

Clough Deuteronomy Session 4  
Deuteronomy 1:6-18 - From Sinai to Kadesh  
Fellowship Chapel; 3 Nov 09

If you'll look in the handout tonight we're going to start by just a review of the Introduction & Review section of the handout and if you'll turn to Deuteronomy 1:1-5 again, we're looking at that section of Deuteronomy and I want to make a point before we leave that section. I want to make several points. One is that that is the historical prologue and that corresponds to the prologue or the preamble of a suzerainty-vassal treaty format type of thing, and the point of that is that it introduces the great king. Now that works in an almost duplicate way in Exodus 20 when God speaks the Ten Commandments, because you know the first commandment is "I am the LORD, thy God," I have brought you out of Egypt and so forth. But if you look at these five verses in Deuteronomy 1, God is not the one who is speaking; Moses is speaking, "These are the words that Moses spoke," and then we emphasized that in verse 3 we see the subject and the verb, "Moses spoke." Then in verse 5, "Moses began to explain." So Moses is the speaker in Deuteronomy whereas Yahweh, God, is the speaker in Exodus, which is the original revelation.

That gives us a picture from the Old Testament of what a prophet looks like. If you'll hold the place in Deuteronomy, in fact you don't have to hold the place because we're going to do a few other verses, if you go to Exodus 7 this is a little dialogue God is having with Moses and Aaron and this is one of those passages out of the Old Testament that defines what they thought when they used the word "prophet." Today that word is kind of used loosely but in the Old Testament when somebody was declared to be a prophet there was some specific things that went on.

If you'll look at Exodus 7:1, "So the LORD said to Moses, See I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. [2] You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh," so now there's the role of God and a prophet. God reveals and the prophet is the one who is the recipient of Yahweh's revelation. This is why throughout the Old Testament the prophetic books are all grounded on top of Deuteronomy because Deuteronomy is Moses, he is the archetype of all prophets. He expounded the Law, that he got directly from God speaking. And that was the unique relationship, and the Old Testament commemorates that, that God spoke face to face with Moses. That distinguishes Moses from all the other people that followed.

But in this role of a prophet in the Old Testament, the prophets were the ones that received revelation about their contemporary situation. And they were the ones who then went out and broadcast this information that they had gotten from God to the nation. They were not social reformers. Now we've had over a century and a half of liberals and higher critics of the Scriptures arguing that these books, these prophetic books of the Bible, gee, they're really nice and we like them because they are a social commentary, as though these prophets are just kind of making it up themselves. Later on in the book of Deuteronomy we shall see tests, because if a person claimed to be a prophet it was sort of a dangerous occupation in many ways, and they could be prosecuted for falsely proclaiming themselves as a prophet. So prophets in the Old Testament could be involved in court cases in which they would be accused of false

identity. So that's the issue there we have with the prophet and God roles.

Now I want to review something about what happened in that Numbers 13, so if you'll forward from Exodus over through to Numbers, through Leviticus to Numbers 13 and I want to also review what was going on in the minds of the people. It helps in every day Christian walk to clearly understand the battles in our mind, because the battles that we face, 90% of it goes on in our heads, it goes on in how we think. And I want to look at some specifics here. Let's look at what went on in the minds of the mob, and what went on in the minds of Caleb and Joshua and let's distinguish how they thought but let's also understand the facts that were common to both of them because they were both in the same situation; the mob and the two guys, plus Aaron and Moses, that stood up against the mob, they were in the same strategic and tactical situation. So the circumstances did not change; it wasn't the result of circumstances that changed how they thought. How they thought was their reaction to the circumstances. And that's the key thing that you need to remember in living the Christian life is that we are reacting all the time to circumstances. And it's how we react to the circumstances.

So in this chart on the overhead you see face number one, they both agreed, both of them, the spies that came back with a pessimistic report, they agreed that the land was as God had promised. So that fact is common to both the mob and Caleb and Joshua. They also reported that there was going to be a fight ahead because these people weren't just going to evaporate that were occupying the land, so there's going to be a fight ahead. And that's interesting because in the Old Testament conquest of the land at this point in Israel's history was a necessity. Now you might say well, why does God make us go through these fights? Presumably it's to strengthen us spiritually. Tests result in strength, it's an exercise, and so God put His people through this, there is going to be a fight, there is going to be a clash that's going to be involved.

Now we come to how they differ, and how they differed, one of them, the "grasshopper" interpretation, the other one was the "bread" interpretation that we went through last time. The grasshopper interpretation looked at the occupants and made the evaluation which, in many ways, is true, that the occupants behind long walls, because remember the Jews are out in tents, these are cities with walls around them, the occupants are stronger, they are in a superior military situation, military defense posture, than we are. So, the occupants are stronger than we are. Traditionally in the military the offensive force always has to be two or three times the forcer of the defensive force, that's just the advantage of being in a defensive posture. So that's what they looked upon. Then they concluded as a result of that that we're going to die and our families are going to be destroyed. So without considering anything else they went from fact one, fact two, immediately to the fact they're going to die and their family is going to be destroyed.

