

Introduction to Deuteronomy

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Deuteronomy

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Please take your Bibles now and turn to the book of Deuteronomy, the fifth book of the Bible, the fifth book of Moses, the book of Deuteronomy, for today we begin an exposition of this book, a book that is recognized by nearly all as one of the great books of the Old Testament. It's a book of enduring significance, not only to the church of Jesus Christ, but to all men and nations. Someone has said that if you understand the book of Deuteronomy, you understand the pulse beat of the entire Old Testament.

As I said, we begin today an exposition of this book and the purpose of biblical exposition is twofold. First of all, it's to explain the meaning of the biblical text in terms of its original audience and its historical setting. We want to understand what the writer was saying to those to whom God had sent him; those to whom he wrote; those to whom he spoke. That is the foundation of all exposition, however it doesn't end there, secondly, the purpose of biblical exposition is to apply the meaning of the text to today, and that application is in terms of its underlying theology and its unchanging moral law. Every text, Old and New Testament, is informed by transcendent, divine, unchanging truth. That truth is expressed within a particular context to a particular people, and our goal is to understand what that unchanging moral law, that unchanging theology, is and then on that basis, apply it to our context and the circumstances that we find ourselves in today.

So, that will be our method of treatment here in the book of Deuteronomy throughout this sermon series. We'll begin by looking at the text of Deuteronomy, seeking to understand what Moses was intending to say to his original audience, the people of Israel. Deuteronomy is a book that contains a series of addresses delivered by Moses to the Old Testament people of God, Israel. We want to understand what he intended for them. This exposition will be based on the text of the authorized version, but we will also seek to ground our exposition in a careful understanding of the original Hebrew text in which it was written. We hope that our exegesis will be guided by sound principles of interpretation. We'll be called to grammatical, historical methods of understanding the word of God. We want to look at the grammar of the text and we want to understand its historical setting so that we can discern the meaning in terms of God's will and purpose for Israel.

Then we will endeavor to apply that meaning as we find it in Deuteronomy to our own lives: toward families, to our church, and to our society. We'll constantly be asking these questions: what did Deuteronomy mean to them? Secondly, what does it mean to us? How does it apply to us? It is my conviction that biblical law is the unchanging standard of truth and righteousness for all men and all nations. We believe that the Torah, God's law, is the word of God, instructing us in his will so that we might live and prosper as his people in the calling that he has given to us. Our goal, therefore, is to preach this ancient law of God given through his servant Moses, as the contemporary law of God for Christians and, really, for all mankind, and for every aspect of life.

Now, the application of the law of God for our day and circumstances can be a difficult task. We will find it to be so in many passages in Deuteronomy, and often we will only be able to be suggestive in what we think the passage means in terms of its application today. One of the reasons why we are in this situation is the church has neglected the law of God for many, many years and therefore we are far behind in understanding and applying the righteousness of God's law to contemporary conditions, circumstances, and ethical questions. Commentaries on Deuteronomy abound and many do a very good job of explaining the text, the first part of exposition, what it meant to Israel, but when it comes to the application of biblical law to today, many, if not all, are defective to some degree or another, and some are grievously so; they are nothing more than pietistic platitudes that are derived from the passage.

This is why I believe the work of a man by the name of R. J. Rushdoony is so important in the study of biblical law. In his great work, "The Institutes of Biblical Law," a work that is very significant and made a profound impact, he has done something here, or at least attempted to do something here, that very few are attempting today. He has given to us here a carefully researched exposition of the law of God organized around the 10 Commandments. But not only has he given exposition of the meaning, he labors very hard to apply that law to every area of life, every area of contemporary life: theology, ethics, education, law, economics, business, agriculture, the environment, medicine, the arts, and politics. Now, in such an ambitious endeavor, there is going to be the case that we're not going to agree with everything he says and I certainly don't, but there is much there that is profound and I would highly recommend this study to you as a collateral reading and study as we go through the book of Deuteronomy. It's a pretty thick book but you'll have plenty of time to read it because we'll probably be in Deuteronomy for about two or three years so you'll have time to read through that work by R. J. Rushdoony, "The Institutes of Biblical Law."

I would also recommend another book for you to read because my interpretation and application of biblical law, my approach to biblical law which I'm not going to take the time to outline and go into today, I have set forth in that book that I have recently published, "Walking in the Law of the Lord: An Introduction to the Biblical Ethics of Theonomy," and I would encourage you to read that as another book in preparation for our study and approach to Deuteronomy. You will have a much better handle on how I am approaching various questions; how I deal with issues such as legalism and antinomianism, the interpretation of biblical law, God's covenant, the moral law, ethics,

the application of God's law to politics and so forth. You will have a context, perhaps, to better understand what we'll be saying week to week here in our study of the book of Deuteronomy.

Well, why should we be doing this anyway? Why should we be studying Deuteronomy, after all, we're New Testament Christians, some might say? Well, I'd like to suggest a few reasons why we should be studying this book today at this time in history, this time of our lives. The first is that there has been a widespread and consistent neglect of biblical law in the church. This is a problem, I believe, of epic proportions, and it needs to be corrected now; not just here, of course, but in pulpits throughout the land, but we can only deal with our own house and our own responsibilities. Listen to what Moses says concerning the word of God here that was delivered through him. He says, "Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life," Deuteronomy 32:46-47. This is not a vain thing. This is not an empty exercise. This is our life. Or to put it in other words that Moses says in Deuteronomy 30:19, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live," Deuteronomy 30:19.

Well, what are some of the reasons for the neglect of God's law? I would suggest three. First, I'm going to call it rampant antinomianism. Antinomianism as you can hear from the word "anti," it's against something; nomianism is God's law, it's against the law of God as the standard of Christian living. It is a theological perspective but even more so is an attitude of the heart which is set against the teachings of God's law and its application to Christians. Its slogan is, "We are not under law, but under grace," badly mutilating the meaning of that passage in Paul's use of it in Romans 6, for Paul goes on to say after saying that "we are servants," even the word that is used could be translated, "we are slaves of righteousness." And righteousness is the expression of the very character and being of God and that expression is revealed to us in terms of how we should live in the word of God, specifically his commandments, his statutes, and his judgments. This faulty perspective of antinomianism which has swept the evangelical church today, is destroying us.

