible sense. The covenant was in fact made with their fathers. But what he's saying is I don't want you to think that since it was made with our fathers, it only pertained to them.

God didn't simply make this with the previous generation. This is for all generations of Jews. This is for your fathers and you.

And so that's what he means, although he sounds like he's denying that it was made with our fathers. Obviously we know enough about the story to know that it was in fact, and this is one of the most obvious cases of this figure of speech that I've identified. Verse 4, then Yahweh talked with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire.

I stood between Yahweh and you at that time to declare to you the word of the Lord, for

you were afraid because of the fire and you did not go up to the mountain. He said, and now we have the recitation of the Ten Commandments. I am Yahweh, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself any carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them, nor serve them for I Yahweh, your God and a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me, but showing mercy to thousands to those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not take the name of Yahweh your God in vain for Yahweh will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy as Yahweh, your God commanded you six days. You shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of Yahweh, your God.

In it you shall not do any work. You nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your men servant, nor your maid servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates that your man servant and your maid servant may rest as well as you and remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and that the Lord, your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm. Therefore, Yahweh, your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

Honor your father and your mother as Yahweh, your God has commanded you that your days may be long and that it may be well with you in the land which the Lord, your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You should not commit adultery.

You should not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You should not covet your neighbor's wife and you should not cover your neighbor's house, his field, his man servant, his maid servant, his ox, his donkey or anything that is your neighbors.

And that is the end of the Ten Commandments as they are given here. And it's kind of interesting how a few of the changes came about in it. Mostly we have, of course, the it's the same order, the same commands.

The first command is don't have any other gods before me and before me means in my presence. It doesn't mean ahead of me on line, you know, on a higher rung of the ladder than me. It means at all.

The assumption is you, my people live before me. You live before me in my presence. Don't before me you live in my presence.

Do not have any other gods. And so it's not OK to have him simply as the highest God on a pantheon of many gods. He has to be the only God.

And in this, Israel is very jealously monotheistic. And of course, that becomes their declaration of their faith in the Shema in Chapter six, where in verses four and five, it says, Here, O Lord. I mean, here, Israel, Yahweh, our God Yahweh is one.

So he is one God and they do not recognize any others. The second is, of course, about carved images. And that is expanded on in the same way that it is in Exodus, Chapter 20.

Namely, that it's not simply a matter of making images or making pictures or making representations of things in heaven or earth or under the earth, but rather it's a matter of bowing down to them. That is the issue. And God, in verse nine, says that he's jealous and that those who hate him, that is, those who bow down to other gods, will be judged and their judgment can extend as far as the third and fourth generation of their offspring.

But he does show mercy to thousands of those who keep his commandments. Now, the third commandment is you should not take the name of Yahweh, your God, in vain. And we talked about that when we were in Exodus, as we talked about all of these in detail, taking the name of the Lord is like what a wife takes the name of her husband when they enter into a covenant relationship.

She becomes part of him. She becomes part of his family. She takes his name and she therefore is an extension of himself.

What she does is partly what he does through his family, through the solidarity of himself and his wife. They become one flesh. And so Israel in entering into a similar kind of covenant with God was became an extension of of him.

They bore his name, his reputation and their behavior. Therefore, I would reflect on God's name and for them to claim to be God's people, to bear his name upon them, to take his name and yet to do so emptily, which is what in vain means to do so unworthily. That is to represent oneself as the people of God and yet live in a way that is contrary to God or dishonoring to God or the besmirches his reputation in his name.

That would be taking his name emptily upon you. It also is the case that this would apply to the taking of oaths because Israel was to take their oath in the name of Yahweh. It says so in, for example, Chapter six in verse thirteen.

You shall fear Yahweh your God and serve him and take oath in his name. Likewise, in Chapter ten of Deuteronomy in verse twenty. God says you shall fear Yahweh your God.

You shall serve him and to him you shall hold fast and take oath in his name. That means that if you would take a vow or an oath, you don't swear in the name of another God. You swear in the name of Yahweh.

But of course, then you invoke his name. You take his name when you make an oath. You'd better keep your oath then.

Otherwise you've taken his name and taken it in vain. If you invoke the name of Yahweh as your guarantee to somebody else that you're being honest and then you're not honest, then you have misused Yahweh's name. And that also would be something that would be a meaning of taking the name of Yahweh in vain.

Then there's the lengthy treatment as in in excess. There's a lengthy treatment of the Sabbath question. The Sabbath was, of course, as we saw in Exodus, Chapter thirty one, a distinctive sign of the covenant between Israel and God.

Just as circumcision was. We're told in Genesis seventeen that circumcision was the sign of God's covenant with Abraham and in Exodus, Chapter thirty one, that Sabbath keeping was the sign of God's covenant between Israel and God. So they're being circumcised and keeping the Sabbath were specific signs setting Israel off from the other nations.