Now if you come over to the bread interpretation of Caleb and Joshua, they see that, but they analyze the occupants in light of the Lord who is stronger. So now who's focusing on what? See how they're focused. If you look at the mob they're focused on the immediate circumstance, the closest fact to their eyes is the fact that we're going to be in a fight,

we're going up against walled cities. And that is a true fact. What happens, though, if you look at how Caleb and Joshua are thinking, they are putting that fact and encapsulating it in a bigger fact, which is that Yahweh is stronger than those cities. So do you see what's happening here; that's why I use the word "strategic envelopment." What they're doing is they're taking the facts and they're enveloping the facts in a Theocentric world view of the God of the Scriptures, and that gives them the stability they need.

Now just to give a further indication of how out to lunch the mob really was and the dynamics of what wasn't happening in their minds, let's go to Joshua 2, we did a little bit of that last time and look at what Rahab told the spies. As she's cutting a deal with them she reveals that the inhabitants for many years had the sense they were going to be defeated. And she goes through it in verse 8, 9, 10, and she says, verse 11, "As soon as we heard these things our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath." Now that's the irony in this situation, that the mob was further away from what was really going on than the inhabitants in the walled city. The walled city people, they had a little bit more of a perspective on the real strategic situation than the mob did.

So this is just a lesson in thinking, and if you look at that Numbers 13 passage they wanted to go back to Egypt, and that's emblematic of another little kind of thinking that you'll see again repeated in the Old Testament, slaves, people who are slaves in their mind, always prefer security to freedom. People who have been freed to the Lord are free men, we're not anarchists here. These are free men under God, and because we are free under God we recognize responsibility and therefore we crave freedom. So wherever you have a population that always want the government to take care of them, because Egypt was a totalitarian government and they took care of their people, and these people wanted to go back and go under this government where they would give up their freedom in order to gain security, which really isn't security in the eternal sense. And then you have the free people who understood what redemption means because the word "redeem" means to give freedom, they said no, we're not going to go back to Egypt, we have a challenge here and we're going to go forward because our God that gives us freedom is bigger.

So we then conclude with the principle of unbelief. In the outline, unbelief is ultimately arrogance. All unbelief is ultimately arrogance; it is self-centeredness and it usually goes in either a rationalistic, legalistic way, or it goes into an irrational emotionalism licentious fashion, it's fantasy land. But real faith requires an object and that means we have to have God's revelation of himself in history. Our faith needs an object, your faith cannot be any stronger than the object of that faith. So the issue leads us back to the fact that we need a God who speaks, and it can't be just a God who acts, but a God who acts and then tells us what He is doing, then we can have a personal relationship. So God has to have events, He does things, and then He explains things, He shows and He tells.

Now there's one other thing that we said that Moses also plead for the people. Going back to Numbers 14, I just want to review something else

because this shows you the logic of Moses' petition before God, and it gives us a model of what a priest looks like. So we've seen now Moses as a prophet, repeating revelation, broadcasting that revelation, disseminating that revelation that he's received from God, now we see him acting as a priest on behalf of the people. And again, if you'll look on the outline, if you'll follow this I'll add to it, let me get the next slide, I've got four points that kind of summarize the argument. This is the logic of the argument that Moses is having with God. And I emphasized last time that this is a dynamic conversation that goes on between God and Moses. God comes down and He dialogues, and when He comes down and He dialogues He doesn't blow Moses out of the way with ten thousand volts of divine fire, He comes down and He dialogues with Moses but in dialoguing with Moses He dialogues as a person would dialogue.

And there are four points Moses makes in answering God. The first one is that historical events were known among the nations, they had already been identified with Jehovah. Later, in the Ten Commandments we'll see, "Thou shalt not bear the name of the LORD Thy God in vain." And God is very concerned that if we are going to be identified with Him, that we don't screw up in such a way that people then laugh at God because we've done something stupid. So what Moses is zealous for at point 1 is the reputation of God. This whole Exodus event has been spread abroad; all the nations know that. We just saw Rahab, Rahab tells us what was going on. So there's no question that the knowledge of Jehovah from the Exodus event has spread throughout the Ancient East there. So Moses, point 1, is that the historical events are known among the nations. So that's part of his petition. And that bothers him because if God is going to end Israel's existence because they screwed up, then we've got a little problem here because Moses, if you look at the logic of his argument, he is concerned for the glory of God. Yes, he's petitioning for the people, but the power of his prayer, the power of his argument is to save the reputation of Yahweh.

