

Clough Deuteronomy Session 14

Deuteronomy 4:25- 40: Biblical Versus Pagan Views of Responsibility and Destiny

Fellowship Chapel; 23 Feb 10

On your handout I've changed one topic. If you look at the chart you'll see we've been covering, and tonight we finish, the first four chapters. And the title of those first four chapters, we said it was an exposition, the first exposition of the Torah. In other words, Moses is going to have exposition #2 and he's going to have exposition #3, and so forth. This is one complete exposition, from beginning to end, and we have emphasized for a long time the first three chapters where he is giving them a motivation to obey. He's talking to the second generation because the first generation was disciplined into death because they violated the Word of God, they basically did not trust the Lord to provide what He said he was going to do, and so we are left with the second generation. So Moses is addressing that second generation and he is telling them that God has given a set of past gracious actions and you observed those actions and you saw that God did what He said He was going to do. So that's anchored in the past.

Then we said the last time we met that now Moses is turning his attention to the present and the future and tonight, verses 25-40 he's going to press home a second source of motivation. We want to look at these sources of motivation because we all need to be motivated and we all get lagging from time to time in our Christian life, and the question is, well how does the Holy Spirit motivate? This is a model of how the Holy Spirit motivates; He motivates by directing our attention to the past. And when He does that He directs our attention to the faithfulness of God. Every time we have communion, that whole communion service is basically looking at the past because it's saying God did this and God did that and so forth.

Now in verses 25-40 Moses is going to look at the future so the second way of motivating is to realize that God has a sovereign destiny for this nation and that future history is shaped by His sovereign purposes. And this gives a personal sense of destiny, which is h-o-p-e. And I want to point out, h-o-p-e, or hope, in the Bible is not what we use in every day language. In every day language we use hope like, well gee, I hope it's so, and when we use it that way we're talking about truth that we're not sure of, we're talking about uncertain knowledge. That's not h-o-p-e in the sense of Scripture. In Scripture it is a grand statement, it is a statement about the whole of history. And it's an overview, and the technical word for this area of theology is eschatology, it comes from the Greek word eschatos which means the last, so it's the last things, the knowledge of last things.

On this slide, this is a book written 40 years ago now, Alvin Toffler, Future Shock, did a study of why it is that some people fall apart in the middle of a disaster and other people are stable. What is it that makes the difference in disaster? And it's the ability to respond, to see the truth, to see everything falling apart but having a frame of reference that is strong enough and powerful enough to absorb the shocks, and the shock is absorbed by the fact that there's hope in the future. Now there's false eschatology and there is the true eschatology in the

Scripture. Every person has some sort of eschatology that they use in order to cope with life. When a person lacks an eschatology they go into an absolute depression and probably go and commit suicide, and when a person gets to the point of depression to the point they are willing to kill themselves and end their life, they basically have lost their eschatology at that point; they've lost all hope. Presumably it's because they have placed their faith in a false hope which has invalidated itself some way in their experience. So here's Toffler's quote, and what he's talking about, he uses the word "orientation response," he says: "The orientation response is particularly stressing," that's the response to a disaster, it's a response to a serious problem in life, serious enough to dislocate your path; that's what he means by orientation. "The orientation response is particularly stressing when a novel event or fact challenges one's whole world view." So we're not talking about disappointment over a grade on a test or something, we're talking about something a little bit more powerful, more scaring in life. "Given an elaborate," and here was his discovery, and he was right, "Given an elaborate ideology-Catholicism, Marxism," or we could add Islam today, "or whatever-we quickly recognize (or think we recognize) familiar elements in otherwise novel stimuli and this puts us at ease. Indeed, ideologies may be regarded as large mental filing cabinets with vacant drawers or slots waiting to receive new data. For this reason ideologies serve to reduce the intensity and frequency of the orientation response."

And of course, in those days there was a study of the Vietnam War and the way, for example, the North Vietnamese were able to sustain themselves in the face of American carpet bombing, for example. How did the young people that were on the side of the communists, how were they able to sustain themselves under the tremendous bombardment? And it was because of their Marxist doctrine; they had an eschatology that was very powerful. So it's that point that we want to expose ourselves to tonight as we go through this point of history.

