

## Deuteronomy Lesson 60

If you look at the handout you'll see that we're on the third exposition. We finished up the long, long second exposition. Tonight we'll start the third one. This one is a complete change of tone in the text. We're into a different emphasis and a different structure than we have been so far.

Let's open with a word of prayer.

(Opening prayer)

Tonight if you'll follow the handout, you'll see that the outline is massively condensed from what we've had with these big, long subsections in all of the second exposition. In that box the you'll see where it says the whole point of those chapters with all the case law was to show a proper response to Yahweh or Jehovah with the heart and with the nephesh, with the soul. I think we've belabored that point for a year so this won't take any length of time like that did.

We're coming to a new section. We want to look at the map to get sort of oriented here. Israel at this time is over in Moab. Moses remember is not allowed to enter the land because of God's discipline in his life over the incident of hitting the rock which to us that seems kind of trivial; but yet for God it wasn't. That became a good and powerful point in Moses' leadership over the nation because he said God enforces His law.

"He enforces His laws and He enforces it on me; and I'm your leader."

These folks are all here. It's the second generation. The first generation has died off. They're on the east side of the Dead Sea. They will shortly come over here and open a front, a military front, and conquest through Jericho. The strategy that Joshua is going to use he's going to divide the nation (the Canaanites here) by a pronged attack through Jericho into the highlands here just north of Jerusalem. In that area - once again, then he'll run a southern campaign and take out some of the Canaanites in here; then they'll run north. It's hard to read this on the projector for some reason the color isn't coming out right but there are two are two mountains here in a place called Shechem. That's the center of this particular chapter. Moses is preparing them so that after they conquer here and they start controlling this land - Moses assumes (and that's the assumption behind this text) that Joshua and the army of Israel will control this terrain. The terrain includes this place called Shechem with two mountains, Ebal and Gerizim. The significance of that location because again we're in the Old Testament - it's location because these people are looking at history as something real that occurred in space time.

So Shechem is a place where Abraham went. That's the connection here. Once they get over into the land they conquered, they start enjoying some of God's blessings on the nation real estate wise. They have to go back in their own history to the place where Abraham had his first altar, which is in that area. That is the significance. This is the only place because remember he's talking to the nation here. Moses will never cross the Jordan. So he is stuck over here. The people are over here right now. The only mention of a specific location - I mean Jerusalem isn't

mentioned. Jericho isn't mentioned. None of those place names occur except this place name.

So when that happens and you read the text, you begin to say, "Wait a minute. Why is this particular place in there?"

That's a good observation of the text. Then you begin to see why. It's going to be obvious when we go through this.

If you'll look at the outline on your sheet briefly catch up to where we are under the review of the structure of the book. The first 5 verses of this book going way, way back a year and a half, two years when we started this thing that was a description of the historic situation. I want to review this because the ideas in book of Deuteronomy include every major idea of the Bible except the incarnation and the New Testament truth. These are fundamentally different than our culture - fundamentally different than our culture.

So since most of us have been raised in a secular education, when we've been taught history in the past we have been taught an unbelieving view of history. So when you come to the text of the Word of God, you have to start purging your mind of some of these false ideas about history. That's why in this section I am just reviewing those three points.

God's revelation is historic show-and-tell. The reason I use show-and-tell is because I want to point to the fact that God works in history (Exodus and so forth, Mt. Sinai); but He also tells what He is doing. If you think about it, He needs both of these. If He only talks and never walks and never performs; that's kind of useless. On the other hand if God providentially worked in history but He never gave us a clue on what He was doing, that wouldn't work either. So the biblical view of revelation is show-and-tell. You've got to have both; and they mesh together. So God's revelation show-and-tell that engages the reason - that's the reasoning power of man so we can think this thing through. God doesn't leave us up in the air - that engages the reason and sensory experience - sensory experience. That is we see; we hear.

As the John the Apostle of 1 John says, "We heard; we saw with our eyes; we gazed upon; and we touched Him."

All the senses were involved. This is a full orb experience. It is not - and here is the contrast. When you go to the Word of God always remember you need to see the truth of the Bible over against the culture. There's always a tension point. It's not pagan irrational mysticism. Paganism has always gravitated to the mystical - India, the Hindus, and Buddhist monks. You see it in our New Age people. New Age people, the hippy group that grew up in the '60's that now run the country, have a real problem in thinking through consistently. It's how they feel. It's what grabs them this moment. But what grabs them on Tuesday may not be what grabs them on Friday. So you have this turmoil in our society because we're not thinking rationally. But that's typical. It's not like it just happened to us.

So it's not pagan irrational mysticism nor is it abstract ideals. This was the ideal of the Greek that we just think of ideals up here in the abstract world. God's revelation is show-and-tell. It's here and now.

The second point is God's omniscience - remember that's the attribute God knows all things - God's omniscience is revealed in the coherence of His verbal revelation throughout the centuries. So because we have consistency from century to century to century that shows us that God thinks reasonably and rationally. Now what that does is that supplies me, and you, with the assurance that existence has reasons behind it. .

NKJ Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good...