So point 2, the collapse of the nation will lead to a "failure" of Yahweh seen like the pagan "musical chairs" theology. What do I mean by that? You read pagan literature in the Ancient East, whether it's Ugaritic stuff, whether it's Assyrian stuff, Babylonian stuff, Egyptian material, not so much Egyptian material but the other materials, they viewed the ups and downs of a nation as though the nation's god got defeated or elevated in the divine counsel of the gods and goddesses. So, for example, if Ur, the moon god, was blessed, then Ur would prosper, but if that city had disease or a plague or the economy went bad, they would interpret that, immediately, as the moon god got outvoted in the councils of the gods. So if you have a population that thinks that way and they see Israel go down in defeat, what is going to be their understanding of that? How are they going to interpret the destruction of the nation Israel. Moses is very acutely aware of this. And that's his second point; they're going to interpret it that their God, Yahweh, He failed, that's all, among the other gods.

Point 3, He sticks with the Word, he says Lord, you have given us the Word, no compromise with Your glory, and so he realizes that however God answers this argument of keeping Israel in existence it's got to be done in such a way that God's glory is never compromised. You see what kind of a hardnosed prayer logic this is; it is a very carefully engineered

petition before God Himself that we want this to happen but we recognize that You cannot compromise Your glory, You are not going to compromise Your glory, and any solution to the problem will not compromise Your glory. That is non-negotiable. So Moses, on the basis of that platform, then he petitions, forgiveness, and when he makes his petition he does so in terms of the Abrahamic Covenant which we're going to examine also.

So the conclusion of that little episode is that the unbelief and disobedience of Israel, which leads to suffering consequences, which is a responsibility, the very fact that they are suffering by divine discipline, doesn't that mean that God holds them responsible for their choices? And this is a central axiom of all this, the theology of the law, the legal literature here, is that the legal literature gives testimony, revealed testimony to the law of consequences and the law of consequences gives testimony to the fact and the existence of personal responsibility, a rare word in our culture called "responsibility." And the fact is, if I screw up and I make a bad decision, I'm responsible for the consequences of that bad decision. This is revolutionary language but this is the theology that comes directly out of the whole legal milieu of the Old Testament.

So unbelief and disobedience leads to consequences; even Moses is going to be excluded from inheriting the land, which shows that even number one in society, the big guy, the executive, the chief executive of this whole nation, he personally is excluded from inheriting it because of his problems with the Lord, that was the consequences. And that itself was a revelation to the people. I mean, they're standing here, here's Moses, he went up on the mount and God spoke to him directly when nobody else wanted to go up on the mountain to hear God, and he is going to also be excluded from the land? Yes, so the discipline upon Moses itself is revelatory, once again, of the law of responsibility.

Now there's an idea here and this has implications politically today; it has implications socially, but you want to grab this one because this is the collision that we are experiencing in our own historical moment. Freedom and equality cannot long coexist; one will eat up the other. Freedom and equality cannot coexist! Think about it. If people are free, truly free to excel, to produce, everybody isn't going to produce the same. So freedom will lead to inequality and there are two kinds of collisions, philosophically and politically today going on. Those who want equality basically think like Marxists, the idea everybody is going to be equal in the outcome of whatever it is that we're doing. Well, if that's your highest value you have got to destroy freedom, because freedom will undermine that equality. You cannot have both of those qualities co-existing. And this is a very serious thing because it means either you have a philosophy of freedom and inequality, or you have a philosophy of equality and no freedom, but you can't have both. This is the fight, really, between Marx and what we would call republican type of freedom.

On page 2, the last thing we want to review, just quickly, Deuteronomy 1-5 shoes the supreme importance of understanding the Lord through His Word. Now last time I reviewed quickly for you some of the terrain and I'm just going to show you those three or four slides again. Visualize yourself walking about in that kind of land with your children and your family, and you can see it's not a great garden area. God provided clothing that didn't wear out, shoes that didn't wear out, that's rough ground, sandals

don't last too long in that kind of terrain, and yet their shoes lasted, for 38 years their shoes did not wear out... and we don't know that God takes care of us? For 38 years He provided food every 24 hours... but we don't know that God takes care of us, we're going to die. See, what has happened here in unbelief and emotional panic is they forget. You talking about losing peripheral vision.

When my son was in an F-15 when they were doing high speed maneuvers because they wanted to show the guys what happens to a pilot pulling 6 or 7 G's and the first thing you notice when you're say, up to about 5 G's, 5 G's means you weigh five times as much as your normally do so each arm is about a hundred, two hundred pounds pushing down, and you're trying to strain to tighten your calve muscles, tighten your thigh muscles, tighten your gut to keep the blood in the top half of your body and not the bottom half, when you're going through this one of the indicators that you're going to have a problem is you lose your peripheral vision. And when that guy hits 6 or 7 G's in a high speed turn Jonathan said phttt, he could feel it happening, all of a sudden he had pinhole vision, he was losing that peripheral vision. Well, in that way, that's a picture of unbelief. These people are losing the peripheral vision of what God had done to provide for them.