And here what's interesting is that while it's like Exodus does go off on a lengthy explanation of why the Sabbath should be kept, it's actually a different reason than it's given in Exodus, because in Exodus the Sabbath is commanded. And this is for in six days. This is actually twenty in verse eleven.

In six days, the Lord God made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. And on the seventh day he rested. And therefore, he commands you to rest on the seventh day.

So in Exodus, the command to rest on the seventh day is based upon the fact that God rested from his work of creation and that Israel is urged to commemorate that by resting each seventh day also. But now we have an entirely different reason given. It says notice.

In verse fourteen in the middle, it says that they're supposed to have no one in their household work. They're not their son or daughter, nor manservant, nor maidservant. That is, their slaves are not allowed to work.

And he says in verse fifteen, and remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and you know, God brought you out and gave you freedom. And at the end of verse fifteen, therefore, Yahweh, your God, commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. What do you mean therefore? Why? Because you were a slave in Egypt and God gave you rest from your hard labors.

And later on. In a later passage, Moses going to start talking about the entrance into Canaan as entering into rest in chapter twelve, verse nine, in Deuteronomy, twelve nine. He says, for as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance which the Lord

your God is giving you.

But when you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to inherit and when he gives you rest from all your enemies round about that you may dwell safely, then there will be a place where the Lord chooses to make his name of Biden, so forth. But notice the coming into Canaan, which was anticipated in Deuteronomy, but not yet accomplished, was referred to as entering into God's rest. And you see, Israel have been slaves under rigorous labor in Egypt, and now God's bringing them into a rest from their servitude.

Eventually, they would actually be resting in houses and so forth and rest from their enemies and all that they were in a transition between slavery and that rest during that forty years of wandering in which Moses is speaking to them. But the point here is that when they go into the promised land, they are going to have to commemorate the rest that God has brought them into. That is the rest from their former bondage.

And one way they do that is by themselves resting every Sabbath and allowing their servants to rest, especially because they were servants themselves. And it is God having taken them out of service, out of slavery and giving them rest. That is the reason that he's telling them to keep it.

All right. So the very fact that they had been slaves and come out becomes the basis in this chapter for God to tell them to rest and that rest ultimately that it represents is the rest that they will come into in Canaan. Now, if you look over at Hebrews chapter four, we find that the writer of Hebrews in talking about God's rest in which we should enter, he mixes all these things up.

He mixes the seventh day of creation rest. He mixes the entry into Canaan as a reference to the rest also. And he seems to indicate that both God's resting on the seventh day and our Israel's resting in Canaan becomes a picture of us entering into God's rest in chapter four of Hebrews at verse one, it is therefore, since the promise remains of entering his rest, let us fearless.

Any of you seem to have come short of it. Now, the reason that he says there remains a promise of entering into God's rest is because in the previous chapter is quoted from Psalm ninety five where God said to a much later generation through David. Today, if you will hear his voice, do not harden your heart and he talked about how he had said to that generation who come out of Egypt that they would never enter his rest.

And so that today, if you hear his voice, not harden your heart, seems to be an invitation in David's day. David wrote the psalm. He's invited inviting people even then to enter into his rest and therefore the right of Hebrews begins chapter four by saying, therefore, there remains a promise of entering his rest.

Therefore, let us fearless. Any of you seem to come short of it. For indeed, the gospel was preached to us as well as to them.

But the word which they heard did not profit them not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. It's not about the generation that did not go into Canaan. They didn't enter the rest.

Said they wandered restlessly in the wilderness until they were all dead. Now, it says that the gospel was preached to them and to us. Apparently, the promise of entering the promised land.

Which was given them is treated as a type in the shadow of the gospel is preached to us. But they did not benefit. They didn't have faith and therefore we may fall short of benefiting if we don't say.

But he says in verse three, for we who have believed do enter that rest as he said. So that rest is a rest that comes about by believing. Entering God's rest is something that comes from trusting him and then it goes on in verse four.

It says, for he has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way and God rested on the seventh day from all his work. Of course, that's Genesis two two and then verse five. Here says and again in this place, he says, they shall not enter my rest.

That's in Psalm ninety five. So now he's got rest from two different passages from Genesis two to about the seventh day rest of God when he finished the creation and then from Psalm ninety five a reference to Canaan as a rest entering Canaan as a rest. These two now become one thing in the mind of the writer of Hebrews.

They both point forward to the rest that those who have believed to enter, as he said in verse three. And so we don't have to read the rest of this chapter necessarily, except it says in verse nine of Hebrews four verse nine says there remains therefore a rest for the people of God. Now this word rest is the word Sabbath rest.