We need that confidence. With all the chaos that's going on today we have to be able to sit down, take a deep breath, and renew our confidence that there is a plan. History is moving toward its climax. There are reasons why things happen. We don't necessarily know all the reasons; but it's comforting to know that somebody here is in charge of this mess. If we didn't have that - this drives people crazy - not to have that inner assurance that we have ultimately a plan behind this thing. So that's the point.

It is not a meaningless jumble as both ancient pagans and modern counterparts speaking super scientific vocabulary asserting there is no ultimate rationality to existence. After all in the evolutionary Darwinian worldview if everything evolved from pond scum, there's no meaning in it.

If you read the thinkers that are really honest and lay their hand out on the table, they tell you it's meaningless. Dr. Gould at Yale University, the great paleontologist, he openly confessed it in his classroom at Yale.

He said, "We are a product, a chance product, of a meaningless universe."

Then we wonder why the second leading cause of young people's death is suicide. Like I said before, that's because they're learning their lessons. I mean if you really believe that you're evolved pond scum and there really is no ultimate purpose - when you have a problem in life why not just give up and kill yourself. It makes sense if that's the worldview you are enmeshed in.

Finally the third one - God's faithful integrity (His love, His immutability, His holiness, His power, His omnipotence) is revealed in His record of compliance to His contractual promises.

That's what's so important about the Old Testament.

People wonder.

"Gosh, I don't know why all this real estate stuff and genealogies and all these little stories."

It's not a cure for insomnia. All of those details are put into the text as a record that God is consistent. When He says He's going to do something, it may take a couple of centuries; but it will be done. We

need that assurance. That's why God's faithful integrity revealed in His compliance to contractual promises supplies me, and you, with confidence that He is able to be my Father.

NKJ Ephesians 3:20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think...

I want to again you've seen these slides again and again but repetition breeds familiarity. Hopefully you'll remember these things.

I keep reiterating this over and over and over. There are two characteristics that mark off biblical Israel from every nation in history. You need to know these things because your secular history courses totally ignore this.

These are serious. If these two things really are true, these two things should control every history course you have.

1. The first one is that as Albright John Hopkins said, "Israel is the only nation - the only nation - that ever had a contract with God." Now that ought to stand out. Have any of you taken a history course where that was pointed out to you? I haven't. We don't learn that. But, that's what the biblical claim is. Israel is the only nation that has a contractual agreement with God.

2. Then we learned (number 2 slide) Dr. Kaufman, Jewish authority, points out, "The other unique thing that follows from the first thing is that if Israel is locked into the contractual agreement with God, then it follows that there's going to be a record of the compliance to that contract or a breaking of that contract.

That's what contracts are for - mortgage contracts, business contracts. Once you enter into a contract then there's a record has to be kept of whether the contract is being kept or it's being broken. So what Kaufman points out what makes the history of Israelite prophecy so generous is the succession of the apostles of God that come to the people through the ages. Such a line of apostle-prophets is unknown outside of Israel.

These two things should grab us when we think about history and yet no history course ever touches this. When you think about what he's saying there (Such a line of prophet-apostles is unknown in paganism) think about for example of Buddhism. How many prophets are in Buddhism? One. How many prophets started Mormonism? One. Jehovah's Witnesses, one. Every cult, every other religion - Zorastionism, Confucianism. Isn't that striking? They all started with one person; but there wasn't a follow on over the centuries of prophets. Yet that is what the Bible is - two-thirds of the Bible spanning 14 centuries of time with this.

I just want to remind us of the fact that this is a feature that we need as believers in Jesus to have fortified in our souls that we can go out here and we look at the history of the United States. We look at the history of Europe. We look at the history of Asia. Whatever, wherever we're traveling and going, none of it is ever going to have these characteristics. That ought to make us thankful that we know from the Scriptures something about the root structure in history.

So then we have in the first section 1:6 to 4:40 the first exposition of the Torah. It goes through the little history of their Exodus. It goes into the history of the 40 years wandering. Why does Moses in the first exposition bother narrating this history? Because the history is a history of God's being super gracious to these folks. It's a motivation. Moses is giving them their history for motivational purposes.

The other point that we need to remember about history is if you lose your sense of your personal history - think for example of Alzheimer's patients, just as an individual. What happens to people who are in deep senility and Alzheimer's? They kind of lose who they are. Why do they have an identity crisis? Because they've lost their memory. Memory is crucial to identity.

And, that goes for nations. When a nation loses its sense of history, it also loses its identity. That's why liberals have tried so desperately to rewrite American history to leave out the Christian influence at the beginning of our nation. If they can change in the public education system they can project a false sense of American history they've got them because now the kids have two false histories. They have a false natural history that tells them they are pond scum evolved. So now we've erased God. We've erased the image of God in man that makes man valuable. We've erased ultimate responsibility before God. So all that's been erased by a false natural history.

Then we start rewriting American history so we get rid of the Christian influence. We're not saying all the Founding Fathers were Christians. But in their day Christianity played a powerful role in how they wrote the Constitution and how they governed.