So on page 2 we have this outline and I've shown that from Deuteronomy 1:6 through 4:40, the first four chapters basically, constitute sort of Moses' first sermon. In other words, it's pretty connected to the text, and it tends to follow the historical prologue area of a suzerainty-vassal treaty. So therefore what is the theme, the big overall theme? What's the rationale for Moses talking to these people with these four chapters, and it's going to be an exposition of the Torah, but from the standpoint of motivating this generation that is going to survive, they are going to go in, they are going to conquer. They're going to have some bloody battles ahead of them but they've got to be motivated, and the way Moses is choosing to motivate the folks is to make them cognizant of the past gracious actions of Jehovah toward them.

This is fundamental to the Christian faith. Every time we have communion service we are remembering the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the body and the blood, the body and the blood, and we've been remembering this for over 2,000 years. And why is it that we have to remember. The corollary is because God doesn't always reveal Himself. God reveals Himself sometimes in some places over certain events, and then he's silent, don't have any more revelation. The biblical faith of Christianity is not a mystical faith; it's dependent upon our memory of past revelations of God. That's not a downer, but it's just a characteristic of true biblical faith over against mysticism, {?} seeking God's presence in the sense of getting more and more revelation. That doesn't happen; God reveals and He's quiet, sometimes He's quiet for centuries; He's been quiet for 2,000 years. So just because He's quiet doesn't mean the faith is dead, it just means you have to remember these things.

So Moses shows us in the first four chapters the importance of memory. That makes Christianity and the Bible's faith an historical faith. That's why we're interested in history. When I was going through school I was taught history, as so many people are, you know, memorize a few dates then Monday burp them up on a test so you can forget them so you can memorize

another list of dates for the next week. That's what I call the marble theory of history, just marbles rolling around on the table, nobody connects the marbles, nobody puts the beads on a necklace and shows you the meaning of it. Well, the Bible insists that history is going somewhere; it's not as Henry Ford once said of history: The sequence of one damned thing after another. History is a sequence of actions that God is leading the whole universe toward.

So then we have in chapter 1, if you look at the outline there, we're down now to Deuteronomy 1:6-8, so if you'll turn to Deuteronomy 1:6-8 we'll cover those verses tonight and then we'll speed up next time. But there's something else that we need to deal with in the way this Old Testament approaches things. If you'll verse 6, and we'll just read these two verses, you can see verse 9 is a little different, and those of you who have any kind of study Bible or something, you'll see that the editors make a break there.

But look at verses 6, 7 and 8, "The LORD our God spoke to us in Horeb, saying: 'You have dwelt long enough at this mountain. [7] Turn, take your journey, and go to the mountains of the Amorites, to all the neighboring places in the plain, in the mountains and in the lowland, in the South and on the seacoast, to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the River Euphrates. [8] See, I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your father-to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob-to give to them and their descendants after them.'" A lot of material in here and we want to go carefully.

So the first thing we want to look at in verse 6 is how the Lord spoke to them at Mount Horeb. And that takes us back to the first time that God spoke to Moses. So we are going to move back in time to that encounter, that famous encounter out in the desert between Moses and Jehovah when he first saw Jehovah in the burning bush. And I'm going to take you there because we want to deal with some theology. The problem we've got in many of our Bible churches today, the Bible church movement in our country is really going down the drain pretty fast; we have people that are involved in the entertainment, we have people involved in ordaining female elders and trying to justify elder-ettes when the noun is masculine in the text, not feminine, and we find a complete forsaking of the theology that once permeated the Bible church movement, and it's pretty sad to watch this happen. This is why we have people leaving by the droves to the Reformed churches.

Here's a letter written to me by a young lady, I've known her for several years, I talked to her in October, last month, she's gone through undergraduate school, she wants to be a lawyer, and I was getting her in contact with some Christian attorneys and trying to give her some pointers about going to law school. She's a smart girl and she's, in previous years when I've been up there, she's asked me for a bibliography and I can always tell she's interested because the next time I talk to her she's read the bibliography and has questions about this author and what he said and so on, but listen to what she says, a girl in Connecticut now, she's gone to a good college in Connecticut, comes out of a Bible-teaching church.

"One of the things I always lamented throughout the beginnings of my undergraduate work was the fact that often Christian teachings in the churches nearby were quite separate from any kind of intellectual involvement. I never really gave it much thought but when I began to learn philosophies and question them in classes, I found this whole new world to me that I wished could seep into my Christian beliefs. I guess God has given me the desire to see things in an intellectual way rather than just by having strong faith." Here she's using faith in an emotional sense. "There were so many of my believing friends who never questioned anything" at this particular college where she went, "which I saw as being so strong but I always wanted more assurance from the logical and rational perspective. That is why Frances Schaeffer's works have been incredible to me; I find my faith growing daily when I can look at it from this perspective."