The second reason I would call rigid dispensationalism. Rigid dispensationalism is that which teaches that Old Testament, the word of God in the Old Testament is really only for Israel. It has no direct bearing nor application to the church of Jesus Christ. I'm calling it rigid dispensationalism because there are many dispensational brothers, that is, that is their theological perspective, dispensationalism, who honor and value the Old Testament, even the Old Testament law, though they apply their dispensationalism in a prophetic way that some of us would differ with, and yet they are one with us when it comes to the fact that, "Yes, this is God's word. Yes, this teaches me how to live." And thankfully, rigid dispensationalism is falling more and more off the scene as, I believe, God's Spirit speaks to the hearts of God's people and says, "All the word of God is good, and it is righteous, and just, and good." But this type of approach to the Scripture has also

done great damage to the church; it has caused us to neglect nearly 3/4 of God's revelation.

The third reason why people neglect God's law is because of the difficulties we find in it. The church has always struggled with how to apply the Old Testament. These difficulties have been both theological and moral in nature. Frankly, we sometimes are offended at the commands of God that we see in the Old Testament such as the command to exterminate the Canaanites, men, women and children and beasts completely. Also, the laws that God gave to Israel in the area of civil justice where the death penalty is applied to many crimes beyond that of murder. These things trouble us and offend us and therefore we, maybe the solution is we'll just sort of avoid those passages. And if you're going to teach on the law of God, if you're going to teach on a book like Exodus or a book like Deuteronomy, you're going to have to face these passages and so, "Well, let's just avoid that so let's not teach or preach from Deuteronomy." And what has happened is that the church, in regard to its public teaching of Scripture, it's not in the circumstance that Paul found among the synagogues when he was preaching in Acts 15:21, it was said, Paul said, "Moses hath in every city them that preach him." Well, that's not what the case is today in terms of God's people. Very few cities have those who are willing to preach him, preach what God revealed through him.

So the first reason why is that we have seen this neglect is because there is a widespread rejection due to antinomianism, rigid dispensationalism, and the difficulties in biblical law. Secondly, Old Testament law, this is why we should study it, this is why we are studying Deuteronomy, Old Testament law is the word of God and therefore it is both authoritative and profitable for Christians and for the church. Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, gave the standard that we should follow as his people in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 when he was responding to the charge that he had come to abrogate, to do away with, to belittle or downplay the importance of the law of God as revealed up to his time that is in the Old Testament. Then he says, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Christ is talking to his disciples. He has gathered them around him. He is setting the course of Christian ethics and Christian living and he's responding to the charge, as I said, that he had come to set aside what God revealed through Moses and the law and through the prophets and he says, "Don't even let that fought enter your mind. I have come to fill them up."

When it comes to the law of God, Jesus fulfilled it in three ways. He fulfilled it in that he kept it perfectly. We're to be like Christ, correct? Well, he kept the law of God. "What would Jesus do when it comes to the law?" people ask the question. Well I won't tell you what he would do, I'll tell you what he did, he kept it as the standard of his life and the standard of righteousness and it's good for us that he did keep it or we could never have been saved because by keeping the law of God, he truly was a righteous man and the

righteous could then die for you and I, the unrighteous. Christ's Gospel is centered in the law of God. He came to save us from breaking the law that we might become children of God who keep the commandments of God.

He filled it up also in that he cleared away the scribal misinterpretations. The scribes and the Pharisees and their legalism had so shrouded the law in the clouds of human speculation and human self-righteousness that it had been something that became a burden to men. Jesus came to clear that away and he fulfilled it in that he set forth the law of God and perfectly taught it's righteousness, which he goes on to do on the Sermon on the Mount. He fulfilled the law of God in that he called his people then also to keep it and to obey it and to teach it.

We've recently had exposition from our Brother Chris in 2 Timothy 3:16 to 17, that talks about, "All Scripture being given by inspiration of God and being profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works," and Paul clearly has in mind all Scripture, all Old Testament Scripture, including the book of Deuteronomy, and therefore there is the profit of it: doctrine, instruction, correction, reproof. All of these things we will find in this book, this book of the law.

Certainly we recognize that there is a basic twofold aspect to the law: the moral law of God and the ceremonial law. The ceremonial law of the Old Testament set forth the means of Israel's worship. It provided the way for the atonement of man's sin through the priesthood and through sacrifice and in the tabernacle. That law foreshadowed the person and work of Christ and he has brought it to fulfillment in his own person and therefore the observance of these institutions and ceremonies has been abrogated, but the truth of them continues: the truth of substitutionary atonement; the need of a priest to represent us before God. All of that theology upon which that whole system was based, Christ brought to reality.

But the moral law is something that remains unchanged. It's the will of God for men. It sets forth the character and conduct that God requires of us and since it's a reflection of his own personal being, his own righteousness, it cannot change unless God can change. What God said was righteous and just in the Old Testament cannot now be unrighteous and unjust in the new unless God is evolving and God is changing which, of course, is the heresy that some teach. But those of us who believe the Scriptures that say God is the same yesterday, today and forever; that he fails not; he is unchanging; he is "I am who I am," he is not "I was this now and now I am this and I will be that." I am, he is unchanging, the great I am.

So when we study the law of God in the Old Testament, we have to keep in mind those distinctions, however, it's interesting that Deuteronomy does not deal with the Levitical law. It is not a book like the book of Leviticus written to the Levites concerning these ceremonies. In fact, there is no Levitical law in there. There are some things about the feasts of Israel, but not the ceremonies.