After all you know the British intelligence under King George III, the reports of the British intelligence system was that the American Revolution was a Presbyterian Revolt. That was their code word. Now why do you think that military intelligence of King George called the American army a Presbyterian Revolt? Because it was the role of the pastors. It wasn't just Presbyterians. Another British term for the American Revolution was "Get the men in the black regiment." And they did. When the British army went into New York the prisoners they tortured most were captured pastors. The reason was the pastors were the people who gathered the community around and were often the commanders of the combat units. This is something you don't read about. It was the pastors.

When Paul Revere rode out to Concord, you know where he was going for. He was going to the church in Concord because the church in Concord was the militia.

The whole point here in American history is being erased for a purpose - destroy your identity. Now the people can be manipulated because they don't know who they are. .

So now we come to chapter 27 and here is the transition. I want you to see the two bookends of this chapter.

Chapter 27 verses 1 and 2. Now I'll show you 29:1. That brackets this section of Scripture.

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:1 Now Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying: "Keep all the commandments which I command you today.

2 "And it shall be, on the day when you cross over the Jordan to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, that you shall set up for yourselves large stones, and whitewash them with lime.

We'll study about what he's going to do. So he's looking forward to that penetration, that military penetration, into the land, the conquest of the land and then they have to do something.

If you turn all the way to 29:1, it appears that 29:1 is really the end of chapter 28.

NKJ Deuteronomy 29:1 These are the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb.

So there are two contracts here. There is the Mt. Sinai contract and then there is this one. Actually what's happening here is it's not a double contract. What's happening is that first contract was made to the first generation. When happened to the first generation? They died. They died in discipline. So the second generation, the guys here east of Jordan, when they go into the land they are going to rejoin God in the contractual agreement. This is called a covenant renewal ceremony.

What we're studying now in chapters 27 and 28 will be a liturgy for the protocols that were involved in reestablishing the covenant formally with the nation. Every man, woman and child had to be part of this covenant renewal. So it's kind of a study in and of itself of what joining a contract looked like in those days.

We aren't going to get into chapter 28 today with the blessings and cursings but we will have a lot of cursing in chapter 27 so we want to get into this and look at it.

Roman 2 in your outline, the official ceremony of contractual renewal at Shechem will be executed in Joshua 8. That's the passage where it actually happens. What we are reading now is preparation for it before it happens.

You'll see item A, site preparation.

Moses says, "I want you to renew this contract at a certain location and here's the site preparation. Before you do this I want you to do some fieldwork here."

So the first 8 verses of 27 give us the things that he wants them to do.

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:2 "And it shall be, on the day when you cross over the Jordan to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, that you shall set up for yourselves large stones, and whitewash them with lime.

Now this is an Egyptian custom. Moses got this because was trained and educated in Egypt. We know archeologically what they did. When they

wanted to make a poster board they didn't have boards like we do. They had stones they coated with white stuff like lime and then they'd write on it in black. What's stunning about this particular poster board it appears the best we know from looking at the language (and commentators have studied this), is that they wrote every single word of this book on those stones. Can you imagine how big this was? Think about the details of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. All that was on the stones. In other words there wasn't any fine print like you get from the bank and credit card. This was all big font stuff that they had to prepare at this site of the covenant. That shows you something about Scripture and about the Bible - something again that pits the Bible against the culture.

In the pagan worldview, whether it's the Greeks or the Romans or going back to the Canaanites, going to Babylon; what's intriguing is when you ask about the educational system - it's always for the priests only, only for the elite. The Bible insists on universal education. The idea of putting those stones up there with all the writing of the law so everybody would know it because faith in the Lord was for every man, woman and child. It's not just for the elite priests. It's not just for the Levites; it's for everyone. That's an emphasis in Scripture. The reason why? Because everyone is made in God's image. Jesus Christ died for everyone - the world. The relationship with God should not be restricted to just the elite.

This has had consequences down through the years. This idea of educating everybody in a society did not come from the Greeks and the Romans. That idea came out of the Word of God.

I would suggest that as Christianity weakens (Biblical influence weakens, declines) in our country we are going to see giving up universal education. That would usually be a forecast of repaganization of a social entity.

So here we have these gigantic white stones.

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:3 "You shall write on them all the words of this law,  
See verse 3.

"You shall write on them all the words of this law,

So He's not just giving them paragraph titles. He wants all the instructions there.

when you have crossed over, that you may enter the land which the LORD your God is giving you, 'a land flowing with milk and honey,

Then he adds at the end of verse 3 the zinger.

just as the LORD God of your fathers promised you.

Remember what I said? It's show-and-tell.

So He says, "I want you to go back to Shechem. I want you to write this on here and I want you in the middle of enjoying what God has given you, I

want you to remember this isn't an accident. This didn't happen because you've got a great army."

This happened because God works providentially and powerfully and sovereignly in history to bring about what He has promised.

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:4 "Therefore it shall be, when you have crossed over the Jordan, that on Mount Ebal you shall set up these stones, which I command you today, and you shall whitewash them with lime.

Now again Ebal - there are two mountains here, north and south. Ebal is on the north side. That's the mount of cursing. Gerizim is on the south side; that's the mount of blessing. In chapter 28 we're going to get the cursings and the blessings. There is going to be a service here. There are 3 parts of this service. Think of a triangle. There is the mount of cursing (Ebal) with guys facing that. There is going to be Gerizim (the mount of blessing) with people facing that. Then there are the Levites in the middle. A passage in Joshua tells about it.