So let's turn to Deuteronomy 4:25, and Moses now looks forward. He says: "When you beget children and grandchildren and have grown old in the land, and act corruptly and make a carved image in the form of anything, and do evil in the sight of the LORD your God to provoke Him to anger," then certain things are going to happen. There are going to be consequences. But the whole idea of verse 25, though its negative in some sense, in another sense what he's saying is that history has a pattern to it. History is malleable, so let's see if we can get the next slide up here. This slide shows the difference in the philosophies of history between the Bible and paganism, and so there are two distinct ways of looking at history. Outside of the Scriptures and outside of Scriptural influence, the only solution to history has been cyclical; in other words, history repeats itself in these cycles. So the pagan concept of history is it's just repetition. This is what the early Greek historians... they were trying to understand the patterns of history that would repeat themselves. So that's the pagan view of history.

Now if you think about that diagram, what you're seeing is hopelessness, things are just going around and around and around, there's no progress being made. At the bottom of the diagram you'll see there there's progress; that's the biblical philosophy of history; it's linear and it's progressive; the pagan view is not linear and it's not progressive, it's

just going in a circle. Now today things are a little more confused because both Darwin and Karl Marx stole, and they might not have been totally conscious they were doing this, but they stole the lower view of history from the Bible. We know where Karl Marx got it from, he got it from Hegel and Hegel got his view of progress in history from the book of Daniel, so it's just two steps away, and that's why communists believe in a progress toward a goal. They don't know why, on an atheist basis there's no reason to believe that history should progress to any goal, but Marx got that idea surreptitiously from the Scriptures. And so Darwin did the same thing if evolution is supposedly progressing, because of atheistic materialistic chance processes somehow it's progressing.

So now let's go to verse 25 and see another point. He's saying here, "When you beget children and grandchildren," so now it's multigenerational, and I'm going to try this one more time, verse 25, a multigenerational span of attention, "When you beget children and grandchildren and have grown old in the land," so at least two generations in the future are mentioned, because he's in the second generation, and the children would be the third generation and the grandchildren would be the fourth generation, so we're talking here a century or so in the future, at least. "...and you act corruptly and make a carved image in the form of anything, and do evil in the sight of the LORD your God to provoke Him to anger, [26] I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day," now as we said last time and we're going to make the point again tonight, the criticism that Moses is doing here, his critical... he's pointing out what the sin is, it is not immorality here. And we started this discussion last time and I want to reinforce it tonight with two more slides. The reason why idolatry is #1 and immorality and social chaos is a distinct #2, unlike the way we think, in the Bible it puts idolatry as the primer of destruction-NOT immorality. Immorality comes after you have idolatry setting in. So this jerks us around in our thinking because we don't normally think this way when we think about society and life and so forth.

I want to spend some time on this and I wanted to throw up a slide that we did last time to show that when we are up here and we are discussing a political issue and I'm not talking about necessarily political parties here, I'm just talking about social issues in general, when we talk about that, the pressure of life drives us down. Historically this is true, I mean, people who study Plato know that Plato was a would-be politician and he got so frustrated by the political process he withdrew himself and went off and started studying philosophy because he realized that the political discussions weren't getting anywhere because they weren't substantive. So the pressures of life drive you down to discuss... well, ethics. Remember we said in a non-technical everyday street way ethics is an answer to the question: what right do you have to tell me how to live my life. That's the ethical question: What right do you have to tell me how I should live my life? That's the primary ethical question. And frankly, it's being answered very sloppily because most people say because I said so. That's a power answer, what you're saying is you have more power but you haven't given an ethical reason why I should listen to you.

So that's the primary ethical question, but the problem is if you think about you deal with the who, who is the one who says what is right and wrong, and now you're back to another level of epistemology and

metaphysics. And epistemology, in a rough, crude way, answers the question: why should I believe what you tell me is true? Why should I believe what YOU tell me is true? What is your justification for making these assertions that you're making? On what basis do you make those assertions. So we're dealing with the issue of how do we know truth.

