

Clough Deuteronomy Session 11

Deuteronomy 4:1-8 - Israel's Uniqueness in Law, Ethics & Authority  
Fellowship Chapel; 19 Jan 10

On the handout tonight we are going to another section and we're going to finish, if you look at the first part of that, we're still in the first exposition of the Torah, Deuteronomy 1:6 to 4:40, and that is Moses' motivation, he's trying to motivate a generation who basically lost out because they were raised by parents who failed them; they were raised in a generation that basically rebelled against the Lord, refused to trust His Word, and reaped some horrible results; an entire generation passed off the historical scene in unbelief.

So in Deuteronomy 4, we've gone through the first 3 chapters in which Moses has repeated history, he's given the details of history. Now in chapter 4 of Deuteronomy he's going to start looking forward; he's going to draw conclusions from that history and those experiences and this is going to be the transition into the Law itself. So tonight I want to follow on the handout answer some of the preliminary questions before we get into 4:1-8 and that is what God is doing in these four chapters. This is a model of exhortation; there's two powerful works of the Holy Spirit, many, many works of the Holy Spirit, but two that are instrumental in the age of the law of Israel. One is the Holy Spirit had to motivate obedience, and the second thing, the Holy Spirit had to empower obedience. People were helpless to obey the Law in the flesh. It didn't work. So they had some sort of spiritual enablement, not like you and I do in the church age, but they had something. It's obvious from the Psalms. But in this section what we want to just focus on for a minute is Moses and how he motivates.

So how does he motivate. Well, he doesn't do it by appealing to their emotions directly; he doesn't do it with a cheer leading group, he doesn't do it with a choice proposal that is divorced from past history. So the tool that Moses is using here is a span of historical experience, properly interpreted. The key, obviously is "properly interpreted." He isn't like the modern historians who try to make up history to reflect their personal philosophy and then read the personal philosophy backwards into the history they are writing. Moses isn't doing that; what he's doing as a prophet of God is he is giving a divine viewpoint of specific historical instances. And I keep emphasizing the historical instances because that gives you your confidence, that this isn't some abstract philosophy that Moses just thought up, but it's actually what happened in history, and we can know this and we can be motivated by it.

Last time we went with the Beth Peor incident, and we want to review those two things because these truths from the Beth Peor incident Moses assumes that the readers understand, that his listeners understand and what happened. So in Deuteronomy 4 he's going to mention this and he does it very casually, it only takes two verses to do this. But as you saw last time, we're talking 3 or 4 chapters here in the book of Numbers to describe this. So there are a number of points that we want to understand and these are directly pertinent to our Christian life.

One of them is that God's election means that the nation is eternally secure. The best and most powerful pagan prophet of that day, Balaam, was

unable to curse Israel, and he was an outstanding prophet, he was known all over the Middle East. This isn't some little local guy from Palestine here, this is a fellow all the way from what is now Iraq who came a thousand miles over to this for the specific mission of cursing Israel. This man we now know from the tablets at Mari in 1933 that were excavated, they gave us some insight into how these pagan prophets were deep into the demonic. They would talk to demons in animals and so forth. And so this is one reason Balaam isn't freaked out when the donkey starts talking to him, because he had seen this before; demons can indwell, at least mammals. We know this from Luke 8. So this is a phenomenon and in his case they were using the demonic powers to curse their enemies, the idea being if you could somehow get demonic powers to curse your enemies then you could defeat them easily in battle, and that was the whole point of Balaam.

But what we learned in the Beth Peor incident is that God's elect instruments are shielded, that the demonic powers, no matter how powerful they are, could not attack Israel because God was their shield, and that, as I point out in the notes, Romans 8:38-39, repeat that truth for the church: "Neither height, nor depth can separate us from" what? "the love of God." So the Romans 8 truth isn't something Paul just made up, it's something that's been centuries true, all down through redeemed history.

Now the second thing, the second thing to learn however, after learning that, is that though we are eternally secure, as God's elect people and as Israel as a nation was, that doesn't shield us from the consequences of our personal choices. And this is something that... it's a weakness that got into things during the Reformation a little bit, but we need to understand that believers don't always persevere, and Solomon was a case in point. Solomon was a believer and he did not persevere, they had a whole generation here with many, many believers in that first generation, apparently, they didn't persevere and they went down in physical discipline. So God does not shield us from responsible choices.