I was there back in 1973 and I took this picture. We are standing on Mt. Gerizim there. Keep in mind those of you who are used to mountains, these are hills in our lingo. But here is Gerizim. Now notice something interesting about the terrain. There is Mt. Ebal. Here is Gerizim. See the town down here. That's on the site of biblical Shechem.

Do you know what else happened there? That's where Jacob's well was. That's where John 4 happened when Jesus said the everlasting water. So lots of things over biblical history happened in this place and not just by happen stance. God seems to have favorite places where He pulls off His stuff. So there's Mt. Ebal.

By the way, which of the mountains are the stones on? This shows you something theologically. The billboard isn't on the mount of blessing. The billboard is on the mount of cursing. You'll see this comes up and as we conclude tonight you'll see how this tips us off to all the Pauline theology of the New Testament because Paul knew this stuff well.

Mt. Ebal, the mount of cursing, you will set these stones. You'll whitewash them with lime.

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:5 "And there you shall build an altar to the LORD your God, an altar of stones

Notice what's happening here on this altar.

you shall not use an iron tool on them.

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:6 "You shall build with whole stones the altar of the LORD your God, and offer burnt offerings

In your notes I have given you a parallel passage Exodus 20:25.

It seems like when God gave the rule of building altars He consistently said, "I don't want you cutting the stone."



Can any of you think what is going on with that restriction? Why do you think in God's mind when you make an altar you use the natural stones? You don't want to cut them make it like it's a building. Yes, the cornerstone would enter into it. Why do you think He doesn't want tools? Idolatry and works. He wants the altar the way He has created things. He doesn't want our work. Our work is non meritorious. So the altars are made with ordinary stones.

"Don't take your iron tool because if you use your tools on it; then human merit enters into this altar."

People tend to..."Oh gee! That's so beautiful - an altar that we made."

God isn't interested at the point of the altar in what we've done. He wants to meet us on His terms.

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:6 "You shall build with whole stones the altar of the LORD your God, and offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God.

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:7 "You shall offer peace offerings, and shall eat there, and rejoice before the LORD your God.

There's another thing. In Jewish worship, in the Old Testament, joy was to be part of it. Remember when we went through tithing the second time? I mean people took 10% of their annual salary and they blew it on a Yahweh party in Jerusalem. Can you imagine how much money went into this Yahweh party that's mentioned in Deuteronomy? The people had a great time. So it was a time of trust because now you have reduced your income 10% so now you have to trust in the Lord to provide for you.

He also says, "I want you to have a good time. I want you to enjoy it. Have a blast."

That's something interesting about the God of the Bible versus the pagan deities. Pagan deities weren't interested in us having a good time.

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:8 "And you shall write very plainly on the stones all the words of this law."

Now why do you suppose in verse 8 there's an adverb - you will write plainly this? Why is that important? This is the Word of God.

He says, "I want it plain so it can be understood."

There's an effort here. To me this is important because in your outline - put emphasis on Word of God is understanding the minds of all the people paganism having no verbal revelation relies on mysticism.

In pagan religion it's how you feel that counts. It's, you know, contemplate your naval. It's how you feel. We're not saying emotions are bad; but emotions are not your authority. It's how you think truth. The emotions respond to truth; but emotions aren't truth themselves. Put emotion first and you have no truth. You have ups and downs. It's

instability. Everyone is going crazy. It's how they feel. How I feel on Wednesday is not how I'm going to feel on Saturday. You're the same way. You have emotions - ups and downs. You cannot afford to build your life on how you feel. It has to be the Word of God. So He wants it written plainly - not mysticism.

Then the second blank here, paganism having no transcendent God, that is the creator creature distinction, elevates human authorities an elite that has access to secrets is no concept of universal education. Plainly, everybody is to know this. This isn't for some specialized group of people.

Now verses 9 to 26. Now we have Moses telling them the how-tos and the specific curses. This sounds at first glance to be very depressing. It is very solemn, this passage. When you get done it's very sobering because believe it or not, this passage sets up the theology of the gospel of grace. You have to through the somberness and the almost depressing features of this curse.

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:9 Then Moses and the priests, the Levites, spoke to all Israel, saying, "Take heed

It's funny. As I point out in the notes under B in 27:9 - it says, "Take heed."

Literally in the Hebrew it says, "Shut up and listen." It's quite a blunt expression.

The idea that he's telling people to quiet down means that today he would probably tell us, "Stop texting. Turn off the cell phones."

When he is saying that obviously what he is saying is that you really want to pay attention to this. The reason that this becomes so focused is that this is the official coming back into a covenant relationship with Yahweh for the second generation.

This would be analogous to what Mike was teaching on Sunday in Romans 12:1. This is the coming back, the dedicating themselves to God. This is different than Romans 12:1 in the sense that this is pure legalism. It's contractual. It's scary when you see what is going on here.

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:9 Then Moses and the priests, the Levites, spoke to all Israel, saying, "Take heed and listen, O Israel:

This is an eminent thing that's going to happen.