We should study the Old Testament law because it's the word of God. It's profitable for us. How should the law of God be used? The Formula of Concord of 1576 states it this way, "The law has been given to men for three reasons, 1. To maintain external discipline against unruly and disobedient men. 2. To lead men to a knowledge of their sin. 3. After they are reborn and although the flesh still inheres in them, to give them on that account a definite rule according to which they should pattern and regulate their entire life." From the Formula of Concord 1576. These three uses have been called the political use, the pedagogic use, and the the didactic. The political use in the sense that God's law does teach how we are to restrain evil in society, as it says here, to maintain external discipline against unruly and disobedient men. The pedagogic refers to the idea of how the law brings us to Christ. It teaches us that we are sinners. It teaches us that we are undone in the presence of God. It teaches us we need forgiveness and that we need a Savior because we are all those counted who have fallen short of the glory of God and therefore we are brought to a knowledge of our sin and the end of ourselves and there in the misery of our condemnation and sin said, "O Lord, save me. Provider a Redeemer." The law does that. But also as it says here, it's the didactic, that is, it teaches us how to live. It's a definite rule for those who are reborn because the flesh still inheres in us and we must fight against the flesh. We need the direct instruction of a father that we might live according to the pattern of life that he would have us live and therefore the law of God, as he says here, is a pattern that would regulate our entire lives.

We could also state these uses of the law in a more expanded fashion. The law of God is an excellent means to understand who God is. The law of God reveals the great distinction between God and man. The law of God defines sin. The law of God convicts men of their own unrighteousness and their condemnation before God, driving them to Christ. The law is a means of grace for the sanctification of the believer. The law is part of the Scripture that Paul says is profitable to equip us for every good work. The law of God provides the basis for a just and well ordered society. And the law of God establishes a biblical basis for anticipating blessing and cursing in this life and in human history.

The third reason why we are studying Deuteronomy is this: the neglect and rejection of God's law has led to predictable results - rampant sin, unrighteousness, moral chaos, and judgment. This is seen in individual men and women, in families, in churches, and in society at large. Proverbs 29:8 says, "Where there is no vision," that means prophetic vision from God, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Cast off restraint, cast off moral restraint, "but he that keepeth the law, happy," or blessed, "is he." People are perishing all around us. They are casting off moral restraint and they're coming under judgment. Our culture is under judgment. Americans are casting off the restraint of the laws of God which at one point had a great restraining influence upon this country. Though many, of course, were not Christian, there was a Christian ethos, there was a Christian ethic, there was a Christian perspective on life and the 10 Commandments were taught to young men and women from early age and they were called upon to keep these commandments; though many of them were never saved, there was this external discipline that kept things in check. But, of course, mere external discipline will never save a culture. Thankfully, there has always been a core, a very large one, of Americans

who truly knew God. The Holy Spirit lived within them. They worshiped Jesus Christ and believed and preached his Gospel, and within that context we were a thriving people with good external order. How that is changing.

What we see today is similar to what happened in the days of Nehemiah. He said, "Nevertheless," this is the people of God, Israel, "they were disobedient and rebelled against thee and cast thy law behind their backs." Sort of like this, cast it behind their back, "What do we need this for?" "And they slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee and they wrought great provocations. Therefore thou delivered them into the hands of their enemies who vexed them." We see this today in our country. We are being vexed more and more by the enemies of God. We are losing our liberty. Persecution looms. Why? Because we have cast the word of God behind our backs. The process that we see taking place today is the paths that we are on in this once great nation, imperfect as we've always been, it was a nation that did seek to honor Christ and governed by his law.

4. Why are we studying Deuteronomy? It's because a return to God's law will bring revival and reformation. The biblical accounts of the revival of the people of God, if you've studied these carefully in the Old Testament, they included four essential things. 1. There was a rediscovery or a reaffirmation of the law of God. 2. There was repentance in response to the law expressed in prayer. 3. There was a renewal of the people to their covenant oath of obedience to God. 4. There was a reformation based on new obedience to the commands of the living God. A very profitable study is Ezra, Nehemiah and to see these four things so clearly set forth.

But I would have you consider with me the great revival and reformation under Josiah. Turn, please, to 2 Chronicles. Things had come into very evil times in Israel but God raised up a young man by the name of Josiah who became an agent of reformation, and one of the first things and desires of his heart was to restore the worship of God that had been neglected and the temple itself had fallen into disrepair and so he sent his servants and his workers into the temple to work and to clean, and while they were there they found a book, and the man who found it read from the book, and he said, "We need to show this to the king," and they brought this book to the king and they read it to him, this book of the law. And when he heard it, he tore his clothing and he cried out in agony and repented before God and he saw the fact that Israel had been under such cursing and judgment because they had turned away from the law of God. And this is recorded for us in 2 Chronicles 34:14, "And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD given by Moses." And they then read that book to the king and what happened? Verse 23, "And she answered them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell ye the man that sent you to me," that is Josiah, tell him this, "Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah: Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place. And as for

the king of Judah, who sent you to enquire of me," thus you shall say to the Lord and that because he humbled himself and repented before him, there would be a great revival.

What's important about those verses there is that it says the book that you found where the curses that were written in the book, well, there's only one book of the law where the curses are written out and specified in detail and you know what book that is, it's Deuteronomy therefore we believe that the actual book that was found was the book of Deuteronomy. In the ancient world, the Scriptures were written on scrolls, they were not written as we have them, and therefore each scroll of the law would have been a separate one, if not even two scrolls per book or something to that effect, therefore they would have been separated; they would not have been bound together as one five book library of the books of Moses. But they found a book of the law and from those words that the prophet speaks here, we know that the book that they read and they found was the book of Deuteronomy, and this led to great revival, great repentance among and thereby through the people of God.

Here's what it says, here's what happened, verse 29 in 2 Chronicles 34, "Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the LORD. And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book. And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel, and made all that were present in Israel to serve, even to serve the LORD their God. And all his days they departed not from following the LORD, the God of their fathers." You see, it was the discovery of Deuteronomy that led to repentance, renewal of the covenant, and reformation. The church needs to rediscover the book of Deuteronomy today, now. We need repentance. We need renewal. We need reformation. Let us pray that this book, the study of it, will have a similar effect in our lives as recorded here in this text. This is why we are studying the book of Deuteronomy.