Now the question is, where is the primary responsibility located in the Old Testament? Is it located in the leaders or is it located in the people. Let's turn to 2 Kings 17 because this is a postmortem of Israel when it went down, when the theocracy collapsed and God withdrew the Holy Spirit from the nation, the prophets who wrote these books did an analysis, and in 2 Kings 17:7-8 we're asked in the text this question: Who is to blame for the collapse of this nation? Is it the leaders or is it the people. 2 Kings 17:7, "For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and they had feared other gods, [8] and had walked in the statutes of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel which they had made. [9] Also the children of Israel secretly did against the LORD their God things that were not right, and they built for themselves high places in all their cities, from watchtower to fortified city. [10] They set up for themselves sacred pillars and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree. [11] There they burned incense on all the high places, like the nations whom the LORD had carried away before them: and they did wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger. [12] For they served idols, of which the LORD had said to them, 'You shall not do this thing.'"

Now if you look at that paragraph, what conclusion do you draw? Who bore the responsibility? It's the people. Notice even in verse 7, it starts out there and it says "their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and they had feared other gods, [8] and had walked in the statutes of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel," and look at the clause that occurs after the noun "kings," kings "which they had made." So in the final analysis nations and societies go down because of the populous. Leaders can destroy the nation, yes, but ultimately in God's sight a nation goes down because the society at large turns their back on Him and under Acts 17 principle of history that deals with us Gentile nations, that He raises up nations, He superintends the bounds in space and time in order that that nation will seek Him, and if they don't after a while, okay, they change things, shuffle the deck and start history rolling again.

So the point we want to make is the Beth Peor incident has some vital lessons; number one, it shows us that the most powerful demonic forces in the Middle East, under one of the most powerful necromancers and pagan prophets could not touch Israel, but Israel at Beth Peor failed, at least ten to twenty thousand people failed because of their own personal choices, because God does not protect us against the consequences of personal choice. And we'll see this again and again in the Law, that's why I'm emphasizing it here, why Moses is doing it in Deuteronomy 4. The Law is a tremendous clear repetitive document that we are free, that we have a freedom of choice but what we do not have is the freedom to dictate the consequences of our choices, and God holds us rigorously to choices.

Tonight we're going to get into chapter 4 so if you'll turn to Deuteronomy 4, this is the last chapter before we actually get into the details of the Law, and it's a lead-in chapter. So tonight we're going to take the first 8 verses of chapter 4 and we're going to deal with some of the vocabulary in chapter 4 so we understand the terms that Moses is going to use again and again and again, but then we also want to deal with some of the big ideas that the Holy Spirit is giving us in this text.

So if you'll look at Deuteronomy 4 and follow with me as we read the first 8 verses. "Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you. [2] You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. [3] Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal Peor; for the LORD your God has destroyed from among you all the men who followed Baal of Peor. [4] But you who held fast to the LORD your God are alive today, every one of you. [5] Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. [6] Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. [7] For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? [8] And what great nation is there that has such statutes and

righteous judgments as are in all the law which I set before you this day."

Now this seems like a very simple text but let me raise some issues here so we start with an understanding and an appreciation for the Bible. One of the things I've learned over the many years of studying the Scriptures is the Bible gets bigger and bigger to you if you ask bigger and bigger questions. The harder the question is and the more profound the question is, the more profound the answers are that you will find. You don't find the profound answers in the text of Scripture until you ask the profound questions. That's why oftentimes I think the Lord has us suffer, because it seems like until we suffer, we get in a jam, or we get in some trouble, where we obviously can't solve it ourselves, it seems like it takes that to drive us back into the text and say Lord, what are you doing, what do you want me to know, where have I screwed up now, and find out these things.

So one of the things we want to do here first is we want to go into the matter of ethics and morals. There's many different definitions of this but when I'm using the word "law" here I'm using it in the sense that Moses is going to use it as the social norms that are enforced. For example, "thou shalt not steal," that is a notion that is enforceable; "thou shalt not murder," it's a notion that is enforceable by law. But when we use the term ethics we're looking at a bigger circle. It's wrong to steal, it's wrong to murder, it's also wrong according to the 10th commandment to covet, but there's no way a policeman or law can deal with coveting; the 10th commandment is not an enforceable law. It's addressed to the ethical side. So mixed with what we're talking about in the Bible are ethics, which is the big circle, and law which is contained within the ethics, the principles. We'll go into that a little bit more. But what we want to remember is something that happens in paganism, and we're going to see how this works out in the field of law.