This day you have become the people of the LORD your God.

This is the second generation now.

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:10 "Therefore you shall obey the voice of the LORD your God, and observe His commandments and His statutes which I command you today."

In your notes I point out something interesting. If you take a look and take apart verse 12, look at the front end of verse 12.

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:10 "Therefore you shall obey the voice of the LORD your God,

There you will obey the voice of who? Moses or God? It's God, right - in that first clause.

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:10 "Therefore you shall obey the voice of the LORD your God, and observe His commandments and His statutes which I command you today."

There is the Doctrine of Inspiration of Scripture. It is so important. Religious professors and liberals don't have a sense of this. They really don't grasp this. This is saying that the words that Yahweh speaks; Moses speaks. There is a one-to-one correspondence between God's words and the man Moses. In the liberal way of thinking that permeates most religious circles and all religious classrooms outside of some evangelical colleges, is that men's words come from here. It's just men. In other words Moses just thinks this up. These are Moses words.

"But you know. Moses lived 2000 years ago or something, 2500 years ago, 3500 years ago. So therefore you know things have evolved since that day so you know we can't be pinned down to what Moses thought."

That's how they get around and do higher criticism of the Bible. The problem is it starts out with their starting point. They're starting with the idea that God never reveals Himself. That's the whole point. You're begging the question. There is a logical fallacy here. To say that these words are no longer authoritative is to say that you're saying that God never revealed Himself. But that's the question at standpoint. You can't answer the question by begging the question. That's the question. Has God spoken? If the Bible is correct, God has revealed Himself to His prophets such that what the prophets write - whether it's Paul, Peter, John or whatever in the New Testament or Moses or Isaiah in the Old Testament - when you read the text you are reading the same thing as though God spoke it.

It's a high view of inspiration and you really want to be careful about this because you'll hear biblical critics say, "Oh well. That was written back then. Those people weren't contemporary. They didn't know the things we know."

They use that to demean the contentual authority of Scripture. They are implicitly denying the God reveals Himself or that God can reveal Himself. That gets back to some 20th century views of language.

In your notes under the liturgy of invoking contract enforcement before 27:9 is a blank there. I want to cover those two points. The contractual relationship is going to be blessings and cursings based on choices. As we said another title for this might be Choice and Consequence.

Now the Jewish biblical way of looking at life is that there is rationality out there. In fact when Israel went into captivity in 586 (You've heard me say this before.) there were six revolutionary changes in

world religions within 100 years of the exile. I've never heard a history course explain this. Why do you go centuries after centuries of time in history and no new religion pops up? Then here in 586 B. C. you've got Buddhism; you've got a revision of Hinduism; you've got Zoroastrianism; you've got Confucius; you've got Taoism. All those "isms" started within a hundred years of 586. And, all of them had the same characteristic - the idea that we could do away with the elite priesthods and think for ourselves. Now they screwed up but the idea that we suddenly had the confidence that we can think for ourselves.

Now I say that that was spread across the world because the Jews were ejected from Israel and we know Jewish businessmen are all over the place. I think that's a Jewish influence on world history.

The other stunning thing that happened within a 100 years of 586 that no one has ever explained is why did all of a sudden the Greeks think of philosophy. The presupposition of philosophy is that the universe is thinkable. You can think their way through this. Nobody ever explains - how did this happen? You go all these centuries. Nobody thought philosophically then boom all of a sudden after 586 people are seriously thinking this through.

So that's my point there. Rationality, predictable and understandable patterns in our existence were modeled by centuries of Jewish life. Pagans didn't have a clue. They had no model for this; but the Jews did. The difference though and the clinker that separates this biblical view of reason from the pagan view (and screwed up derivatives) is the cause-effect in the Bible was primarily ethical. The driver behind the cause-effect was my choices.

My obedience or disobedience to God yielded predictable things out there. So I have predictability, rational predictability. But what's dangerous here is I've got a third rail charged and the third rail is my responsibility before God. I can start a chain of circumstances with my choice that I might not want. It's sobering to think about that. Young people don't think about that. The choices you make will haunt you for years so make sure that they're good choices.

Now we have voices in verses 10 - the voice of God, the voice of Moses and their words. Now in verse 11 to 13 here is what he tells them what to do.

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:12 "These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when you have crossed over the Jordan: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin;

He lists certain of the tribes. They have to be on the left. If you faced - if you're in this town, if you're down here; this is Gerizim. So you have these tribes lining up and they're going to face Gerizim.

Then he says:

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:13 "and these shall stand on Mount Ebal to curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

I ask myself, "What is the difference in these guys?"

It turns out that Gerizim are all true sons of the patriarch Jacob. The guys that are on Ebal (the mount of cursing) - he first guy, Reuben; he's the first-born. He's a legitimate child; but he was involved in incest. Then you have the next guys. They're all sons of Jacob by handmaids, not by his wives, except for the last guy which I can't explain. That's Zebulun.

Then it says - now to get the picture of this if you'll hold the place and turn to Joshua 8. This is where it actually happens, Joshua 8:33. This gives you an idea. With this photograph in mind, read verse 33 of chapter 8 of Joshua and then put yourself in this picture.