But of course, he's he's referring it back to the Sabbath because the Sabbath rest commemorates both God's rest on the seventh day according to Exodus twenty and the Sabbath rest also commemorates the entering into the rest of Canaan and being delivered from bondage as per Deuteronomy five. Both are given as reasons in Exodus and Deuteronomy respectively for keeping the Sabbath. And so there is a Sabbath rest for us to.

It is the antitype of those two things is the antitype of God's rest on the seventh day and of Israel's resting from their bondage coming out of bondage. He says for those for he who has entered into God's rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from his now God's rest. It's obvious that he's talking about us coming to a place where we are at rest.

But he refers to it as entering into God's rest. And he gives the example that God made the earth and six days and he rested. God has experienced a rest arresting and that resting is because he's finished a work.

That's why he rests on the seventh day. He finished the creative work in six days. He had nothing more to do.

And so he rested. He had nothing more to do on that project. Likewise, Jesus has finished the new creation through offering himself once and for all.

And he sat down, as it says in Hebrews chapter 10, as the same writer will develop later on. Because he there in Hebrews 10 reminds us that the priests in the Old Testament never really rested from their work. It was always another sacrifice, always another sacrifice.

There's always something more to do because nothing in the sacrificial system really made a total and permanent end of sin. And so it says in Hebrews 10 11. Hebrews chapter 10 verse 11 says, and every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices which can never take away sin.

But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God. That is, the priest in the temple did not sit down. They stood continually.

They didn't ever get to rest from their work, so to speak. But Jesus finished the work, and therefore he sat down. There's nothing more to do.

And his finishing of the new creation, his finishing of the redemption of the new creation is an antitype of God's finishing of the creation work in Genesis and the writer of Hebrews says now God has rested. Jesus has rested. Jesus is resting and we enter into his rest.

How? Well, as Paul said over in Ephesians 2 6 that we are seated in heavenly places in Christ. We are entered into his rest too. We are.

We experience not the striving and the laboring to measure up to some standards that God has so that we can be good enough. But we actually in Christ are already resting. We're already seated in Christ in the heavenly places as Christ himself is.

We have entered into his rest and once we account, we once we recognize that. And count on that being so. Well, then we are no longer struggling to earn or to maintain a relationship with God.

We rather rest in what Christ is finished. But the point is that the writer of Hebrews gets all of this by combining two ideas about the Sabbath in the Old Testament, one from Genesis. Well, one from Exodus 20, where the rationale for the Sabbath is given as God's

rest on the seventh day and one from this passage where God's command to rest on the Sabbath is the rationale given because he gave Israel rest from their bondage in Egypt.

By the way. In Deuteronomy 5:14 at the very end, where it says that your man servant, your mates or may rest as well as you, it suggests that if you're a Sabbath observer, you don't let people work for you on the Sabbath. Your servants rest too.

There are people who do keep Sabbath, that is, they won't cook their meals, but they'll go out to a restaurant, let someone else cook them for them and things like that. They'll let other people work for them and do the work that they would ordinarily do for themselves. But that would seem to violate the spirit of the Sabbath as it's given here.

If you're not working, your servants aren't working for you either. Even paid servants. We've got the command to honor father and mother in verse 16.

Nothing new about that, except that in the old version of it in Exodus, given 40 years earlier, he simply said, honor your father and mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord's given you. But here he adds to that and that it may go well with you. It may seem like only small addition, but there is a difference between just having a long life and having a good life.

You know, it's one thing to live long. Another thing to have things go well for you in a long life. I know people who, when you offer them eternal life through the gospel, I don't want eternal life.

You know, life is not that good. And their life isn't that good to just prolong life without it being a good life is not really something that very many people should find desirable. I think what I find interesting is Paul actually quotes in Ephesians six, the fifth commandment when he's talking to children.

And he specifically quotes it from the Deuteronomy version rather than the Exodus version. And in Ephesians six, the first three verses, he says, children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. Then he quotes, honor your father and your mother.

Then Paul says, which is the first commandment with a promise. And then he quotes the promise in verse three, that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth. And here he's quoting the promise, of course, from Deuteronomy, because it says that it may go well with you and that you may live long.

That's the main difference here in between the way it's in Exodus and the way it is in Deuteronomy. Most of the rest is the same. You should not murder.

You should not commit adultery. You should not steal. You should not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Those are all the same. Of course, there's a very brief. And then verse 21, you should not covet your neighbor's wife.

You should not desire your neighbor's house, his field or anything else, et cetera. That is your neighbors. The only difference between this and the way it's worded in Exodus is that in Exodus, the house and the wife were mentioned in different order here.

It's you should not cover your neighbor's wife or his house. In the rest is pretty much the same. Now, verse 22, these words you always spoke to all your assembly in the mountain, from the midst of the fire, the cloud and the thick darkness with a loud voice.