If you look at this diagram that we've done again and again, here's paganism, and if you look right here, paganism has a continuity of being; ALL kinds of paganisms have this same thing, it doesn't matter whether it's old-fashioned paganism of the Ancient Near East, or the modern paganism of our day, in the environmental movement, for example, it's still the same, same story. It hasn't changed, Darwin didn't change it, Darwin just articulated it with a more sophisticated vocabulary. But all of the pagans have always seen man and the gods in this continuity of being, and ultimately all coming out of nature. And because of this continuity of being, by that we mean that it's just like a spectrum of light, it shades into one another. And if you believe that everything is just contained in this scale of being, then you can have transmutation and evolution, you can have this mutation between them. And sure enough, in the pagan myths you have the mixture of humans and gods, humans and goddesses. And this is common stuff in pagan mythology. And in modern, ironically, in Neo-Darwinism you have the same thing, coming out of nature.

Well now, if this is really correct, then what is the source of law? Let's just push it back all the way; if this is the picture, and remember, unless you go to the Bible you're stuck here. It's only if you come over to the Bible that you have this, the Creator/creature distinction. But if

you're mixed in with this, then when we ask the question—whence cometh law? Ultimately law comes from man, but man himself comes from nature. Now this was something that you have to think about as far as Baalism goes. All paganisms ultimately boil down to this, that out of the chaos of nature comes order and order brings law, but the authoritative source of it all is chaos. Now you see this repeated again and again across all kinds of philosophical ideas. Karl Marx, the ideas the Marxists have of absolutely destroying society and having total chaos, there it is. Out of that chaos a tremendous global revolution, the destruction of all social institutions, out of that somehow we'll get the Millennial Kingdom. You see, it's the same story, it's the pagan story over and over and over again, the cultural Marxists of the Frankfurt group in Germany that came to Columbia University before the Nazis took over, the guys that had basically written a lot of this stuff the hippies were reading in the 60's, they were the same thing except they didn't see a revolution like Karl Marx did, an armed revolt, they just saw the destruction of every social institution: marriage, destroy it, family, destroy it, we're going to destroy all the social institutions because once we get back down to the atomic level, then maybe something else will pop up and we can get going and make the big change. So this is always the story.

Now it's that that Moses is contending with in the Baalistic form. So Moses is going to make it very clear that the law originates in God the Creator, in Jehovah, and if you resort to idols and idolatry ultimately your law comes out of a chaotic nature.

The second question we have and we want to go to the next slide here, is this: let's ask what the roots of law are. It's hard to find political leaders who have thought through this diagram. It's not original with me, all I did here on this diagram, it's very simple, just go back into Greek history and ask yourself what were the great philosophers, like Plato, doing and why were they doing what they were doing. Plato was a failed politician. He wanted the Greek society to go in a certain way and it didn't work out practically so he went into it, formed like an academy, and said well, I've got to rethink this, I've got to think through. Now let's trace this; here's the pressure of life. Life forces us to deal with the political issue because we all live in communities and we have to get along with each other. So the political pressure starts with trying to live together with people with discordant views. But then, that raises the question of what is the right particular position, what is the right thing to do, what ought we to do. So now the political pressure gets deeper and we have to deal with the ethical question, what is right, what is wrong, where do we get that? But then when we start dealing with the ethics, then we're got to deal with well, how do we know what is right and what is wrong, where do we get the idea from and how do we get the idea from, and that's the epistemological question. Epistemology is just the study of how do we know, how do we get to truth? Do we contemplate our navels? Do we ask the computer? Are we empiricists? How do we get that?

And then finally, epistemology leads to the metaphysical question of what is, what's the structure of reality? So that's the pressure of life, forcing us to dig deeper and deeper, and if you look at the biographies of Aristotle, Plato and the other guys you'll see that that's their plot, that's how they started, they started up here, couldn't solve this so they went down here, tried to work here, then they realized well, I can't build

my ethics if I don't have this, but I can't do this until I have this, and it's a search for this. The tragedy today is we have people on blogs, people on five-second spots politically and they're arguing up here; I'll bet you one in a hundred of them haven't realized that the argument isn't up here, the argument is all the way down here; once you get these things straightened out this follows. But you've got to dig down deep and most people don't have time or the experience to do that, but the Bible does it because the Bible is hitting the metaphysical right here in Deuteronomy 4 when Moses says, "Hear, O Israel, listen to the statutes which I teach you, that you may live," and then he adds the last clause in verse 1, "which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you," the land he is giving you.

And then he says that, verse 5, "I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me," and later we'll see the passage is going to be on idolatry. So what Moses is saying is look, the laws and the political issues here are rooted in the metaphysics down here. And that's why he's going to deal with idolatry. You say what has idolatry got to do with social life, it has to do with social life because idolatry destroys this and if you destroy this you have no foundation for this, none! Basically the problem of modern folks in our society, and sadly many Christians, is that in your discussions about what is right, what is wrong, where are we going and so forth, and people say well, I think we ought to do this and so forth, you know a way to inject into the conversation a great question is this one, a very simple question. Who are you to tell me what I'm supposed to do? Who do you think you are? And it forces the person to think well, that's right, well who am I to be telling other people how they're supposed to live their lives. And that immediately drives you down to a deeper level.