NKJ Joshua 8:33 Then all Israel, with their elders and officers and judges, stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, the stranger as well as he who was born among them. Half of them were in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, ...

So that's why I say I think what happened was they were down here with the ark. Then these guys were on the mountain, but on the base of it - facing it.

Now we have the cursings. Here's where we get into a setup for New Testament theology and Paul.

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:14 " And the Levites shall speak with a loud voice and say to all the men of Israel:

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:15 'Cursed is the one who makes a carved or molded image, an abomination to the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret.' And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen!'

Now you've got to the slide we've shown over and over again based on the Ten Commandments, the structure of a society. Down here you have the heart allegiance, integrity of communication, labor and property, marriage and family and then life. It has to be building blocks in that order. You can't have business if you don't have integrity. If you're going to cook the books; you can't have business. You can't have viable marriage and family without money. That's why you need business and you need to support homes with finances. So you see this structure built into the Ten Commandments.

The point I am making tonight is that if you ask yourself every one of these curses that you look at have a particular common characteristic. All of them are sins that can be done out of public sight which means that none of these sins can be enforced by civil authority, which means that it's up to the heart allegiance of the people. So the contract that God has with the people depends on heart allegiance. It doesn't depend and can't depend on the government coming by and enforcing these because they're not enforceable. These are all private sins.

So that's why in the first one make it with the hands of the craftsmen and they set it up in secret. So here you have the first commandment problem.

They can do it in the backyard of their house or in the bedroom or the living room of the house. No one is ever going to see it. They just have it there. It's private. It's low profile sin; but God doesn't consider it low profile because He's talking about what it means. He sees it in His omniscience. Whether the civil government sees it or not is irrelevant.

Then it says - look at verse 16. Oh, then notice what happens after each curse.

And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

Do you know what they're doing here? They're cursing themselves. Every time you see an "amen" in these cursings, these people are agreeing.

We would say it in our contemporary English language, "I'll be damned."

It's what we call a self-malediction where you curse yourself for doing these things. Every one of these "amens" is self-malediction.

Then...

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:16 'Cursed is the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt.'

Now when we went through (and I put this in your notes), Deuteronomy 16:18-18:22, remember that section? It dealt with the 5th commandment - honor your father and mother, etc. I pointed out when Moses gave us the implications of the 5th commandment he wasn't just talking about honoring your father and your mother. He was taking that one step further. He said if society where children do not honor their father and their mother will never learn the concept of authority. That's the section where he deals with how to set up priests, judges and prophets, and kings. In other words all the authority figures in a society require a society that honors authority.

The next question is, where does a society learn authority? By respect to mom and dad. That is the fundamental engine. If that lesson is not learned, you can forget the rest of it because you'd have to have a police state to enforce rebels. So that again, these are secret sins that can be done. The police can't do anything about these sins.

Seventeen is another example.

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:17 'Cursed is the one who moves his neighbor's landmark.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

We went into that remember back in Deuteronomy. We had it in Deuteronomy 19:14. The idea there was landmarks were survey points for somebody's property. The property was God's given inheritance to these families. The problem is you could go out there at night and move the markers. That's theft. What you're doing is you're disinherit your neighbor - property God gave your neighbor. This is another idea of confiscation of private property. Socialism is great at removing landmarks.

Death taxes which were started by Karl Marx because he wanted to destroy the families - not that inheritances taxes are going to raise big revenues. Inheritances taxes are there to punish successful families.

So you have the idea of moving landmarks. It's a secret sin.

Then the people bring themselves into the curse when they say, "Amen."

Look at verse 18, another secret sin that the police would never catch.

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:18 'Cursed is the one who makes the blind to wander off the road.'

Some commentators have pointed out that this verse would also include misleading anybody, misleading a child, an innocent child that doesn't know any better - deceiving people. This is taking advantage of people's weaknesses. And people enter into the curse.

And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

Then in 19...

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:19 'Cursed is the one who perverts the justice due the stranger, the fatherless, and widow.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

We've seen that in the content of the law. What characterizes the stranger? That was a gere. That was a person who was an alien who came to live inside Israel as a Gentile because he worshiped Yahweh. But, he had no inheritance. He had no land title. And, the widow didn't. She was dependent on her brother or some other person in her family to support her. And the orphan surely didn't. These three are vulnerable people. They can't be taken advantage of. God is very angry about this when these kinds of people are taken advantage of. It can be done in secret. It can be sneaky sin.

What God is saying is, "I see it even if the police don't see it."

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:20 'Cursed is the one who lies with his father's wife,

Now we have a bunch of sexual sins in here.

because he has uncovered his father's bed.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:21 'Cursed is the one who lies with any kind of animal.'

Bestiality.

And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:22 'Cursed is the one who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:23 'Cursed is the one who lies with his mother-in-law.'  
And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

Isn't it interesting? We have 4 sexual sins here all of which are private. All of which could be pulled off without any - people who do this aren't in the public square. It's done in the bedroom. So what is this all about? I have included in your handout because I wanted you to see this. This is a commentary written by Dennis Pragert. Dennis Pragert is a conservative Jewish writer and he writes some excellent stuff. I thought this is a beautiful commentary from a Jewish man who knows his Jewish history. In the light of what's going on in our culture, follow me as I read this.