And so we've been working to get her connected with some... a Christian lawyer who recently went through law school and he's giving her some advice about things to watch on the campus, you can't spend three years on a campus of a law school and not imbibe the worldview that's being taught there. So you need to have defenses. But this is the kind of stuff that's going on and many in our Bible church movement, I don't know what's happening but we're just not training the youth to withstand this, and then wonder why gee, I wonder where they all go? Well, gee, what kind of training did they have in the first place?

So I want to go back to this burning bush, and out of this we want to see something fundamental, basic, basic stuff. So if you'll turn to Exodus 3, this is where God reveals His name, Yahweh. I don't come to this passage any longer but I don't think of a former certain Vice President who during the election, several election cycles ago, made some crack about the burning bush, and clearly, although educated in a certain well-known conservative denomination this particular Vice President obviously had a very crude, almost despising attitude toward this event. Now let's look at it, Moses at the burning bush.

Exodus 3:1, "Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert," think of these areas of the desert now, so he's out there in this terrain. And he "came to Horeb, the mountain of God." And many think that is Mount Horeb. [2] And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and beheld, and the bush was burning [with fire], but the bush was not consumed." Then Moses said I'm going to go see this. [3, "Then Moses said, 'I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn.'"] [4] "So when the LORD saw that he turned aside, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, 'Moses, Moses!'"

The first observation from the text obviously is it's a personal communication. Now just think about what we just read; this is the God of the universe, not just the God of the earth, not just the God of the solar system, not just the God of this galaxy, but this is the God of the universe who knows Moses personally. I find that fantastic; this is a fantastic thing, that the God of the universe knows this man's name on planet earth, and thinks enough of him to talk to him. See the power of what's here. And we're going to think a little bit more about this.



[4] ... And he said, 'Here I am.'" [5] Then He said, 'Do not draw near this place. Take the sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.' [6] He said, 'I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. [7] And God said, 'I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. [8] So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, the to the place...' and then he gives you all different names of the places. [9] "Now therefore, behold the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppressed them. [10] Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh...." And then Moses gives Him an argument about his mouth.

But let's look more at what's going on here. Moses does not see a visual form of God here...right? What he sees is a bush that burns, but he makes the point that the bush isn't consumed by the fire. So let's see what this shows us. If you'll turn in the notes, the handouts tonight, you'll see that down on the bottom we have two doctrines, two descriptions of theology. And we're going to look at God and His name because what happens here is that when God reveals Himself, particularly to Moses, because of what's going to happen in a few verses, God has to give him a visual aid, and this visual aid is designed in such a way to teach these two truths, the aseity of God and the condescension of God. Those may be new terms but they are not new in the sense that they've been around for a while.

Aseity, as you can see, is the absolute independence of God from everything, even from the act of creating. Aseity means God did not have to create; God wasn't depending... He didn't have an itch and He had to scratch Himself and make the universe? Aseity means that God is self-contained 100%, He is totally independent. He doesn't have to do anything outside of Himself, He is totally independent. Some theologians, instead of referring the Creator/creature distinction, call it the eimi/eikon, two Greek words meaning existence and image of an existing thing.

Now let's read further and we'll get to the slide here where we're talking about God's name. [11] "But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt.'" [12] And He said, I will [certainly] be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." And [13] Moses said to God, 'Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you, they will say to me, 'Well, what's His name?'" What am I going to say then? Now there's more to it than just... they're not going to be asking Moses for God's name tag, there's more to this than that. When they're asking for what God's name is, they're really asking for the authority and what kind of God is this that has come to you Moses. The name means the whole shebang, not just a name tag. [14] And then God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.'" And scholars think that it's that Hebrew verb to be, which I've circled and it's on your handout on the last sheet, but it's very small so you can't see it too

well, but that's what the Hebrew is, right here, this is the Hebrew verb to say..., that's Elohim, Elohim says [says words in Hebrew], "to Moses," [says Hebrew words], I AM what I AM. You know, what is the power of that, what is the force of that declaration? What it means is God can't be defined in terms of something outside of Himself-I AM. I AM the existing One. So he gives Moses that name and that's why some people feel that the Yahweh, the expression Yahweh, which looks like this, is derivative in some way semantically from this name I AM.

Now let's look at these two doctrines and their pertinence because we are going to hit these again and again and again throughout the Old Testament, the Deuteronomy book, and the whole book of the Old Testament actually, besides Deuteronomy.

Aseity, this absolute independence of God, means that He is not dependent on something external to Himself. Now why am I stressing that? You say well, that's easy to understand. It wasn't easy to understand historically, because every pagan pantheon the gods had to be served, they needed things, so therefore they had to be served food and these things. Acts 17:25 is a New Testament reference when Paul speaks to the educated pagans of the educational center of the eastern Levant there which was Athens, the University of Athens, it wasn't a university then but that was the center. And when Paul addresses the Christian faith to these people, the intellectuals of his time who were pagan intellectuals, he has to make a big point in the middle of his presentation that the God of Scripture has aseity, He is not dependent on this, not dependent on that. Why does he do that? Because that's the hallmark of pagan thinking. Right here, people, is the crux, and you're on one side of the fence or you're on the other, either God is independent, completely self-contained or He's not. And the modern world thinks He's not, the god of these conceptions are just rolling around in the universe along with us.