So these are the questions that we need to deal with and if you'll turn the page on the handout you'll see the historical oscillation between paganism and God's revelation. Now this is a lesson in history and it's one we'd better know in our own country today and it's useful because it shows you why we who believe in the Bible believe in the Millennial Kingdom as the ultimate answer. Notice what I've done here; I point out there's waves in history where the pendulum swings back and forth and , it's on page 1, "Historical Oscillation between Paganism and God's Revelation:" The first level is paganism, that's what we just covered, that out from nature comes man in the process of bringing order out of chaos; the Canaanites did this, that's what Moses' culture looked like. Then we go on a few centuries until we get to the Diaspora; that word, "Diaspora," that is the term for the exile, that's when the Jews went into exile, 721 the Northern Kingdom fell, 586 the Southern Kingdom fell. So you have the exile occur. Now the Diaspora is a Jewish term meaning they were dispersed. So here all these Jews are dispersed, they are dispersed throughout the Middle East, some probably all through the Mediterranean area. And these people aren't stupid people, remember. These are Jewish businessmen, these are cultured people, basically from the world standpoint they are pretty well educated people. So they spread out into the world and they cause something to happen, and if you look there, this is one of the mysteries in philosophy classes, I've never heard this question answered, and it's an amazing thing because the Bible has the answer.

If you look down at footnote 1 I quote from Robert Brow, who by the way was a missionary for many, many years to India. "Seven [ethical] world religions appeared within fifty years of each other and all continue to this day." There was a stunning thing that happened in world history that is unexplainable apart from the Bible. Why did you have mythological religions with priesthoods, mythology, temple sacrifices, belief in many gods, and then suddenly in the 6th century and in the 5th century all of a sudden in China you have Confucius, you have Buddha, you have Zoroaster, you have these people that are all teaching ethical religion, they're all reformers, reformation is happening in Southeast Asia, reformation is happening in China, reformation is happening in Persia, and it's a reformation in all these places doing the same thing—denial of the traditional gods and goddesses, almost a forsaking of the whole issue, and centering on ethics, what ought we to do. And so the question is: what started that? I believe it was the Diaspora that did that, the Jewish people fanned out and these pagans, not realizing the God who gave them the right and the wrong just suddenly found, you know what, these Jewish people, we've got to start thinking the same way, we've got to have order in our lives, we've got to have what we do, what's good, what's bad, and so you have the rise of these things. The problem with it in a pagan biblical mixture is this diagram; they are borrowing the ethic without the epistemology underneath it, and eventually it's a weak house because it doesn't have a strong foundation.

So now you come to the third wave here, paganism, and in western Europe you have Rome; Rome started out with a lot of freedom, in a sense, relatively, as a republic, Cicero and so forth, those of you who studied Latin and translated Cicero and remember his dialogues. Rome went from a republic to a dictatorship under the Caesars, and eventually it collapsed from social immorality, slavery and corruption. Why did Rome fall? It wasn't due to the Christians, like Gibbon, *Rise and Fall: The Decline of the Roman Empire*, wrote. It had nothing to do with the Christians; Rome fell apart because paganism won out. For a while they had an ethic that made sense only on a biblical foundation but it went away because there was no empowerment... no empowerment, so you naturally have a degrading of society.

Well, then the Christian started, so then you have a Christian influence now bringing biblical theology back into society and its legal implication, and the legal implications was a transcendent law known in its basics to all men. So that was the contribution; the two guys that were very, very influential in doing this were Augustine and Aquinas; they changed Western Civilization because though Rome fell, this idea persisted and it became very strong after the Reformation.

So then we have that next section, *God's Word in Post-Reformation Europe*. Now one of the men that was very, very influential in our country's founding, because of books that he had written, was the man, Sir William Blackstone. He wrote a book called *Commentaries on the Laws* and it was Blackstone's commentaries on the law that was read by the founding fathers. So the founding fathers, though they were not all believers by a long shot, they were affected culturally through Blackstone's commentaries on the law because Blackstone was the guy that argued that above the English common law there was a higher transcendent law. So this was the effect of the Bible on Western Civilization. And to memorialize that,

here is the famous painting in the old Supreme Court Building in Lausanne, and it was done, Frances Schaeffer has a picture of this, called "Justice Lifts the Nations." Now [Paul] Robert wrote later, after the Reformation, this painting was done in 1905, but let's look at the painting and watch what Robert is saying here. This painting, he deliberately painted it so when the Supreme Court judges came to work every day they had to walk by the painting. So this is a very important painting because, as Schaeffer points out, this summarize the Reformation Christian view of what law is; this is not true today in modern courts, this is the foundation, however, of when the Bible influenced culture.