And then finally we come down to metaphysics which is basically the answer to the question: Is there any purpose out there or meaning at all? Is there any purpose or meaning, because if there isn't then we don't have any basis for truth, and if we don't have any basis for truth then we don't have any basis for right and wrong, and if we don't have any basis for right and wrong, all our political discussions are trivial. So in a nutshell here's what's going on. What Moses is getting at is when you falsify the nature of God by idolatry, you have destroyed these two elements; you have destroyed the metaphysical base of the nation Israel because it's grounded on the fact that God is Creator and we're the creature and as Creator He has a purpose for history, and therefore a purpose for your life. And if you're going to mess with that you're going to mess with the whole metaphysical underneath this thing and the thing is going to collapse on you. That's what he's getting at, and that is why idolatry is so critical. And it works its way up logically, once you mess with the metaphysics you mess with epistemology you mess with ethics and then you mess with society.

Here's a diagram that shows what's going on mentally in all this. You have the biblical metaphysic and epistemology as a basis for the nation; that is Yahweh, that is God. You have the Creator and you have the creature; that's the foundation of it all. And God has certain attributes, sovereignty, omnipotence, and we could do more; the creature has analogous images, we are made in God's image as far as human creatures, and we have what answers to sovereignty as choice or responsibility; omnipotence, energy, and love is love and so forth and so on. So we have characteristics and attributes that come because we're made in God's image. So that's the Creator/creature.

Then we have verbal revelation and that answers the epistemological question. Remember the epistemological question, why should I accept what you're telling me is true? So revelation gives a basis of it and Moses is going to say here, you'll see him say it several places, watch in the text how often Moses refers to Mount Sinai and hearing God speaking. Now he's doing that for a reason, because in verbal revelation you want accessibility. You don't want God mumbling something [can't understand the mumbling] and some sort of priest that you pay a thousand dollars a year salary to interpret the mumbling into some sort of word that you can use in your life. A fuzzy word of God is having no word from God. So he's going to say look, you people, you sat there in the valley and you heard Him speak; we have an accessible knowledge of God because He reveals Himself. And that's why Moses is going to say this in the text. And what does that do? That's also, by the way, the location of infallibility. Keep your eye on the little infallibility ball because it's going to move. Once you go into idolatry infallibility does not disappear, it moves, it shifts its location, but infallibility does not go away with idolatry.

So we have infallibility and accessibility and that lets us... God is near to us, we can have joy and confidence in an evil world. So that's very,

very important; that's the whole basis of our Christian faith, that's the whole basis of Israel's faith and Moses wants it very clear. So that's why the text is going to say certain things.

Now, let's watch what happens when we mess with this. If we have an idolatrous metaphysic and epistemology let's see where that leads us. First we get rid of the Creator/creature distinction because we've got an idol now. Now the gods and goddesses and what other creatures run around the universe, gods, man and nature, they're all there. Now of those three, the gods, man and nature, what institution socially has enough power to maintain society? It's the state. So here you have a very interesting insight; wherever you have idolatry and the destruction of a transcendent God, the state becomes God in practice. That's why Pharaoh; Pharaoh could say I am the state, and he did. The Egyptian art work shows it very, very clearly in the pillars. Pharaoh was the state. So when Moses confronts Pharaoh in the Exodus, unless you understand Egypt and paganism you don't really get what that conflict is all about, when Moses walks in and he points his finger at Pharaoh. Nobody pointed fingers at Pharaoh. Pharaoh was God walking on earth, he was the mediator between the state and the gods and goddesses, and for you to challenge Pharaoh in the name of some dessert Jewish deity was an affront. So that was the collision and God dealt with Pharaoh and it's remembered again and again and again in Old Testament history. And there's various names, leviathan and others become code words for this confrontation with the almighty state.