When Judaism demanded that all sexual activity be channeled into marriage, it changed the world. It is not overstating to say that the Torah's prohibition of non-marital sex made the creation of Western civilization possible. Societies that did not place boundaries around sexuality were stymied in their development. The subsequent dominance of the Western World can largely be attributed to the sexual revolution initiated by Judaism and later carried forward by Christianity. The revolution consisted of forcing the sexual genie into the marital bottle. It ensured that sex no longer dominated society, heightened male-female love and sexuality, and began the arduous task of elevating the status of women.

Who do you think is always hurt by a sexually promiscuous society?

By contrast through the ancient world,

This is really the most important part of this. This is really why I put this in here because we are not progressing. We are regressing backwards to what Western culture looked like when it left Rome. This is what society looked like before Christianity influenced Rome. We're going backwards to that moral state.

When you hear, "We are advancing in our gender neutral this and that," and all the rest of it you hear.

The polite way (and the curious way) of responding is not get mad. You should really pity it. You don't get mad. That's what the other side wants you to do is get mad.

Go back and smile and say, "Yes. That's what pagan societies always do."

See if that provokes some thought in that conversation.

Watch this paragraph.

By contrast through the ancient world and up to the recent past in many parts of the world, sexuality infused virtually all of society. Human sexuality especially male sexuality is utterly wild. Men have had sex with women, with men, little girls and young boys, with a single partner and in large groups, with total strangers and immediate family members and with a variety of domesticated animals. There is little animate and inanimate that has not excited some man sexually. The revolutionary nature



of Judaism's prohibiting all forms of non-marital sex was nowhere more radical, more challenging than the prevailing presumptions of mankind than that with regard to homosexuality. Indeed, Judaism may be said to have invented the notion of homosexuality. In the ancient world...

Very important point here that Pragert is making.

...sexuality was not divided between homosexuality and heterosexuality. That division was the Bible's doing. Before the Bible, the world divided sexuality between penetrator (active partner) and the penetrated (the passive partner.) To appreciate the extent of the revolution brought by Judaism's prohibiting homosexuality and demanding that all sexual interaction be between male and female, it is first necessary to appreciate just how universally accepted valued and practiced homosexuality has been throughout the world.

See it's new to us because it's coming back into a civilization that had been Christianized.

The one continuous exception was Jewish civilization and a thousand of years later Christian civilization. None of the archaic civilizations

That is talking about ancient times - Babylon, Assyria, Egypt. That would include Greece and Rome by the way.

In the ancient world none of the archaic civilization prohibited homosexuality per say, notes Dr. David Greenberg.

Judaism alone declared homosexuality wrong and it said so in the powerful and unambiguous language it could.

NKJ Leviticus 20:13 'If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination.

I don't think you could say it more clearly. The most important thing to think about this is homosexuality is normal for a pagan society. So when you see it arise, it's just a sign that we're going pagan.

It's not to demean the individuals who are wrapped up in homosexuality. Christ died for them too. All have sinned and we have sins too. So we can't be pie in the sky and self-righteous here. But we can point to a historical fact. The fact is that homosexuality is the normal expression of sexuality in an unregulated, unbiblical society. So it is now bubbling up to the surface because the biblical restraints are gone. We should predict that.

Let's conclude then. Here are some of the type verses.

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:24 'Cursed is the one who attacks his neighbor secretly.'

See the emphasis. All this is secret stuff, private stuff.

And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:25 'Cursed is the one who takes a bribe to slay an innocent person.'

Secret stuff.

And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

Now the clinker verse... Paul picks this verse in Galatians 3.

NKJ Deuteronomy 27:26 'Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

Let's conclude by turning to Galatians 3 and you'll see the use that Paul made for this particular verse.

NKJ Galatians 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

NKJ Galatians 3:11 But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith."

NKJ Galatians 3:12 Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them."

That's where Paul gets his theology that drives him to look to Jesus and grace to be saved.

He says, "Look if you live under that covenant, the Old Testament, you'd be cursed because everybody has sinned. Everybody is cursed. The only way the Old Testament saint had of living out his life was that he trusted in those sacrifices - that those sacrifices somehow would cleanse him for a while. But even then it was temporary cleansing. He had to look forward to somehow someday Yahweh will save us.

"Right now I need cleansing because when I see the law, I am locked into a contract that says I am cursed when I don't do it all. And everyday, I don't do it all."

You see the Old Testament saint, he lived under a lot of tension. That's why our last verse I put in the notes here but turn back to the Old Testament, Psalm 143. I want to close on this note. This is the dilemma if we were living in the old times like this covenant. Here is how we would think. Psalm, 143:2, in other words we would know God's holiness and in verse 2 it says:

NKJ Psalm 143:2 Do not enter into judgment with Your servant, For in Your sight no one living is righteous.

Do you suppose they had a grip on all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God? It seems to me they did. That was their daily diet in the Old Testament. Paul sees that if you know the law and you know your heart you know your secret sins, it drives you to look for grace and cleansing.