Now here's lady wisdom, what do you notice about her that's different from every other painting you've ever seen of her? She doesn't have her blindfolds on. Now that's interesting, she doesn't have her blindfolds on, she has the scales of justice, however, she's holding. But notice the sword, guess what that is? It's the Bible. What she's doing is she has the scales of justice but she's pointing down to the absolute transcendent law of the Word of God and then lower than that you have the disputes; and next to her, looking up at her are the judges. So here are the judges in the black robes, discussing among themselves because down here they have the litigants, all the cases they are arguing, but they're looking up at her and what she's doing is she's pointing them back down to the Scriptures. It's a powerful painting and it's really neat if you can get it, it's on page 107 of Frances Schaeffer's *How Shall We Then Live*, I think it's in the church library. But it's worth just having to be able to look at that and think, what am I looking at when I see this. What is this painting saying to me? And then read your newspaper. And of course, today we're going back toward paganism so we've had the swing from paganism to the influence of the Word of God in the 5th or 6th century, back to paganism, then we had Christianity up through the Reformation in the early years of our country, now we're sliding back into paganism again. So it's a cycle that goes on and on; this is why I'm not a post millennialist, the Church is not conquering the world here, so what's happening is that you have ebbs and flows; sometimes the Church will expand, sometimes it won't.

Now there's another footnote there, footnote #2 that I've added some source material so that you can get quickly some idea of where we're heading now. There's a definite... remember, we go back to the fact that there's a foundation underneath the law, tamper with the foundation and you have to tamper with the law. Footnote #2, "Oliver Wendell Holmes, Supreme Court justice (1902-32) stated clearly the modern paganized view of law." Look at what he said, look at these statements, they're quite classic; also found, by the way, in Frances Schaeffer's book, *How Shall we Then Live*, page 217, "Law is only a prophecy of what the courts will do in fact, and nothing more." But this is the modern view, and he was the one that set in motion a lot of it, we're talking something going on for many, many years. "Truth is the majority vote of that nation that can lick all others." But you see, he is right, isn't he, if the Bible isn't true? If you did not have the Scriptures what's wrong with Oliver Wendell Holmes' saying? Look at the next statement. "When it comes to the development of a corpus juris the ultimate question is what do the dominant forces of the community want and do they want it hard enough to disregard whatever inhibitions may stand in the way." Talk about a modern view of law, this isn't something some recent post-modernist wrote, this



is a guy that had thought it through back in the early 1900s. Frederick Moore Vinson (1890-1953) was the former Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court stated, look at this, "Nothing is more certain in modern society than the principle there are no absolutes." So you see where the battle is, people; understand where the battle is.

Barak Obama in his book, *Audacity of Hope* says, "Implicit in [the Constitution's] structure ... was a rejection of absolute truth, the infallibility of any idea or ideology or theology or 'ism,' any tyrannical consistency that might lock future generations into a single, unalterable course." That's our President writing before he became President. So again, the Constitution, our Constitution is not... the founding fathers never claim that it be an infallible document. What they wanted, however, was a giant flywheel to keep continuity in society, and if you want to change the Constitution there's something called an amendment process. And it's been used, 27 times or something. But the point is, this is the big idea, people, so when you read in Deuteronomy, when we start studying Deuteronomy, here we are Christians trying to be salt and light in our day, in our society, what you want to do is approach Deuteronomy with these questions in mind and ask yourself how do we cope with this view of law and ethics, and how did the Lord lead Israel.

So, verse 1, we're ready to go now through the eight verses. Verse 1 says, "Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes," so with that little term "Now," Moses is switching from an analysis of their past history to their moment in time as he addresses them. Now he's going to look forward, so that's why this is a pivot verse. Up to now we've talked about what happened in the past, now he switches to the future. This is the implications of what's going to happen. And he says, "listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you," now there's a vocabulary issue here and I want to just briefly cover it and define three words that area going to be used again and again. One is called, usually in the Scriptures it's called "law" but it's the noun that comes from the verb to teach. And it's called "Torah," and sometimes you know it's also the Torah, the Jewish name for the Pentateuch, the Torah. What is the Torah and what does it mean? What it generally means? Guidance, it's not a hard-nosed legal term, it's a shade wider than law, it's guidance, in other words, if it's this big, Torah, law is this big, so Torah is the idea of guidance, it's pointing people in a direction. This term is important because that defines the big idea behind law. Law is not some static thing, some impersonal thing; in the Scriptures law is simply a way to guide people, in this case guide a society. It also implies that a society needs guidance.