But then this passage says God had come down, you'll notice that in chapter 3, verse 7, I want you to look at the verb, "And the LORD said I..." and notice the little word "surely, " at least in my New King James translation, "I have surely seen the oppression of My people," and there's the Hebrew construction there that denotes an intensity. It's not just that I have seen, but what God is telling Moses is that I feel and I know your pain. "I have surely seen," I have been there, I understand where you people are coming from because I know what that is like. Now how God knows what it is like we don't know; it's just that He does declare in verse 7 that He is so aware that He uses a powerful form of the verb to see, "I have surely seen" this.

Now what does this all mean. Let's put this together. And then He says "I have come down" to see this. So if we put this together here's what we come up with, and that is if you combine aseity and condescension, top of page 3 of your handout, you'll come to four conclusions, at least; there are more, but at least these four. And these four conclusions strike at the heart of our culture, at the heart of popular understanding of the world's literature, of the world's thinkers in the West, at least since Immanuel Kant, and that is that if you have a God with aseity that is totally independent, and He voluntarily creates and He voluntarily comes down at the creature level, then the following are conclusions.

First, it denies that human language is incapable of expressing divine revelation. All modern theology denies that human language is capable of expressing divine revelation; language is so limited in theology that wherever you have the claim the verbal revelation, it can't be variable, it's just Moses had an experience and he thinks about his experience and he writes, but the words are Moses' writing, they're the results of human beings meditation on their mystical experience. But the difference is that in the Bible, that's why I try to carefully word it this way: what we mean by verbal revelation is that information actually is transferred from omniscience to finite man. There is a message, there's information transferred, and it didn't come from man, it came from God Himself. So that denies that human language is incapable or positively saying, it affirms that human language is capable of expressing divine revelation.

The next conclusion is you combine aseity and condescension and it denies that knowledge of God is impossible, or it affirms that knowledge of God is possible. And that clashes with all of modern philosophy. There's not a philosopher in the West, other than the Christian philosophers, that believes this. These are revolutionary things, people, and when this gal I read the little thing from, she was never taught this. She went to a church all her life and she was never taught these basic truths and then she gets in college and she gets smashed. It's because... the truths are all here, all she needed is to have somebody point the truth out to her. This invalidates philosophical speculation because if God speaks and if language is capable of carrying information from his mind to my mind, then by definition the Word of God trumps all human speculation. That's {?}. And if the Word of God doesn't trump, then you must be holding to some idea that divine knowledge is impossible. And then you have to ask yourself, why do you think that?

Point three there, the third conclusion, it denies the absolute authority of man's finite intellect. No one has an absolute authority; the most brilliant person is not an absolute authority because they're finite in their intellect. We could also add because they're sinners and we revolt, we go into... our sin nature, our flesh revolts against the knowledge of God, Romans 1.

And the fourth conclusion, therefore this whole biblical view "denies the validity of human speculation, particularly from Immanuel Kant down to the present day," and then I have a bracket, which makes a very, very serious accusation that any biblically informed person knows this that's studied the issue, "[no secular thinker can give a coherent metaphysic, epistemology, or ethic to support their views in sociology, law, politics, or any other field]", no one operating outside of the Scriptures, outside of revelation, can have a coherent metaphysic. Metaphysic means your view of the universe, of what does it consist, how did it get here. There is no consistent answer to that by a finite intellect.

Epistemology means how you know and this is a place where I think we Christians need to hammer, hammer away at the secularist. When they make a claim that an idea in my mind fits external reality, I'm a scientist and I have a hypothesis in my mind, and I've done these measurements out here in the real world, and I have a theory about the real world, immediately a red flag should go up and say how do you know, as an evolving bag of

protoplasm, that the neurons inside your head are generating any kind of a signal that corresponds to external reality; tell me how you do that because I haven't figured it out and I don't think you have either. That's what we mean by epistemology. It never is discussed... never is discussed. And yet day after day we make all the assertions about the real world and about science and so forth and we're never told how this magic happens.

And then the easiest to see one is the ethic; any time someone tells you that something ought to be true, if you want to have some fun ask them why? People who complain about suffering and blame God for it, you know what the answer to that? It's a two-letter word, "so," if we're only bags of protoplasm that are evolving who cares, why are you upset, that's just the way it is; why are you making these ethical judgments, you don't have a basis for it. And this is going to be central to the whole idea of the Ten Commandments because they are the basis for ethical judgments, but they're ethical judgments not because Moses got them on Mount Sinai, as one unbelieving Israeli professor said in the last five years, he had a drug experience on Mount Sinai and thought he heard God speaking. But God actually did speak.