And he added no more. No oral Torah. Actually, there was more law added later on more statutes and so forth in the book of the covenant.

But there were no more commandments than these given in the Ten Commandments. And I'm not sure why he mentions that, except that he's always urging them not to add to the words of God. And I guess not supposed to add an 11th commandment.

And he wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me, probably in saying he added no more. He may be saying that all the other statutes and ordinances that God gave are not really more than these commandments. It's more amplifications on them.

It's not that there's new principles necessarily that he added, but that all the principles, all the laws that gave can be found in some way subsumed under these 10. So it was when you heard the voice from the middle of the darkness, while the mountain is burning with fire that you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders, and you said, surely Yahweh, our God, has shown us the glory of his greatness, and we have heard his voice from the midst of the fire. We have seen this day that God speaks with man, yet he still lives now.

Therefore, why should we die for this great fire will consume us if we hear the voice of Yahweh, our God, anymore we shall die for who is there of all flesh, who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire as we have and live. You go near and hear all that Yahweh, our God, may say and tell us all that Yahweh, our God, says to you and we will hear and do it now. Seems like a strange thing for them to say.

They say, wow, we have heard the voice of God and we have lived, but we can't hear it anymore and we'll die if we hear it anymore. It doesn't make an awful lot of sense to me. It seems like they had observed that God was going to let them hear his voice and it was not going to kill them to hear him, but they weren't so sure.

Now in Hebrews chapter 12, it speaks about this as the voice that thundered, which those who heard it could not bear to endure what was spoken. In Hebrews chapter 12, it suggests that the problem here was not hearing God's voice, but hearing what he was saying that they could hardly stand to hear. But here they seem to express their

willingness to obey what he says.

They're just terrified of the sound of the voice. They're not like us, I guess. Most of us would probably be attracted to something sensational like God speaking from heaven, but they had seen plenty of sensational stuff and would see more after that.

And they apparently didn't. I know they just didn't feel comfortable. And so they wanted Moses to speak for them.

I would have thought that was a wrong choice for them to make. However, God approved of it. Verse 28 says, then Yahweh heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me and Yahweh said to me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken to you.

They're right in all that they have spoken. What are they right about? Well, that they are probably in danger of dying. If they get too close to God, they are pretty rebellious.

But he said, oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear me and always keep my commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever. I guess the idea is that it's good that they fear me like that. It's good that they are not cavalier about Yahweh, that they they have gotten scared just hearing his voice, seeing the thunder and the darkness and the fire and the smoke.

And so he says that it's good that they're afraid of me. That's appropriate. I wish they'd always be that fearful of me.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. I wish they would always have such a heart and then to fear me and to keep my commandments as they say they will at this time. Of course, at that point in time, they they made claim that they would keep his command.

So it wasn't long after that that they made the golden calf. So they were talking mostly in their hearts, didn't follow through in their loyalty that they claimed. God says, go and say to them, return to your tents.

But as for you, stand here by me and I will speak to you all the commandments and statutes and the judgments which you shall teach them, that they may observe them in the land which I am giving them to possess. Therefore, you shall be careful to do as Yahweh, your God, has commanded you. You shall not turn aside to the right hand or the left.

You should walk in all the ways which Yahweh, your God, has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess. Once again, the frequent reference to if you obey, then you will prolong your time in the land. Otherwise, you will not, as implied.

Chapter six. Now, this is the commandment. And these are the statutes and judgments which the Lord, your God, has commanded you to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, that you may fear Yahweh, your God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, you and your son and your grandson all the days of your life and that your days may be prolonged.

He doesn't say that they may be prolonged in the land, as he usually says, just that your days may be prolonged and that Israel as a nation would exist for a long time if they are obedient to God. Solomon, in Ecclesiastes 12, said something about the same as verse two, Ecclesiastes 12, 13. He says, Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter.

Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. And that's what God says in verse two, feared the Lord and keep his statutes and his commandments. That is the whole duty of man, according to Solomon, verse three.

Therefore, here, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly as the Lord God of your fathers has promised you a land flowing with milk and honey. Here, O Israel, Yahweh, our God, Yahweh is one. You shall love Yahweh, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might.

Of course, this is called the Shema. The word Shema means here. It begins with that here, O Israel.

Now, the affirmation is that Yahweh is one, not many gods. Now, Trinitarians understand that God is three persons in one God, and some people feel like that's a contradiction of what is said here. Although the word one can mean a complex oneness, as, for example, when it says the husband and the wife become one flesh, same word, husband and wife are two persons, but they become one flesh.