(Closing prayer)

Well we have a few moments here. Any questions?

#### Question

I think that's because if you look at a concordance for the structure of that sentence it takes you back to the judges and their qualifications for office. I think I have in the notes I have where - we looked at that once before when we were going through Deuteronomy. I think that - the question is every one of those cursings is an active sinner but then there's the perversion. Deuteronomy 16:19. Under verse 19 in the handout...

NKJ Deuteronomy 16:19 "You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous.

Wait a minute you asked about bribery didn't you? Verse 25, we covered that too when we were dealing with the judge of perversion. And the idea there, I think it's because it's secret. It's a payoff that goes on under the table. I think the emphasis here isn't so much on the active passivity of the people because again the first one and the last one have the Hebrew adverb in it - secretly. So it's quite clear that the theme isn't active or passive. It's theme is the secretness, the privacy of it. The reason why I think that's important is that what this text says is that these are unenforceable. There is no way the government can enforce this.

I think that's important because the entire Deuteronomic code is written to the human heart. People take a look back at the Old Testament and think theocracy - something like Islam and Sharia or something. Now we have the religious police going around worrying about if a woman drives a car in Saudi Arabia or something she gets arrested. The government is always there to enforce things. That's not the case in Old Testament law. The Levites were not religious policemen. There is a responsibility placed on every individual. That I think is that threat. That's why if you'll notice how this passage started, every Jewish man was supposed to be at this service. Every person was supposed to say amen to come in under the covenant. The emphasis here is what's going on in the heart.

#### Question

Good question. What are the consequences in the cursing? If you look up in a concordance the curse and think through - where in the Bible do you see the curse? Where is the first place we see it? On the serpent - and in the same passage after the cursing of the serpent and the consequences on the serpent - is a botanical change.

What's the next occurrence of the curse - same passage? After God curses the serpent...the ground, the pain. These are things that are not judicial in the sense of civil authorities. There are things that God has in life. At the end of the Bible in Revelation 22 when we talk about the eternal state, what is one of the glorious verses that you read?

NKJ Revelation 22:3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.

This ties in with the idea that the Old Testament Jewish way of looking at life - it is all primarily an ethical issue.

#### Question

Let me divide your comment. One is that you were saying about the consequences of sin again referring to what the other Mike was asking -the idea of the curse is an open-ended statement. God can pretty well do what He wants to. He has ways of enforcing His moral laws both on individuals and nations. I don't think it's an accident that as the United States has turned against the light that it's had, that we are encountering situations that we've never seen. We are encountering economic judgments we've never seen, terrorist attacks we've never seen. We are seeing things that are new in American history. You can't help but think as a Christian cause-effect. Ethical choices lead to ethical consequences.

To get back to your other point about the uniqueness of Jewish prophets, what Calphon is saying there is that neither Mormonism nor Islam had the kind of prophets the Jews had in that you have in the Jewish picture you have prophets that are writing canonical scriptures that are assembled over centuries of time. It's not just commentators. It's not just teachers. But you've got a self-consistent... You go within Islam...when you go inside Mormonism you don't find consistency. But you do within the biblical set of prophets. So I would have to continue to assert the uniqueness of biblical prophets.

#### Question

Yeah the idea that all people are expected to affirm this because if you didn't want to affirm this you didn't have any reason to be a Jew. Your identity, the identity of the nation because it's a theocratic nation in contract with God - if you don't agree with this, get out. It's God's way or the highway. This is why the same thing occurs in Romans 12:1 where Paul talks about presenting your bodies as a living sacrifice. He is saying you don't have a choice as a Christian. There are other things where you don't have a choice. But what happens here that the people who are being compelled to assent to these rigorous moral standards are probably by and large unregenerate. So they are pledging themselves to a miserable life.

#### Question

I forgot the actor that played that but he was a trouble maker. He was an example. Cecil DeMille was a Jew. Cecil DeMille put an awful lot of work into that. I happened to work with a Christian filmmaker for a limited time in my life who got his Master's Degree at UCLA under Cecil Demille's sister who taught theater there at UCLA. The stories that he tells about what she shared in the class about that movie are just amazing. That whole movie, The Ten Commandments, was cartooned. That's how they got those special effects. She said that her brother had to hire thousands of cartoonists just to do that water scene because they didn't have all the

sexy software that we have. Then you go back and look at the Ten Commandments and - you know on Easter they play it.

Just look at that some time and ask yourself, "How the heck did they do that?"

If you look at the nuances, that was done by a filmmaker who really did know his theology. Now we could criticize DeMille for some of his work in that, the Hollywoodization.

Do you remember that scene where God is speaking and Moses is on Sinai and he is ducking and the fire of God comes down and writes the commandments - except for one? It was the sixth commandment.

Charlton Heston - get to heaven and see Moses realize disappointed it wasn't Charlton Heston. But Charlton Heston turns around and instead of the fire coming down and handwriting on the stone; it's coming right at him. I thought that was an interesting nuance because see Moses had killed the Egyptian. DeMille picked up on that. That film is delightful to see. The more you are familiar with the Bible, you see that DeMille really thought through those scenes.

Next week we'll deal with 28.