But then there's a second word here that he uses, in verse 1, "statutes." Now the word statutes is *hakkim*, and this is a term that means you specify a standard or a norm, and this can include ethics as well as law. So it's again a wider term than what we would define in our terminology today as law; it's statutes, it's things that are right, things that are standards. So the Hebrew had a way of saying this, and some of these couldn't be enforced. There's a sense of a heart morality and love of an ethic because of a love of God that you will see that's in Bible. We're going to go into Hammurapi and some of the other law codes and you'll see how impersonal they are. The Bible has a warmth in its legal literature that I love the Lord with all my heart, with all my life. When it says I love

the Lord with all my nephesh, all my life, you now what that's talking about? It's talking about the details of life and I express my love to God in the details of my life by following what he says, the hakkim. John Adams said once, "our Constitution," see, here's again the Christian worldview leaked into the founders, our second President, think of what he's saying here. "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to govern any other kind of people." So Adams recognized that you can't order society by force of law, if the heart isn't there.

Then finally, the third word and the second one in verse 1, judgments; this is the Hebrew mishpatim, and this means case law. In other words, there'd be Ten Commandments or the abstract general principles, and then there are hundreds of judgments. As we go through the Law I'm going to connect, try to, with every passage I exegete of the case law, I want to reference it back to one of the Ten Commandments and you're going to be amazed; when you thought you knew what theft was, and how it fit the twenty-three different versions of theft in the Scriptures, and then you think man, I never realized that. Theft is correlated to respect for people's property. For example, if a person's animal is loose and you see it, you're responsible to either find the owner of that animal or hold the animal until the owner can come, and that's because... and then it says that if you don't do that you've stolen nephesh. You say wait a minute, I haven't stolen a material animal, how did I steal his nephesh. You stole his nephesh because life went into earning that, working for it, so that he could buy that animal. And when you took it, you destroyed nephesh. See, there's a holy... there's a depth of reasoning behind the law. This is why a generation, 300 years ago people knew this, and that's why they could write these great documents. Today the lawyers, these kids go to law school and the ones I've talked to never had an assignment reading the Constitution. They read case law, but it would be like me going to seminary and never learning Hebrew and Greek, never reading the Bible, just reading commentaries, but never getting into the text.

So we've got our vocabulary, now we want to look at one more thing. Here is a work done by Otto Bird and it's the relation of ethics and law. Otto Bird and his team did this book back in 1967, it was part of the great book series. What he did, and a group of scholars, went through 2,500 years of writings on ethics and law. So when these guys got through studying they studied all the views they are, and here are the three categories. They boiled 2,500 years of thinking into three categories as they saw it. Now we would debate some of the fine points because they're not separating sharply the Bible from secular philosophy and so on, but I show you these three issues because it will cause you to think what you are reading when you read Deuteronomy.

So let's look first at the first case. On the left column you have the concept, on the right the consequences in practice, and it's a plus and a minus, meaning there is some good consequences and some bad consequences of each of these three views. The first view is called positive law, that's a term that you'll read about so you need to be familiar with that terminology because sometimes you'll hear people say positive law. What positive law means is nothing exists, there's no ethic, there's no law that exists unless it is positively enacted. So unless some arm of government makes a regulation, or writes a law positively writing it then you can not say that there's any objective ethic or law available,

everything else is subjective. The only way you get an objective standard in society is to enact it. So ethics in this case equals the law because there aren't any ethics behind the law.

Now the good advantage of this view and I'm giving you the positive and negative here because I want you to think as you read Deuteronomy, how does Deuteronomy answer these? How does Deuteronomy supply answers to these questions? The first one is: law is objective. That's one good thing about this, there's no ambiguity in what the law says because it's positively enacted. The problem is you can't ever have an unjust law; there's no standard above the law to judge the law so you never can come to a conclusion that that law, that particular law is unjust because you've eliminated everything, the ethics is the law.