Finally, before we actually begin on the verses today, a word about the title of this book. The title of this book in our English Bible is Deuteronomy. This is not the name of the book in the Hebrew Bible today which is taken from the opening words of the book, "These are the words." So the name of this book in the Hebrew Bible is, "These are the words." The name "Deuteronomy" itself which means "a second giving of the law," deuter meaning second, nomos law, second law, actually comes from a Septuagint translation of chapter 17 and verse 18 where it says, "The king shall write for himself a copy of this law." This law, the one that Moses was giving. And that's where the word "Deuteronomy" comes from in the translation into the Greek from the Hebrew.

The words of the Hebrew text seem to point to the idea of simply writing a copy of the law, however, the sense of a repetition of the law, or a second giving of the law, cannot be excluded and the sense could very well be that the king was being instructed to write this repetition of the law that Moses was giving, that is that the king should especially have in his hand Deuteronomy. Interestingly, that's how the translators of the Septuagint understood the phrase and the oldest name of the book among the Jews is, "The repetition of the law." And seen within its historical context, the name Deuteronomy is very appropriate, for it does contain a second giving of the law to Israel. The reason for this second giving, hopefully, now will become clear.

Let us now turn to the text and read it together and begin our study with the preamble given in Deuteronomy 1:1-5.

1 These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red sea, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab. 2 (There are eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadeshbarnea.) 3 And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that the LORD had given him in commandment unto them; 4 After he had slain Sihon the king of the Amorites, which dwelt in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, which dwelt at Astaroth in Edrei: 5 On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare this law, saying,

Now, from this preamble of the book, there are five things that we want to note today: the authorship of the book of Deuteronomy; the audience of Deuteronomy; the historical setting of the book of Deuteronomy; the nature and purpose of Deuteronomy; and its structure.

First of all, the authorship. Although scholars operating from the perspective and presuppositions of autonomous man, that is, that man is the measure of all things, that he is the final interpreter of all facts, these types have denied that Moses was the author of the book, but the Scriptures and those who take the Scripture as their presupposition, their starting point for all their thought, we have no doubt concerning the Mosaic authorship. And I mention this today and I want to emphasize this because nearly all liberal, unbelieving scholarship out there denies that Moses wrote the book of Deuteronomy. But what does the Scripture say? Moses is identified as the author of the book itself. Three times, for example, in our opening verses, we are told that these are the words of Moses. "These be the words which Moses spake." Also in verse 3, "that Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that the LORD had given him in commandment unto them." Verse 5, "On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare the law, saying." Then throughout the book, which I won't take the time to go to right now, Moses is clearly identified as the author, the human author of the book: in chapter 5, verse 1, you can look these up at your own leisure; chapter 29, verse 1; chapter 31, verse 1; 33:1 as well. They all speak specifically of Moses being the one who is giving this

revelation. In the narrative sections of the book, we have this I/you type dialog and Moses in the first person, I, I, I. It's not about he, he, but I. Moses is speaking. This is the one who has written this book. Throughout the Old Testament, Moses is identified as the author of the five books of the law. Whenever these books of the law are referred to, Moses is specifically identified by the word of God as the one who is the author.

In the New Testament, Moses is identified as the author of the book, the books of the law in general and of Deuteronomy in particular. Throughout the New Testament, Moses is referred to as the one who gave us the law as God's mediator and instrument. Specifically in Matthew 19:7-8, talking about the matter of divorce and remarriage, Jesus specifically refers to Deuteronomy 24:1 and he says, "That which Moses said." Christ identifies Moses as the one who was speaking and writing in Deuteronomy. Paul in Romans 10:5 specifically refers to Deuteronomy 30:12 and speaks of, "Moses said." And also in 1 Corinthians 9:9, Paul again identifies Deuteronomy 25:4 as the very words of Moses. So the inspired Scriptures of the New Testament leave no doubt. Furthermore, the people of God in the Old Testament Israel, the New Testament church, have always affirmed that Moses wrote this book. It was not until the rise of the destructive attacks on Scripture of higher criticism at the end of the 18th century that this question was even raised. It was the desire of men to undermine the authority of God's law; their antinomian spirits decided to wipe away the authority of this book and make it some creation of various editors and redactors and authors that spun these things together out of their own religious experience, but the Scripture condemns such a view.

But, of course, when we talk about Mosaic authorship, that needs to be understood in terms of the book itself. Even as we saw here, these are the words that Moses delivered according to everything God gave him to say. He was God's spokesman. He was being moved of the Holy Spirit as he spoke and as he wrote. Deuteronomy is therefore ultimately that which God gave him and these are the words of God. This is the process of inspiration finding historical manifestation through the servant of the Lord, Moses.

The audience of Deuteronomy is stated to be all Israel. Verse 1, "These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel." Verse 3, "that Moses spake unto the children of Israel." Deuteronomy is addressed to all the people of God. Please turn to chapter 29 for confirmation of this and when we speak of all the people, we mean all the people. Here's what it says, Deuteronomy 29:10-12, "Ye stand this day all of you before the LORD your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel." So here's the leadership of the nation, their captains, their elders, their officers and all the men, but it doesn't stop there. "Your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water: That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the LORD thy God, and into his oath, which the LORD thy God maketh with thee this day." Who is to be gathered? To whom is this addressed, this book of covenant renewal? It's addressed to those who are to stand in making and renewing the covenant, and all of the people of Israel were gathered: the leadership, the men, the wives and the children. All of them.

Now, the context of Deuteronomy was first delivered orally to Israel, but because it was intended for future generations to the people of God, it was also committed to writing, and the original audience of Israel needs to be taken into account as we study this book as we mentioned in our introductory thoughts, and as we seek to apply it, we do so from the perspective that is different in terms of our standing in history. However, beyond that, the scope of Deuteronomy's intended audience remains the same today: all the people of God. All the men and women in this room, young and old, elders, deacons, fathers, mothers, children, masters, servants, or employers and employees, this is for you. The intended audience of Deuteronomy is every one of us, young and old, male and female.