So now we have the state; the state basically now begins to accept sovereignty and omnipotence, the state becomes, in effect, God walking on earth. So this is always true and it's always true, everywhere you go in the world. If you do not have a transcendent God, the God of Scripture, you do not have political freedom. Political freedom and Christianity go together. Then what happens to replace verbal revelation? Human speculation; now the infallibility is basically moved over to man's man. Infallibility hasn't disappeared, somehow we think that our minds become infallible, we are the authority, because we need an authority and we need an unchangeable authority, so we cry out for an authority, but remove it from God's Word over to our own speculation. So these are some of the very serious things that happen.

And we dealt with..., last time we said Romans deals with how this has, and again, just a quick review, Romans 1:18 to the end of the chapter, how does that work? Well, the first thing that happens is there's a rebellion against God and it's against God who is knowable in the environment around us because Paul says they are clearly understood, by the way, this whole Romans 1:18, this is depth psychology. You don't have to go to Sigmund Freud for some dark realms of the human mind that he thinks associates with a sexual diversion, this is a God perversion, and it afflicts all of us. So we have this rebellion against God that produces a sense of guilt, but it does something else, because now we are resisting God's truth. There's a spiritual transformation that starts to happen, and that is our minds become a radio receiver for messages from the evil one. Now the filter begins to weaken and now we have vulnerability to satanic deceptions.

So then we have the suppression of truth and added to it now are satanic deceptions. Don't think that the worldly philosophers have not been conned by demonic spirits. I was talking with a man who studied psychology for 30 years and he says if you go back and you look at the writings of Karl Gustav Jung, you will find very quickly that he had two demons that he spoke to, anima and animus, and that's where he got most of his philosophy from and he freely acknowledges it, he doesn't call them demons because he himself says that that's too offensive, but I have spirit beings that I talk to. So here we have the father of much modern 20th century psychology openly admitting that the basic ideas come from the spirit world. So we're serious about this, this is not just some little Bible story here. Suppression of truth plus satanic deceptions now results in a perversion of the sense of dominion, because we, from creation we're supposed to be managers for God in history. So now that thing becomes perverted and when it becomes perverted, now we want to reengineer, we use our dominion sense to reengineer reality the way we want it. And we want a reality where we can be free some of the... at least some of the consequences of our sin. It's very simple. So we design in our minds reality to fit our heart's desire, in our depraved heart's desire.

And so this is the first step, then after that we have idolatry; the moment we have idolatry, however, because now we've gone through this whole process, something else that we forget about, we no longer have the restraining Holy Spirit ministry against our sinful flesh. So now the flesh breaks out, and this is what God is talking about, I give them over, I give them over, I give them over. What's all this giving over in Romans 1:18-32? It's that He's letting the flesh be unrestrained. So this is where social collapse comes in. Social collapse follows the idolatry, so that's what I'm trying to point out here as we go through this, that there's a sequence in mind.

So he says you're going to make a carved image in the form of something, you're going to do evil in the sight of the Lord, your God, to provoke me to anger. What were some of those images? This is a little guy that you meet in Old Testament theology, this is what Baal looked like, according to the Canaanite according to the Canaanite artists; there he's a statue, usually he's pictured with one arm up here, holding a club, and one arm here with a lightening thing in it; another artist here depicts him again with his right hand up holding a club and his left hand with lightening in it. And you say well what is this? Well, just think a moment, what is the work and labor in an ancient eastern society; where did most people... what did they have to do to survive economically. They had to raise food, they had to raise animals, it was an agrarian economy. So not surprisingly this god was the lord of the natural substances to support an agricultural economy. And we have, therefore, this god who now isn't the creator God, he's one of several gods, happen to be the stronger guy at the moment, and so now we have to deal with this guy; if I want money, and I need rain and I need fertility because that's the needs of an agrarian economy, so how do I get my business going. Well, I get my business going by manipulating somehow, if I can, my need, I need rain and I need fertility, fertility of seed, fertility in the animals; if I don't I can't produce anything. So what do I do? Well, somehow, because Baal and the other gods and goddesses themselves are involved in reproduction I've got to get the fertility theme going, so therefore we have cultic

prostitution; it wasn't necessarily a pornographic thing with them, though that was obviously true, the real deal was that they wanted to get Baal going and the way they did it was to copulate out in the fields; they had orgies out there, and it was in order to get the fertility thing going. So this was a form of manipulation, and then Baal was supposed to give his blessings of rain and fertility on the grain and the herds.