Now we drop down to the second, the social good idea. In this case law can be judged by whether or not it promotes the social good, or the common good. So there's been hundreds of people that write this idea of law, that the best laws, the just laws, are the laws that contribute to the value of society. The advantage of this view is that law is related to social reality, not some arbitrary decision by legislature. The disadvantage is that the individual is valued only in terms of its social usefulness. If social good is the key then the individual succumbs to the good of the society. For example, what value would Robinson Crusoe have on a desert island under this theory? No society, the individual has value only as he participates in society. A baby born, for example, with Spina Bifida or horrible adversities in his physical body, he can't be a great contributor to society, and so therefore his worth is only what is good for society. So that's one problem. And the second problem is how do you calculate what is good for society? Think of the public health codes. Had, in the Middle Ages, they just read the book of Leviticus they wouldn't have had, probably, the black plague because they would have put the sewage of the city outside the camp. But they didn't know that, they didn't know what was good for society. Moses didn't know about ultraviolet radiation killing germs, but he was told by God to go out and put these leper's clothing in the sun. Now they could have said oh God, what are you doing that for? God knew what He was doing. So the problem with the social good idea, it sounds good, except how do you calculate what is good for the society. We're going through the same thing with the health care system right now, the same question.

Then we come down to the natural right idea, here again ethics is over the law. This means that man as man has certain inherent rights. The good advantage is law relates to the individual. The problem is, if we believe in evolution, and we just went through that diagram, man is just an evolved ape; how come all of a sudden, apes don't have rights, of course now with the ecology movement even the plants have rights, the Swedes are passing laws now about stepping on flowers. But it follows, because like the lady that formed PETA, whatever her name was said a pig is a dog and a snake is a man, she's right, this is the paganism, so understand where these people are coming from... they don't understand where they're coming from but at least we can understand where they're coming from because we're getting in a position that we're going to have to teach unbelievers what their unbelief is before they even understand how to come to the gospel. The problem here is the difficulty of specifying the "rights."

So every one of these views, and this encompasses 2,500 years of research, of history, of thought. The guy on the sidewalk or in the classroom isn't going to come up with another idea here. This is comprehensive.

Now what does the Bible do? Let's go in chapter 4 here and look at what he says. Deuteronomy 4:2, he says I'm going to teach you this, and I don't want you to add a word to it, and I don't want you to take anything from it. ["You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."] Now that freezes it, with all due respect to President Obama's book, inexorable cause, the Mosaic Law did precisely what he says you don't do, and that is lay down principles that do not change. Moses does not want it changed.

And you say well, wait a minute, wait a minute, there were people that came along later in time that added to it. Yes, these were prophets and in Deuteronomy 18, I gave you the verse, Deuteronomy 18:17 there was the test of a prophet. So if the prophet was logically compatible with Moses, and he showed supernatural things happening, then he could write Scripture, and add to it. And out of that you have a series of prophets and I gave you some verses, we don't have time tonight to go through those but if you'll references those, 1 Chronicles, that whole string, [1 Chronicles 19:29; 2 Chronicles 9:29; 13:22; 20:34; 32:32; 33:18; 35:27] you'll see if you go there names of books that we don't have. The books in our Scripture are written from source materials that the prophets kept on their log sheets and we've lost the log sheets, but the Holy Spirit saw to it that the prophets would do this. There's the book of Gad, there's the book of Nathan, there's the book of Samuel, we don't have any of those books. Our books, Samuel and Kings, was made from those books. So the Chronicle series shows you in the development of Scripture and revelation a constant stream of prophets, and this is why....

O, I wanted to show you this before we go on. It's hard to see because it's faint, also because it's from Frances Schaeffer's book and it, sadly, did not come out from your handout very well, but just to show you the contrast between the paintings that you see of the Constitutional convention, parliamentary procedure and due process being followed, this is called Oath of the Tennis Court, 1789, the middle of the French Revolution, they decided they were going to have the declaration of the rights of man. Now excuse me, but where do we get the rights of man? They explicitly denied Christianity and so here they are, having a big riot in the middle of a tennis court, trying to figure out the rights of man. And there's a guy that lived through it, and this guy saw this happen and he made a painting of it. So there's a painting for you when you think about people trying to devise human rights, that's what it looks like.

Now there's another reference I want to show you because here's something you can use in your discussions to show the authenticity of Scripture. Remember we said over and over again that only Israel had a contract with their God; no other nation on earth, in all of human history, ever had a contract with their God, except Israel. That ought to raise eyebrows and say gee, what went on in Israel, and you can maybe get somebody interested in the Old Testament that way. But here's another interesting fact; look at this: "What makes the history of Israelite prophecy as su generis,"

that means a thing in and of itself, "is the succession of apostles of God," and this is written by a Jewish guy, by the way, "the apostles of God that come to the people through the ages. Such a line of apostle-prophets is unknown in paganism... [The pagan prophet] incorporated a unique, self-contained divine power; there his 'mission' ended with him." Think of Mormonism, think of Islam. These are isolated people, think of Jehovah's Witnesses and Christian Science; they are all singular people. But in the Scripture you have a continuity over time of prophets who are all theologically consistent with each other.