What's the historical setting of Deuteronomy? It's a very impressive one. It's a critically important moment in Israel's history. The place we are told in verse 1 and then also in verse 5, is "on this side Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red sea, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab." On this side Jordan in the land of Moab. In other words, the place that Israel is situated on the eastern side of the Jordan in the plains of Moab. Their position would be opposite the land of Canaan just north of the Dead Sea on the plains of Moab, opposite Jericho, but they are not yet in the land. They have not yet crossed the Jordan River. They are still, though they are at the end of their wilderness wanderings, they are poised to enter the Promised Land after a 40 year delay which is then made clear when you look at the time.

Verse 3, "And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month." Notice the precise dating. "The fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that the LORD had given him in commandment unto them." This is an historical moment, a critically important moment, but it's a moment that must be understood within the context of the history of Israel. What does it mean, the fortieth year? The dating here is being established in terms of the Exodus from Egypt which took place 40 years ago, which according to biblical chronology, would be about 1446 BC is when the Exodus took place, therefore the date of Deuteronomy is set at the near end of 1406 BC. Consider this as well to get the timeframe for the book: we are taught later on in Joshua 4:19 that Joshua led the people of Israel across the Jordan River on the tenth day of the first month of the new year or the 41st year. Did you get that? Tenth day of the first month. We are also told in Deuteronomy 34:8 that all Israel mourned the death of Moses 30 days. Therefore comparing Scripture with Scripture, we conclude that the timeframe for Deuteronomy from the beginning to the end is one month. It's the eleventh month and there are 12 months. They mourn for Moses 30 days or one whole month, and they went in on the tenth day of the first month of the next year. That means that as Moses begins to speak here, he has one month to live. These are his final words. This is a moment of critical importance. The mediator, the one who had delivered them from Egypt, is now ready to die and it has to be passed on, not only to a new leader, but a whole new generation. No wonder there's a sense of urgency in Moses's appeal to the people. He's ready to die. He must teach them in this short moment, again, the law of the covenant. He must lead them in covenant renewal. He must prepare them for his death and the succession of leadership to Joshua, and he must prepare the people to enter into the land of Canaan. These are Moses's final words to Israel. This is his farewell address.

But there's another time and element that we cannot miss and we look at that in the historical moment. It says here in verses 2 and 3, "(There are eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadeshbarnea.) And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month." Horeb here is another name for Sinai. Israel received the law and entered into covenant with God at Mount Horeb or Mount Sinai. It tells us here it's an eleven day journey from that position to Kadeshbarnea, and what was Kadeshbarnea but to be but the launching place of their invasion into the Promised Land to take hold of the promise give to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Eleven days. Here they are, not in the same location but up around in the Moab, at the same position, ready to enter the land but it didn't take them eleven days, it took them forty years. Why? Because they rebelled against God. A journey, a moment in history that should have taken them eleven days has taken them forty years. Do you see the implications of this?

This is a new generation, in other words, that Moses is addressing in Deuteronomy. The old generation that rebelled at Kadeshbarnea, all the men of war 20 years and older are dead. Now there's a new generation that has to stand and take over where their forefathers failed. They are at their own Kadeshbarnea. They are at their own moment of decision. They are there ready to enter the land but the giants are still there. What are they going to do? You can see Moses and the intensity of this moment for him. He knows not what they will do. He hopes they have been disciplined and learned and trained through forty years, but they must not fail as their forefathers did. They must not let this opportunity slip away from them because of unbelief. They stand on the verge of the promise and the response to Moses's preaching here and his call to decision will now determine their own history.

We, too, must not miss the significance of this word of God for us too. In a sense, each one of us always in life are standing on boundaries, boundaries that must be crossed, boundaries that challenge our faith, boundaries that on the other side there are giants and the moment of decision reaches us repeatedly in life. What will we do? Well, what happens is life journeys that should take us eleven days take us forty years because in those moments of decision, we say no to God. But a fear or whatever, we say no, and then we wander and wander purposeless, not getting anything accomplished, until God in his mercy brings us to our senses and repentance and he brings us again to the Jordan; he brings us again to the moment of decision. What will we do? Beloved, this study of the book of Deuteronomy is going to bring each one of us too many points of decision. We have a Jordan to cross.

What's the nature and purpose of the book of Deuteronomy? The historical setting helps us to understand that nature and purpose. We need to consider these words in verse 5, "Here Moses began to declare this law." The word "declare" here means "to make something plain or distinct; to explain it; to expound it." It comes from a verb that meant "to dig," and it had this sense therefore of digging the meaning out of a text, digging the meaning out of something. What is Moses doing? He's taking the meaning out of the law that was revealed at Sinai. He's expounding that law. This is not a new law that he is

giving, it's not a second law, it's exposition of the first law that is specifically designed for their needs. Deuteronomy therefore is not a mere repetition of the law but it's an exposition, an explanation of the law for this new generation in preparation for three things. This is the nature and purpose of Deuteronomy: it's an exposition of the law for a new generation in preparation for three things: 1. Renewal of the covenant; 2. The conquest of the Promised Land; and 3. Life in the Promised Land. He is preparing them as a people to make covenant with God, to renew the old covenant that had been broken by their forefathers. They need to go in and conquest the Promised Land. Deuteronomy teaches them how to do this, how to take possession of the land, how to conquer the enemies of God, and it's very crucial instruction for them that they must not fail. And Deuteronomy is going to teach them how to begin life in the new situation, in the Promised Land. How to live and prosper together as the people of God but also how to remain in it from generation to generation.

You see, Deuteronomy is not a collection of laws and commandments but it's an exposition of the law of God. Its setting is not the courthouse, its setting is the congregation. The tone of the book is not mere legislation but earnest preaching. J. A. Thompson says, "Even the casual reader of Deuteronomy will be impressed with the remarkable way in which in some sections particular laws are first stated in a simple form and are then followed by exhortation, warning, promise. This supplementary material was designed, it would seem, to drive home the import of each law to the conscience of the hearer. Clearly Deuteronomy is not codified law but preaching about the law of Yahweh." And so Deuteronomy is not a dry recital of commandments and ordinances, but a lively exposition of the meaning of God's law combined with a passionate plea to love the Lord your God and to keep his testimonies and commandments.