Therefore, it's not inconceivable that God could be three persons and still be one God. The word one can be a composite of multiple components, I suppose. And so this does not tell us whether God is a trinity or not.

Some Trinitarians actually try to make it teach that here because they say one means a, you know, a corporate oneness. But that's not always the case. The word one can mean one unit as well, but it doesn't have to.

Oneness is a ambiguous term in that sense. But there's not more than one God that God may have more than one person in his in his Godhead is, I suppose, something that we cannot rule out from this and which seems to be taught in the New Testament, though not at all clearly in the Old Testament. And he says, you shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind.

Of course, this verse has been immortalized for the Christian by Jesus' statement that this is the first and great commandment, which he said is very much like another one in

Leviticus, which is you shall love that your neighbors, you love yourself. Jesus said that in Matthew 22, verse 37, he quoted this also in the parallels in Mark 12, 30 and Luke 10, 27. In all three of the synoptic Gospels, Jesus quotes this verse and says it's the great commandment.

And he said on this one and the other one about loving your neighbors yourself on those two, everything hangs, all the law and all the prophets, all the duty of man hangs on this, that you should love the Lord your God. And as I said in our introduction to Deuteronomy, it's Deuteronomy, I believe, is the first place, first book of the Bible that tells us to love God. And it's the first book of the Bible to say that God loves people.

The idea of love relationship between God and people is spoken of in Deuteronomy first, and it becomes prominent. There's many references throughout Deuteronomy to God's love for his people and the obligation of people to love him. And thus the religion of Israel stands out distinctive from all other ancient religions in this factor that there is expected to be a relationship, a loving relationship like a husband and wife relationship between God and his people.

Whereas in the pagan religions, they were not expected to love their God, just placate their God. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and you should 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, you should bind them as a sign on your hand and they should be as frontless between your eyes.

You should write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Now, this is simply saying how prominent these laws are to be in your thinking. They're supposed to be on your lips all the time in your family, with your children, when you rise up in the morning, when you go to bed, when you're sitting down, just relaxing with your family.

These laws should be coming out of your mouth. Now it says you shall teach them diligently to your children. So it's not just that you, you know, you make reference to them from time to time, but you're actually teaching your children the laws of God.

It is obligatory of parents to teach their children the word of God. Paul said that parents are to bring their children up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord. And that is, of course, because God has more than one generation that he's interested in.

And he's interested in our generation, he's interested in all future generations. And the way that the gospel is to be transmitted in the knowledge of God and its ways is to be transmitted is by parents to the children, not by institutions, not by schools, not by government, not even by the church per se. The church is a fellowship of believers where, in general, the adults are taught the ways of God.

The adults are supposed to teach their children. I'm not saying that children can't learn anything from church. I'm sure I learned something as a child sitting in church.

Not very much, though. I learned far more from my parents than I learned from the church. And when it came to Sunday school, I learned very little.

Strangely enough, although Sunday school is deliberately for the purpose of teaching children. In many cases, most churches have Sunday schools. In fact, the first Sunday schools were established to reach unsaved kids.

I think it was D.L. Moody or someone like him that first started Sunday schools, and it was to reach the unchurched kids from the unchurched families in Chicago area. And it was not a place for Christian parents to drop their kids off to get them out of their hair for a while. It was a place for kids who never had any teaching at home about the things of God to receive some teaching from a service the church provided, an outreach of the church.

But the training of children in the ways of God is supposed to be something God committed to parents to do because they can enforce it not only with discipline, but also with example day in and day out. The children should be able to see that their parents live along certain by certain principles and pick them up by osmosis as well as by direct teaching. It should be reinforced all day long when you rise up, when you sit down, when you go to bed.

And when he talks about binding them as a sign on your hand and frontless between your eyes and write them on your doorpost of your house, of your gate, this is almost certainly intended figuratively, though the Jews, many of whom were very literalistic, took these very literally. And they have these little boxes that they attach their foreheads or to their hands or put on their doors. And they put scripture portions in them.

The ones that they wear on their bodies are called phylacteries. And what they put on the door. Somebody asked me about this on the radio yesterday.

I think they call them a Zusa. I'm not mistaken. And they, they do that to fulfill the commands of the scripture.

They put actual scripture portions of the law in their phylacteries, and they bind them to their foreheads or to their hands. Now, most Jews don't do this today. They did in Jesus day and the the Hathidim in Israel still do it.

You'll sometimes see them, you know, the people have little curls on the side of their head. You'll see a little cylindrical box that they've tied with a band around their head on their forehead. And that's a phylactery.

That's to fulfill this purpose. Now, I don't believe that they're getting the message when they do that necessarily, though I don't think there's anything wrong. But what's the point? You can't read the portions that are rolled up in there.