The observation that all revelation has come through Israel but that's what God said in the Abrahamic Covenant, worldwide blessing. Okay, then in verses 3-4 he repeats about the Baal Peor incident and he reminds them of the fact that they fell, and then he has this little cute thing he does in verse 4 where he says, "But you who held fast to the LORD," and in the Hebrew it's kind of funny, "who held fast to the LORD" is all one participle in the Hebrews and it says clingers, in other words you grab; you guys that grab the LORD and held on, you "are alive," and then he adds a little phrase on the end, "and every one of you is." What do you suppose he does that for, at the end of that sentence. He wants to assure people that God respected, and He was surgically precise in how he dealt with consequences of choice.

Then, of course, in verses 5-8 he talks about the wonderful testimony that Israel is going to have. In verse 6 he says, "...this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes," the word "wisdom and understanding," wisdom is skill in living, understanding means discernment. In other words, this is larger than just case law; this is a whole way of structuring a social order. That's why Deuteronomy is so important, it deals with the heart, it deals with how people are to think, it deals with every area of a human organization that's successful. One of the things in the wild west, you've heard the term in our country, in the 19th century the United States was expanding westward and it was basically pretty rough out on the frontier, very rough and very wild. And it's interesting, one person who was involved in this, the book, Liberty and Expansion by the Handlin couple, published by Harper and Rowe in 1989 said: Every man," they were talking about the leaders going West in our country, and the chaos out there, now it wasn't just Indians, there were gangs who raped, kill, and destroy the pioneer families that were going out there; it was really a wild west. And so as they left Virginia the guy said, "Every man should carry with him a Bible as we hope not to degenerate into a state of barbarism." So you see how they had that knowledge that the Scriptures alone hold society together.

So our conclusion tonight is that Israel has a foundation for its law; we've seen why you need a foundation for law, because if you don't you have a right to ask whoever you're talking to who are you? People don't like to be asked that question but it's a question that needs to be asked. Who are you to tell me how I'm going to live my life? It doesn't have to be in an insolent way, but just in a gracious way, you're questioning where the authority of law lies.

And then we've seen Israel had the correct view of ethics underneath the law; they recognized you can't just legislate things. Look at prohibition, they made a constitutional amendment to ban alcohol; it

didn't work because people's heart wasn't in it. You can't legislate successfully when there's a heart attitude that refuses to accept the standard.

Then Israel had the correct notion of authority, it was rooted in the Creator, not in man. The authority of the law derives from God. Israel was faced with comprehensive law enforcement via man and via nature. And on the notes, I missed this and we'll go for just a minute over here because I want you to see this, this is Alva McClain who wrote one of the great books on dispensational theology called The Greatness of the Kingdom, he was the President and the head of Grace Seminary in Winona Lake, Indiana for many, many years and in this particular quote he points to how God enforced His law, because we think of law enforcement as the police or the court system. It was more comprehensive in Israel's case.

"The well-being of men ... is morally and spiritually conditioned by a principle confirmed by divinely imposed sanctions. Now this principle holds good generally in all nations and every age." What he's saying is that nations that screw up finally collapse, Haiti being a good example. "But its operation has often been obscured to human eyes by the time 'lag' between the moral breach and the infliction of the sanction. ..." sobering news for America. In the general history of nations, the divine penalties are inflicted through secondary causes behind the veil of providential control.... But in the case of the nation of Israel, the moral judgment of Jehovah was not only declared at Sinai but also was confirmed spectacularly in the recorded history of that kingdom by divine sanctions immediately imposed. And these sanctions were generally supernatural...."

We'll get into that in the law. So you had law enforcement, not just through human institutions but you had law enforcement through nature and the environment. God would enforce His laws and it would be a comprehensive enforcement. So that's another conclusion that we want to understand from the book.

Finally, through the law God revealed freedom of choice and the responsibility for consequences. Always keep that in mind, you'll see that from one end of this book to the other; in one sense it's good news, and in one sense it's bad news. It's bad news in that it points out our sin but that's why Paul said the law was given, it was given to expose our sin; we wouldn't know our sin if we didn't have a yardstick and the Law gives us a yardstick, a diagnosis, standard. But the good news is this, and people don't often think about this; the good news, and it applies to parents raising children, the good news is that if there are discernable consequences for every choice it gives me comfort that I live in a rational universe and children need that. And where you have total permissivity of children they grow up with all kinds of psychological problems because they're insecure and they're insecure because nobody's ever said this is the way the world works, son, this is the way it is daughter, you do this, this is going to follow; you do this and this is going to follow. The environment becomes predictable when its lawful.