The law that he is to declare as it is stated there in verse 5, is the Torah, the law of the covenant. Torah is the revelation of God for his people. This is how he teaches them to live in covenant with him and to love and serve one another. Peter Craig says this, "This law which Moses was to expound is probably to be understood as all that the Lord had commanded, verse 3. It was this that formed the basis of the covenant relationship between the Lord and his people. It is important to stress that the content of Deuteronomy is an exposition of the law. The book does not simply contain a repetition of the earlier legal material known in Exodus and Deuteronomy to which a few new laws have been added. It is true that there is a common core of law with the earlier books, but here the law is to be explained and applied by Moses to the particular situation of the Israelites. They were about to enter the Promised Land and the law of the covenant could not lie as a dead letter. It had to be expounded and emphasized to all the Israelites, for the success of the events lying ahead of them demanded this critical point, or dependent on this critical point. Success in possessing the Promised Land lay not in military prowess and strength but in an unbroken covenant relationship with the Lord who alone could bring further victories like those over Sihon and Og."

What's the structure of Deuteronomy? Well, the most obvious structural feature of Deuteronomy is that it consists of a series of addresses or sermons that Moses delivered to Israel on the plains of Moab. We can divide the book this way: Moses's first address is

in chapter 1, verse 6 through chapter 4, and verse 43; Moses's second address begins in chapter 4, verse 44, and goes the whole way to chapter 26 and verse 19; his third address begins in chapter 27, verse 1 and goes to the end of chapter 28; his fourth address, chapter 29 and chapter 30; and then in verses 31 through 34, we have Moses's acts and words of covenant succession. So there are four basic sermons, four basic addresses in the book.

But there's another question: is there an underlying structure that guides Moses in the delivery of his addresses, in the order of their delivery and so forth? Most definitely there is. Deuteronomy is covenant language. It is a covenantal document. It reflects the circumstances under which it was given, the renewal of the covenant on the plains of Moab. It is only in that connection that Deuteronomy can be understood and its structure discerned and so it's a covenantal document yet it is structured in forms of a covenant.

Please look at the back of your outline there now. With the discovery of the international treaties or covenants of the 14th and 13th century BC mainly from the Hittite nation, the specific covenantal structure of Deuteronomy became apparent to us. Now, of course, that structure was there all along, it didn't just appear when these things were found, but what happened in the Providence of God, it enabled us to recognize something that was not as clear before because we had something now with to compare it and to see that the language was very definite, and the structure was carefully put together. As scholars studied these documents, compared them to the Mosaic covenant and the renewal of the covenant such as under Josiah, not Josiah, well yeah, Josiah but I'm thinking of Joshua right now, they were amazed to see the similarities in structure between them.

Now, these international treaties were covenants between a suzerain, that's a word for all Lord, a master, a great king who was a suzerain over vassal states and city states. These were covenants they found, the archaeologists that were digging up in the ruins and found these clay tablets that contain these covenants, they were between a Lord, a great king, that is the suzerain, and his vassal, his servants, subject nations, and they were imposed by the king on those under his authority protection. That was the nature of these. These treaties, these covenants, generally contained six basic parts. First, they had a preamble that identified the author and the Lord of the covenant and his vassal. Second, there was an historical prologue that surveyed previous relations between the two parties. Third, there was a set of stipulations, duties, both general and detailed, that established the duties of the vassal. 4. Provisions for the deposit of a copy of the covenant in the temple or the sanctuary of both the suzerain and his vassal and for the periodic public reading of the covenant. 5. There was a listing of the gods who were invoked as witnesses of the covenant in these Hittite treaties. Curses then, 6, were threatened against the vassal if he should break the covenant and blessing was promised to him if he kept it.

Now, what we see is all of these elements are found in nearly the same order in the book of Deuteronomy. We have the preamble right now that we are studying that identifies the author and the Lord of the covenant and his vassal. "These be the words the Lord spoke through Moses to Israel." Then we have the historical prologue. In chapter 1, verse 6, to 3:29, Moses's second address surveys the history of Israel and the relationships between

God and Israel. 4, in Deuteronomy, the next section of the stipulations, it begins with the basic ones, the 10 Commandments, the overview of the covenant duty, and then in chapter 12 through 26, there are detailed commandments and statutes, exactly the same pattern. In Deuteronomy, there is provision for a deposit and public regular reading of the covenant. Witnesses are called but, of course, not false gods like in these heathen covenants but heaven and earth is called as a witness to the covenant. Then there is cursings and blessings that are specifically spelled out exactly in the same type of format. We are not suggesting that the Hittites originated the concept of covenant and Moses simply borrowed from them; the concept of covenant comes from God. Covenant is an innate idea in men. Covenant is a formal binding agreement in the more serious relationships of life where oaths are taken, promises are made. This is something that God has built into men who are made in the image of God because the very relationship of the Trinitarian Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is covenantal in nature.

But in the Providence of God, the essence of this covenant structure and pattern that he had ordained and implanted into men, came to expression in the international covenants of the 13th and 14th centuries BC at the very time when the great King was going to make his covenant with his vassals, Israel. Why so? So that this would be known to Moses and the people of God. Egypt followed these same patterns. Israel didn't need to be taught the structure of covenant. They didn't need to understand cursing and blessing, it was part of the milieu of the world in which they lived and so they didn't need to teach that form. God in his Providence had it in place and so when the Sinai covenant was made and then it was renewed here, the people understood exactly what was going on.

But in terms of the overall structure of Deuteronomy, we must remember this and Eugene Merrill puts it this way, "Granting the remarkable parallels suggested thus far, it is still important to point out that Deuteronomy is more than a mere formal covenant text. For one thing, it is much longer than any extant documents of that kind. For another, it still presents itself as a farewell address by Moses, the covenant mediator. It's one that is filled with nonlegal passages such as itineraries, paraenesis and hymns and other poetic material. In other words, Deuteronomy is of a mixed and varied genre, but all this is not invalid to understanding the essential core of the combination or of the composition as being covenant in style and purpose. It is covenant expressed in narrative and exhortation, the whole thing together comprising a farewell address."