They're just there for symbolic reasons. Now, if you have scripture portions framed on your walls of your house, that's another story. You may actually read them and they may influence you, but to treat them like magic, you know, like a good luck charm.

You know, I have a little piece of paper in my on my forehead. I can't see it, but I know it's there and there's a scripture on it. And therefore, I feel like I'm obeying God.

It's kind of silly. Jesus said to the Pharisees in Matthew 23, as you make broad phylacteries for yourselves. But he goes on to talk about all the ways that they don't keep the law.

It's not keeping it, just putting it on your forehead like that and bind them on your hand and on your forehead, obviously speaks about your hands, the actions of your hands, your works being controlled by bound by the laws of God and that your thoughts or what's before your eyes, what you're focusing on should be the word of God, too. And it should be on the doors of your house so that you are reminded of the scriptures when you're coming and going. Not necessarily literally written in these places, but rather that these are the this is the kind of attention.

It's a figure of speech supposed to put your attention and and order your actions by God's laws. And verse 10, it shall be when the Lord, your God brings you into the land which he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build houses full of all good things which you did not fill, hewn out wells which you did not dig vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant when you have eaten and are full, then beware lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage. Now, this is something he warned several times in the in the next several chapters is make sure that you don't forget God once you're no longer needy when you're wandering in the wilderness and you don't have any way to grow food and you depend on God each day to provide manna so that you can survive and you don't know where to go.

You're out in the middle of the desert, so you depend on God to lead you by his cloud and you need to depend on God to provide water in the desert. I mean, when you're depending on God like that, it's hard to forget him. You don't have time to forget him.

It's interesting, though, that even in that condition, you can rebel against him. As I said again and again and again, and you can complain and murmur about God, but they didn't forget about him. But the next problem they're going to face is the danger, the temptation to forget about God when he's no longer guiding them around by a cloud, when he doesn't provide manna anymore, when they're living normal lives that are

prosperous lives, comfortable lives, then it's easy just to have God not be in your thoughts because you're comfortable.

The writer of Proverbs chapter 30, a man named Agur, saw the danger of this in his own life, and we see him praying a prayer that many people actually think is a good prayer. I think it's a wimpy prayer, but in Proverbs 30, verses six through nine, Agur, the author of this chapter, says, do not. Well, verse seven, seven through nine, he says, two things I request of you deprive me not before I die, remove falsehood and lies from me.

That's one of them. The other thing is, give me neither poverty nor riches. Feed me with the food you prescribe for me.

That sounds modest. He says, lest I be full and deny you and say, who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God. Now, some people say, well, this is a very modest request.

He doesn't want to be rich or poor. Just give me what I need. That's all.

I'm not. I'm not asking for much. And some people think this is a pretty good attitude to have.

It's not the attitude Paul had, though. The problem here was that Agur didn't have a very stable relationship with God and his financial circumstances endangered his spiritual life. If he was poor, he thought he'd feel if he was rich, he might forget God.

That's not a very spiritual man, but he recognized the tendencies. And that's a wise man. Paul was a spiritual man and Paul said, I've learned how to be a base.

I've learned how to abound. I can be rich or I can be poor. It's not going to affect me spiritually.

I have. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me, he said. He said, I've learned to be content in whatever state I'm in.

So Paul's spiritual state was immune to the changes of economic ups and downs. He could be poor. He'd learn how to do that.

I've learned how to be a base. I've learned how to suffer lack or he could be well off. I've learned how to abound.

He says, I've learned in all things and all circumstances to be content and I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. He said, this is all in Philippians chapter four. Now that means that Paul was not going to have his spiritual life endangered by being in poverty or by being well provided for your spiritual life should not be dependent on those things.

And that is perhaps one of the main differences between the new covenant and the old. And that is that the new covenant internalizes spirituality. God writes the laws on your heart so that you are controlled by internal controls, not external controls.

I really think that God has made a deliberate illustration of this in the animal world. You know, people have heard the illustration that's used all the time about the frog in the kettle. You know, you put a frog in hot water, it'll jump out, but he put it in cold water and raise the temperature gradually.

Eventually you can boil the frog. It won't even know it's in danger because the gradual change, the reason that may be true. I don't know if that's true of frogs.

I've never tried the experiment, but it makes a great illustration of, you know, the way that we are ignorant and not paying attention to the changes in our society when they happen gradually. But the thing about that, if that is true about frogs, it is true because they are cold-blooded animals. Cold-blooded animals have no internal temperature controls.

And therefore, whatever their environment is, they feel normal in it. There is no contrast between their internal temperature and their external temperature. In fact, the external circumstances, their environment determines their internal temperature.

Their body temperature changes with the environment. They don't feel uncomfortable because there's no, we feel uncomfortable because we have, our body is trying to maintain a 98.6 degree Fahrenheit norm. And if we're someplace colder than that, we feel the contrast.