Okay, back to Deuteronomy 1 now, we have another thing in the text and it was also in that burning bush incident and so that's why we want to connect the burning bush with Deuteronomy 1, is that no sooner does Moses start narrating about this past event of God giving them "move out" order from Mount Horeb, but God then goes to say... He gives the conquest limits. Now this is bound to cause some political problems today. Unfortunately for the United Nations, Eretz Yisrael extends to the Euphrates. What happens to Lebanon, Syria and Iraq? Too bad, Eretz Yisrael extends to the Euphrates River. Now the world has a problem with Israel occupying the West Bank, imagine if they occupied all this. But this was the original boundaries that God gave Israel, and of course, granted, there's a discussion about whether they've ever been {?} so forth, and we'll get to that. But the idea here is that God says I have set the land before you, go in and possess it, and they never did, fully. But He gave them the order to do that; He would have helped them conquer all the way up to the Euphrates River; that's how big this land was {?} given to Israel.

Now there's a doctrine in Scripture and we'll see it in this first sermon of Moses, it comes up, to here's another idea that we have to go back too, there are two major areas that we want to finish tonight about things that you need to have in your thinking to track the Old Testament revelation. One is that in history God sovereignly declares certain real estate on the planet earth for certain people, that he gives, as it were, title to lands. If you'll hold the place here, turn to Deuteronomy 32, we'll see it more when they go to invade, they're allowed to go and not go into certain people's... they couldn't go through Edom, they couldn't go through Moab, because those lands had already been given. So God wouldn't let them do that.

But in Deuteronomy 32, maybe you've never noticed this, but look at verses 8 and 9, "When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. [9] For the LORD's

portion is His people: Jacob is the place of His inheritance." There are seventy names in the genealogies of Genesis 10 and 11 and there were seventy sons of Jacob going down into Egypt. So what verses 8 and 9 are saying is there's a seventy something division that occurred in history where God partitioned sections of the earth to various peoples. It doesn't necessarily mean they got there any more successfully than Israel, it doesn't mean that they lasted in those areas but they were partitioned.

Another verse that goes along with this verse is the verse in Acts 17:26 where He tells us that the rise and fall of nations throughout history is engineered to maximize God-consciousness; He says that they may seek God, if blindly they grope after Him. So there is a rhyme and a reason to conquest, to the rise of the civilizations and the collapse of civilizations that is synchronized in some way from God's point of view to maximize the number of people who will seek after Him.

Now the last thing we want to deal with tonight is the Abrahamic Covenant because in the last verse, we have in verse 8, it says, "Go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers—to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." Now here traditional Bible interpretation is right again. For years people who were Bible students had outlined the book of Deuteronomy and sure enough, later on we discover archeology, well gee, this is a coherent book, it's just like the treaties were made. Well now they've discovered another kind of thing in archeology and it confirms what traditional Bible dispensational believers have held that there's such a thing as the Abrahamic Covenant, so if you'll turn to Genesis 12, this was hundreds of years before Sinai, hundreds of years before Moses, and in Genesis 12 God calls Abraham out of what is now Iraq, and says that I will make a nation from you, and I will bless you. And He is going to hover, as it were, over Abraham to see how he responds to this offer.

So we have it announced in Genesis 12:1-2, then if you follow over to Genesis 15 we have this thing come up again and in this case it comes up in a very powerful way, it's that passage where if you look at verse 12, "Now when the sun was going down a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, a horror and great darkness full upon him. [13] And then He," God, "said to Abram: 'Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. [14] And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. [15] Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. [16] But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.'" That's another dynamic of history which we don't have any measuring stick, but God kicks people out of areas after they've apostacized up to a certain point, and that's going to be the story of biblical genocide. And this creates all kinds of problems, oh, the Bible has genocide... yes it does and we're going to have to deal ethically with what that genocide means.

But the point is, before verse 12, in verses 9, 10 and 11 Abraham is instructed to do something, and he's instructed to cut this animal in half, {??} the sacrifices, [10] "...cut them in two down the middle, place each piece opposite the other, but he did not cut the birds in two. [11] And when the vultures came on the carcasses Abraham drove them away."

The idea is these two hunks of meat were sitting here and in the dream, it says, [12] "When the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abraham; and [behold, horror, and great] darkness fell upon him." And God speaks. And then in verse 17, "...when the sun went down and it was dark [that behold], there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between the pieces." And this is the idea of cutting a covenant, a berith in the Hebrew. And in cutting the covenant the picture was that if He did this, the person signing the covenant was making an oath of malediction, and by oath of malediction we mean self-damning. So in our modern vernacular what God was saying, this covenant, this treaty, this contract will come to pass or I'll go to hell. And that's the kind of tough language that's involved here. God is potentially damning Himself; He says I'll be damned if this treaty is broken. That's what this means.