Therefore if you would look at your outline there, we have put together the outline of Deuteronomy where we bring together the idea that these are Moses making an address to the people with the covenant structure and you can see those six points brought together there: the preamble, his first address, the historical prologue, the second address as the law of the covenant, the third address to the covenant sanctions, the fourth address is the call to decision, and then he concludes with his own action words of covenant succession where the covenant is passed on to Joshua and the new generation.

In conclusion, as we think of these five points that we have just talked about today, I'm going to bring them home to us as we conclude. The authorship of this book, what does that mean to us? What it means to us is we are listening to God's prophet here declaring

the eternal unchanging truth of God to us as 2 Timothy 3:16 and 17 tells us. These are God breathed words meant for your and I benefit, instruction, blessing, encouragement, teaching, rebuke. The audience as we gather each Lord's day through this study, we too are the covenant people of God assembled to hear the exposition of God's law just like they were. We want to hear Moses's exposition of the law and we want to give our own exposition of it by the guidance of the Spirit so that we might bring it to us today, and the purpose is that we might be prepared to love God and to serve our neighbor. As we encounter Moses's teaching and application of the law of God in Deuteronomy, we need to consciously apply it to our lives. Through this farewell address of Moses, I pray as we are the audience, that God will grant us, 1. A rediscovery or reaffirmation of God's good law. There will be repentance in our hearts where need be in response of this law. There will be a renewal of you and I's covenant oath of obedience to God and his commandments. And there will be reformation in our lives based on new obedience to the word of God.

What about the setting? We need to understand our place in history just like Israel had to understand their's, and we need to apply the law of God to our historical circumstances, and those historical circumstances need to be understood from two perspectives: 1. What I'm going to call redemptive history; and 2. What I'm going to call world history. Granted, they are not the best terms. Redemptive history, I mean we live in the outworking of God's purpose in history for redemption in the new covenant era and we must understand this law within that covenantal setting; that redemptive historical framework. By world history, I mean that we need to apply the law of God to the circumstances that confront us in this particular hour in history; the ethical questions that surround us and they are complex, from the questions of war, that our country seems to be involved in policing the nations, spreading democracy. Does Deuteronomy have anything to say to that? You bet it does. What about questions of medicine, end-of-life issues, abortion, all of these kind of ethical things? What about sodomy? What about adultery? What about divorce? These things that are wreaking havoc in our country? What about education? Who should be doing that? Deuteronomy speaks with power to the time in which we live and it confronts us with the will of God. We need to be as the men of Issachar, one who understood the times in which they lived, and they knew what they should do.

4. What about the nature and purpose of Deuteronomy? How does this apply to us? Well, Deuteronomy as we have said, is an exposition of God's law, to prepare God's people to do three things: renew their covenant with God. My friends, in many ways, the generations that have come before us in the church and in our culture and society have rebelled against God and his word. We're in a wilderness situation to some degree, but now the future lies with us. We must trust God to fulfill the great commission. We must trust God to do his will that says go into all the world, preach the Gospel to every creature, baptize those who believe, and then disciple them in everything that God has commanded. We need to renew our covenant with God. We stand on a boundary line here, the future is in our hands.

We also need to be involved in conquest, not military conquest, spiritual. The enemies of God are in the ascendancy. Those who hate God and his word, atheists, evolutionists, false religionists, are on the rise and on the march throughout the world and even in our country. They fill the land and hold dominion over it. We are under the dominion of the enemies of God. False religion, heretical doctrine, darken our land. The tyranny of man's law enslaves the inhabitants. The wicked are exalted and the righteous are oppressed. We have a war to fight, a spiritual one. Deuteronomy will prepare us for that. As Paul said, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to pulling down strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." You see, Deuteronomy contains crucial instructions on how we go about this spiritual battle.

3. Even as Deuteronomy was to prepare the people to live in the land, it's to prepare you and I how to live as God's people in our land, in our day. The question made famous by Francis Schaeffer, "How shall we then live?" is answered in the book of Deuteronomy. Here's how you shall live. Deuteronomy 12:1, "These are the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do in the land, which the LORD God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth."

What about covenant structure? Our lives as a people of God are governed and ordered by covenant as well. We're the people of God by means of the gracious provision of the new covenant, the new covenant administration of the promise. The terms of that covenant must govern our lives. Deuteronomy will teach us that. But this covenant also must govern our families, our church, and our society. We too must live in terms of 1. The sovereignty of God, which is expressed in the preamble. We must live in terms of history, biblical history and the history since the closing of the Canon. We must understand history. We must live in terms of it. We must gain our inspiration from biblical history. We must learn from the failures of history. We must be inspired by the historical accounts of brave men and women. And when you live in terms of covenant, you live in terms of history because covenant determines history, blessing and cursing. We must live in terms of the stipulations of the covenant, God's covenant, his commandments. We must understand the basic overall arching covenants. We must understand the 10 Commandments and the righteousness they teach. But we must also understand the detailed laws that apply to those commitments.

4. We must live in terms of the periodic reading of the covenant of God and we must live in terms, more specifically, of the reading and the exposition of the word of God. To live in terms of covenant as the people of God is to read the words of God day in and day out, to gather together as the people of God to have that word preached, to have it be exposition of Scripture; exposition of Scripture has disappeared from many churches because they have rejected covenant and they do not live in terms of it.

5. Witnesses. I would apply it in this way: there is an accountability to our covenant. You have witnesses. I have witnesses to what I have pledged. I witnessed you take the Lord's supper today. You were telling me you were a child of God and you are a member of the

new covenant and you pledge to live your lives in full obedience to him. Now, live it. We need to hold each other accountable; to live in covenant is to hold each other accountable for our promises to God and to one another.

6. In terms of covenant structure, there is a reality to life which is inescapable and we call them cursings and blessings. They cannot be escaped by men; they cannot be escaped by anyone. And life will be defined in terms of God's blessing on our lives, his increase, his peace, his spiritual prosperity, his wisdom, or it will be defined by the lack of those and the absolute opposite of those. God will send folly into our minds as his discipline and judgment. Cursings and blessings, inescapable. If we live in terms of covenant, we will live in terms of those things.