So we feel cold or someplace hotter than that, we feel hot because there's a contrast between our internal system, which does control our body heat and our environment. But cold-blooded animals, they just, they pick up their body temperature from the environment. And it's sort of like people who don't have Christ, their spiritual temperature is determined by the spiritual environment they're in.

They just kind of blend in with whatever is going on and they don't have any sense that there's something wrong. Like a frog, they can start out cold and get to boiling hot until they're dead, and they never notice the difference because they have nothing inside them by which they can externally assess or judge the culture outside of them. The culture just influences them.

And therefore, their internal spiritual temperature is determined by their spiritual environment. But when God writes his laws on your inward parts, and when you are, your spirituality is internalized by the working of the Holy Spirit through regeneration, then you have within you internal control, an internal thermostat. And there's a temperature that's the right temperature that your spirit is set to.

And when the environment is out of sync with that, you feel uncomfortable, like Lot, actually, who vexed his righteous soul day after day by the unlawful deeds of Sodom, as he saw and heard what they were doing. And so, Israel was always in danger that their external circumstances would have a negative impact on their spirituality. Paul didn't have that problem.

He could get rich or poor, it wouldn't change anything. But Agur in the Old Testament, he knew that being too rich would endanger him spiritually, being too poor would endanger him spiritually. He didn't have those internal controls.

If he got poor, he's going to steal. He's afraid he would. He knew at least there'd be a temptation.

And there is even a Christian knows that there is the temptation to let the environment determine your behavior and your spiritual convictions. That is something that has to be fought off. But we do have something more.

We have Christ and we can do all things through Christ, Paul said. And it was in that context he was talking about that famous saying. But God is afraid that Israel will lose their faith, will lose their memory of God, will lose their spiritual life if they have a change of circumstances.

They've been depending on God day by day, but they're coming into a circumstance where they're going to have regular crop cycles. They're going to have harvest times. They're going to have planting times.

They're going to be like everybody else in that respect so that their circumstances will be such as one could forget about God. And so he says, beware when that happens, when you've eaten and you're full in verse 12, chapter 6, 12, Deuteronomy, then beware that you do not forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt from a house of bondage. You shall fear the Lord your God and serve him and shall take oaths in his name.

I mentioned earlier, they're supposed to take the oath in the name of Yahweh. Otherwise, they might take them in the names of other gods, which was not OK. You shall not go after other gods, the gods, the peoples who are all around you for Yahweh, your God is a jealous God, as we've seen before among you.

Let the anger of Yahweh, your God, be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth. This is, we assume, not an idle threat that the nation of Israel could be destroyed from the face of the earth. Obviously, that means that the promises God made to them were conditional because they those promises could not be fulfilled if they were destroyed from the face of the earth.

You shall not tempt the Lord, your God, as you tempted him in Massa. Now, you should

not tempt the Lord, your God. Obviously, in this case, it means you should not go after other gods and tempt God to destroy you.

God was tempted to destroy them when they built a golden calf. He was tempted to destroy them on other occasions and Moses interceded for them. Don't tempt God like you have in the past.

Tempted to what? To wipe you off the face of the earth. That's what that's the context. Now, Jesus quoted this verse.

You should not tempt Yahweh, your God. When he was tempted to jump off the pinnacle of the temple in Matthew four and in Luke four, we have these temptations of Jesus. He always quoted from Deuteronomy when he responded to the devil and on the what apparently was the second temptation was when he was told to jump off of the pinnacle of the temple and the devil.

So because there's a promise in the Psalms that says he has given his angels charge over you to keep you in all your ways and in their hands, they will bear you up lest you dash your foot against the stone. Jesus was therefore reminded that God had promised to keep his faithful ones by angelic protection. And the devil said, why don't you just jump off the temple then? Because by implication, the angels would have to come and help you, wouldn't they? And Jesus said, it is written, you should not tempt the Lord, your God.

Now, tempting the Lord, your God, apparently in this case means to act contrary to God's will and yet expect God to come through for you. When God says he's given his angels charge of you, it says in Psalm 91 to keep you in all your ways, that is, in all the ways that you're supposed to be going all the ways that God has assigned your ways are the ways that God has for you to go. And he will keep you in those ways.

He won't keep you when you go on your own ways after, you know, apart from the ways that he has in mind for you. And tempting God is not taking God at his word. It is something else.

It is insisting that God keep his promises when you're not doing what he told you to do. And Israel believed that they could disobey God, even worship idols. And yet God would still protect them and keep them around.

The idea that they could disobey God and still expect God to keep his promises to them is what tempting God would be and what Jesus said you should not do. And what the devil actually is telling Jesus to do is to do something God did not tell him to do, to step outside of God's will and yet expect God to supernaturally aid him. Verse 17, you shall diligently keep the commandments of Yahweh your God, his testimonies and his statutes, which he has commanded you.