Now that means that this is a different form than the Sinaitic covenant because this covenant depends upon God and His promises, and conservative Bible people have always believed in the unconditional nature of the Abrahamic Covenant, and sure enough, in archeology now we talk about a royal grant, and they discovered an unconditional blessing by a superior to an inferior merely on the basis of there's good will and loyalty to the beneficiary. And so it's a legal kind of format, and it confirms, it doesn't change, it confirms the traditional Bible interpretation of the unconditionality of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Then we have in chapter 17 the covenant comes up again, in this case the issue of circumcision arises. And in Genesis 17:1-2 we have, "When Abraham was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, 'I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. [2] And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.'" And then God gives him the sign of circumcision. Now circumcision was a practice in the ancient world, but not circumcision of infants, it was circumcision of adults, and circumcision... we could go into the theology of that, we don't have time, suffice it to say that it has to do with the fact that the man is responsible in the Mosaic Law, in the nation, to raise up a godly seed, for the organ of reproduction is cut, and that's the idea that the male carrying that, if he went in and he had sex with some Canaanite priestess, he would have to remember what am I doing, whom am I marrying here if I marry into this line. So it has to do with the preservation of a godly seed which we'll get into later.

Finally, last reference tonight, I know we've gone over for a few minutes here, but if we look at Genesis 22, finally in that dramatic moment of the sacrifice of Isaac, which by the way is the first place in the Bible where the word "only begotten son" is given. Now why do you suppose the term "only begotten son" occurs in the context of the sacrifice of Yitzhak, Isaac? Because, by giving us this event, see, here's God showing and telling us again, He says to us, look at this, I asked Abraham to sacrifice His only son, the son that He loved, the son that I gave him supernaturally because they couldn't have children so that son is a supernatural son, and I'm telling that man to go take that kid, tie him up, and slice his throat for Me. And Abraham was willing to do that. Now you feel the pain. So what God is telling us is that is a model of what I go through when My Son dies for you. So when you use the term "only begotten son," just remember Isaac and the original show and tell model that reveals this.

But in Genesis 22, after that event takes place, in verse 12, God calls to Abraham, "Abraham," [12] "And God said don't lay a hand on the lad, or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." Now when it says "now I know," some of the open theologians say oh, gee, God is not omniscient, He had to watch to see what Abraham would do because golly, you know, God's looking down and He can't really tell for sure what Abraham is going to do. That misinterprets the whole thing. What did we say about God who condescends? What does that mean? When God condescends He comes down into history and He dialogues with us and He uses normal conversation. So He's talking to Abraham, now I know you've done it. That's encouraging to Abraham because God says I'm impressed, He responds to it, He doesn't say I am an eternal robot, it's not that, monologue robotic talking here, there's interaction going on between God and Abraham. So, "I know now that you fear Me," and now I have sworn to you and your descendants, verse 17.

So our conclusion for this section, we've covered a zone of theology tonight to handle three verses in Deuteronomy, believe me, we're not going to go this slow in ensuing evenings, but I needed to get through some of these ideas. So if you'll look at your notes in conclusion, Deuteronomy 1:6-8 shows the result of a personal relationship between Yahweh and Israel.

One, it's a relationship between the Independent, Self-Contained God and the derivative, dependent creature. Always think of that. This causes you to worship; it's not how you feel here, it's thinking through what God has revealed and just looking at and seeing what an awesome thing this is, for the God of the universe to speak on a man to man basis, knowing people's names, and entering into dialogue. Now we would be blown away for some very famous person to come talk to us face to face; imagine how it was with Moses when God calls to him out of the bush and he realizes who this is, what this voice in Hebrew is saying and who's speaking it. I mean, if this doesn't grab your mind, nothing will.

The second one, the supposedly infinite, uncrossable "gap" between God and man is crossed by God "coming down" and that violates every principle of modern theology. There's not a modern theology going that would accept this. See, we're odd and we have to understand this and relish in this because it means that we have a God who speaks.

And thirdly and finally, this relationship is shaped and controlled by personal agreements or contracts that go beyond making such a relationship possible but making it stable and orderly. Notice how God is quick to enter into contractual arrangements that spell out what the relationship is. That is an idea that permeates all the social legislation that we're going to study; the relationship of the citizen to the citizen of the city, the relationship of the husband to the wife, the relationship of children to parents under the umbrella of a covenantal relationship. It's all laid out there. So if God does this, I think one of the things we can come to the conclusion is that when the Bible speaks of a personal relationship it's talking about something a little different than what our culture thinks of. We think of our culture as some sort of an anamorphous free spirit kind of personal relationship; that's not really what the Bible is

looking at. What the Bible is looking at is an enduring, stable relationship that is secure, it's not going to be fractured, it's going to be there tomorrow and the next day and the next day and the next day because personal relationships can't thrive unless there's an element of stability. And that's why the Bible is so heavy on covenantal relationships.

I've gone over a little bit....