So brothers and sisters, in this introductory message to Deuteronomy, we have looked at why we need to be studying this book: We've considered carefully the first five aspects that are given in the preamble, and now we have sought to apply that covenant structure to our lives. May God be pleased to speak to us, bring renewal, reformation, to this land, to your heart. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, thank thee for thy servant Moses whom you spoke to in the burning bush and you called and made your servant, to whom you revealed your perfect holy righteous law that you then set straight when you came to this earth by keeping it, rejecting the traditions of men, and urging, binding your disciples, to do and to teach even the least of the commandments that you gave to thy servant Moses. We understand the difference between ceremonies that you fulfilled that now we keep by faith in you, and the moral law and commandments for living that still bind us. Lord, as we gather here week to week to hear Moses's exposition of the law, guide us as we seek to study it and give our own exposition. May it be true to the intent and may the applications be faithful, the underlying theology and moral law that are contained therein. Work reformation, O God, in our lives as we rediscover your law. In Jesus' name we pray this and for his sake and for the great commission's sake, for the Gospel, for the sanctification of his people. Amen.

We'll now open up the service for interaction where we will give the men of the church an opportunity to respond if they have any questions or comments in addition to the teaching of today's sermon. Gary?

Gary: "I don't have any questions but I want to thank you for your exposition of this first part of the book of Deuteronomy. I was particularly struck by the fact that the picture of Moses here at 120 years of age giving these series of sermons as you address this, as you showed us. You know, one of the parts of that picture you didn't mention but I think you said that even at 120 years of age, his strength was not abated. He was just as strong then as he was at age 40 when he left Egypt as a young man and I just wish I could have been there to see it. But also, I thought how you mentioned that the nation of Israel would have

been familiar with the structure of the covenant and so on because of the nations around them and I believe that's a real deficiency here in America today. We don't think covenantally as a nation. We don't connect the dots, so to speak, when it comes to the blessings and the cursings. We are living in great blessings that have come down through men who made covenant with God, but then we're also seeing great cursings come upon our nation in the form of the immorality and just all the things we see in our nation's youth, the drug abuse, the promiscuousness, all those things. We're seeing those judgments being poured upon America, but we don't make that connection many times. We don't see that in the news. We saw a little bit of that, there were some people that had made that connection with Hurricane Katrina, but they were ridiculed when they sought to make that connection. So it's just a real encouragement, again, to think covenantally and to teach our children to think that way."

Amen. Thank you, Gary, and thank you for reminding us that Moses was not on his deathbed or a decrepit old man when he gave these addresses, but he was, as the text says at the end, his strength was not abated which has theological and historical import because Moses wasn't ready to die physically. Why did he die? Because he had disobeyed God in one area and therefore he was not allowed to go into the land and the time for the people to go into the land had come and therefore God said your time to die has come, even though he was not physically ready. Interesting. But he was a man filled with power and you can just see him standing there, 120 years old with probably his white hair and beard and just pouring out everything that's within them. His whole life has been invested but the last 40 years have been invested in this great work of being the mediator of this covenant, and he has seen the hardness and the disobedience of the children of Israel and he's pleading with them, calling them to obedience, that they will now go forth and take what their forefathers lost. Someone else? Mark.

Mark: "When I look to the New Testament for support of what you're about to take us into, I look at James as one of the books that I think supports us looking deeply at God's law, and antinomianism means anti-law but really, in a sense, in our society, it's replacement of God's law with man's law, and James 4:11 says, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." Then it says, "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother," now, I take that to mean judges his brother according to man's law, not God's law, and then "speaking evil of the law is speaking evil of God's law and judges say God's law but if thou judge God's law, thou art not a doer of God's law, but a judge." Then it says, "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest?" I get that partly from verse 4, it says, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" So in context, I think that verse there is talking about how society has a tendency to substitute God's law with men's imaginative laws and I'm looking forward to seeing where that is true in our lives. We are so brought up in society, it's difficult for us to see and where is our thinking more along the lines of man's law and not really true to God's law. So I think, I'm looking forward to seeing where we need to be corrected."

Excellent, Mark. Excellent passage. Excellent application. The idea that we you sit in judgment according to our own law of God's law, it's an evil thing to do but that's what we do all the time. We look at the laws of God and we say, "Well, I don't like that. That seems harsh or that seems lenient," or however we apply it, and yet who are we to sit in judgment on the law of God? It needs to sit in judgment on us and transform us, and we can't have a pick and choose approach to, "I like that commandment but I don't like that one." That's being an evil judge of the law. Thank you, Mark. Chris?

Chris: "Yeah, just a comment about the suzerain vassal treaty form. I appreciate the approach you took there on that. Many times folk either want to look at the documentation archaeology has uncovered in the ancient near East and say, "Well, look here, Moses just copied this," and not see any of the providential, you know, hand of God in inspiration. Or they want to take the other side, unbalanced approach and say, "Well, we're not going to look at any of that evidence. We're just going to think that the Scripture kind of fell from the sky." But I think that you took a very balanced approach in that, a very good approach in saying well, yeah, we do see the covenant form here, but it is within man, the image of God in man, and that this is something that God has come up with. So I want to thank you for that and I'm eager, then, to continue on here. Thank you for your introductory sermon today."

Thank you, brother. Amen. God is in control. His Providence has brought to pass these things and you've hit it well that there are two extremes, you know, well, this is just a human concept that Moses borrowed, totally naturalistic approach to the Old Testament, the evolution of religion and that kind of stuff where there is no God or he is not active in the world, to the other side where we do not interact with the facts. These documents are there and this is the way they were structured. But if we interpret them from the presupposition that all knowledge, true knowledge, comes from God and his revealed word, we can begin to put these things together in a very satisfying way. Thank you.

Okay, we'll conclude now with that. Thank you, men, for those comments, insights and additions to the sermon.