And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of Yahweh, that it may be well with you. If you don't do what's right in your own eyes to do what's right in the eyes of God, and then things go well with you and that you may go in and possess the good land of which the Lord swore to your fathers to cast out all your enemies before you as Yahweh has spoken. And when your son asks you in time to come saying, what is the meaning of the testimonies, the statutes and the judgments which Yahweh our God has commanded you? In other words, why are we keeping these rules? And we've seen before that God is concerned that and aware that children will watch the behavior of their parents in these rituals and also in the just the whole standards that the Jews live by.

And the children say, how can we do that and other people don't do that? I remember one of my children when we were living at the Great Commission School in Bandon was aware of some other Christian friends of ours who didn't, well, who didn't live the way we did, so that way. I remember my children asking, one of my children saying, why do we have to be our kind of Christians and not their kind of Christians? You know, but the idea was, why are we living differently than they're living? And it was a hard thing for me to answer because I didn't want to say anything negative about the other people. And I didn't.

You know, it's hard to know why some Christians don't live the way that we do. But the reason we live this way is because of the values that Jesus taught and so forth. But when children see how their parents live, and they say, this is different than other people live.

The children likely say, why is that? And that's what God anticipates. In fact, God actually wants that because the very distinction between the way that Israel lived and the way that the pagans did the keeping of these laws and so forth was intended to create these teachable moments for their children. For the children to say, hey, I'm curious.

We're doing what our neighbors aren't doing or what the people over there aren't doing. How come? Why don't we, you know, have these particular forms of entertainment in our house? Or why don't we have the kind of parties our neighbors have or whatever, you know? Well, there's reasons for us living a different way. And children should be made curious by observing it and by seeing the contrast.

And so when you're why are we doing this? Then you should say to your son, we were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and the Lord showed signs and wonders before our eyes. Great and severe against Egypt, Pharaoh and all his household. Then he brought us out from there that he might bring us in to give us the land of which he swore to our fathers and Yahweh commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear Yahweh our God for our good, always that he might reserve us alive, preserve us alive as it is this day.

Then it will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the Lord, our God, as he has commanded us. So when the children asked, why

don't we live like other people live? Well, it's because we have a different history than they have. We've been saved.

God has saved us. God has done something for us. Actually, of course, we know that God has done for all people what he's done for us.

That is, he has provided Christ. He has sent Christ and the gospel, but not all people know it and not all have responded and not all, therefore, have come into those promises. And we have been saved from our backgrounds, as others many times have not been.

And because of that salvation, we do what God said. We've been saved to be obedient. And that's what's made clear here.

It says that God delivered us from our slavery and gave us commandments. And he told us if we keep these commandments, it'll go well with us and we'll survive. And look, we are alive as it is this day.

They say in verse 24, to keep, to preserve us alive as it is this day. See, it works. Here we are alive because we keep these commandments.

And so the children are to be trained in this way. This early in the chapter in verse seven, it says you should teach these commandments diligently to your children. But it makes it very clear that sometimes the most effective time to teach your children is when they ask you a question.

That's when they're teachable. Any good teacher knows that what they have to teach will be more received and more remembered by students if the students have a curiosity about it at the time they hear it. That's why Jesus, no doubt, raised people's curiosity by telling parables.

So that's actually what that means. Oh, well, now that you're curious, I'll let you know. This is a principle of the kingdom of God.

Many of Jesus teachings were given in the context of someone asking him a question. He would exploit the curiosity that they had at that moment to teach an important lesson. Curiosity, if it is present in the learner, will cause them to receive and absorb and appreciate the lesson because they'll think that they asked for it.

They'll think it was their idea. You know, if you try to teach them something that they didn't have any curiosity about, they'll see it as it's your idea. It's your agenda.

You want them to know it, but they're not sure they want to know it. But if they're already curious, then when you teach them, they think it was their idea to learn it. They ask the question.

And that's the that's the great opportunity for teaching is when people have that curiosity. You may notice when I teach a lot of times, I will ask a question about the passage verbally, and then I'll answer. I'm hoping that by asking the question, you'll say, yeah, I wonder that myself, because I know what I want to tell you.

I know what I want to teach. So I raised the question first as a question rather than just information. And that's because you didn't ask.

But I thought I'd put it in your head to ask, because that way you'll if you say, yeah, I wonder that myself. Well, then, OK, now that you've got a curiosity, you've got a place in your head for that information to fit in and to sit. And that's how God knew the mind works and how children learn, seizing those teachable moments and exploiting them.

All right. Well, we need to take a break here and we'll come back to chapter seven next time.