This is in one simple picture that's the theology that competed with the Bible. Now if you're a businessman why do you suppose this was superior to the Scriptures, or could appear to be superior to the Scriptures. Well, one thing is, what did the Scriptures tell you to do every seventh day? Stop work. The test of the Sabbath was a test whether we could rely upon God to support me the other six days, and it was a... every seven days I had a test of faith, could I stop my business, could I stop my labor in the trust that God would provide for my need. And it wasn't a light decision. And so God said no, and I'm going to discipline you if you don't. And what did He do every seven years? Shut down the whole economy. How can He do that? Because our God, Yahweh, is to supply our need. This struck the pocketbooks. I'm trying to emphasize that, this is not just an abstract theology, this struck at the heart of the businesses of the day, and that was where the theology, so to speak, met the road, the rubber met the road.

So we have, then, this idea of Baal. Now we haven't got time to go into this but I will have one comment here: "What distinguishes Yahweh," this is a scholar, A. S. Kapelrud, by the way, this Dr. Kapelrud, wrote The Ras Shamra Discoveries and the Old Testament, he was the guy that translated most of the Ugaritic from which we learn about Baal. So he's a guy that really knows Baalism. He has a textbook that you go to study to understand Baalism. Now here's what he says, knowing what he knows about Baalism, and what he knows about the Bible. Look at this quote. "What distinguishes Yahweh so sharply from Baal is His intimate association with history." Remember when I showed you the slide, paganism goes round and round, seasonal cycles, summer, fall, winter, spring, summer, fall, winter, spring, cycles. That's not Yahweh; Yahweh is talking about a progress in history. This chapter we are on is going to conclude with an overview all the way to the end of time, the eschatology. "He was not bound to the cycle of the seasons but guided his people through history toward a goal. The decisive event was not the victory over the primeval dragon [of chaos] but the victory over the Egyptians," a historic work of God.

See how history, goals and progress... translate that into your life. The idea is that we are progressing; if you don't believe you're progressing and being sanctified toward a goal to one day live in the real literal physical kingdom of God, face to face with the Lord, if that's not in your future, you've got to question your faith, whether you've really trusted the Bible and its authority. So that's all the background. So let's now go to one more, I think I have one more slide here and then we can go through the text understanding the issues.

The fight that the Israelites are having is this; we have the same fight. Are we going to go with Yahweh or are we going to go with some sort of sub-biblical view of God. And the battle is over these attributes, basically the simple thing. And this is, by the way, one first-aid tool to use in dealing with tests quickly; you can do this in about sixty

seconds and it can calm your mind down when you're upset and when you've had a disaster, and that is to memorize some of these attributes, nine of them here but you don't need all of those necessarily, but you go through these attributes. God is sovereign, what does that mean? It means He's in control of this mess. God is righteous, God is just, so ultimately it's going to work for good. It's not working good right at this moment but I have confidence because God is righteous and just. God is loving, therefore He has me personally in mind and had me in mind for all eternity. God is omniscient, He knows all the details and He knows things I don't know so when He tells me to do something and it doesn't seem like it makes common sense I have to trust him and put my common sense down because I have to say well, wait a minute, if He tells me to do this and He's omniscient, He must know about a few things that I don't know about so I'd better do what He tells me. God is omnipresent, therefore He's not distant from me when I'm involved in this thing. God is omnipotent and He doesn't get tired; I'm tired, I'm oppressed, I'm in the middle of a trial and I need to know somebody out there isn't tired, and God is immutable, He's the same today as He was with Moses, He's the same today as when He spoke on Mount Sinai. And God is eternal, there never has been a time... so we can operate in one of two ways now.

That's the real God, anything not that is an idolatrous defamation and perversion of that theology. So we can go to our response of humble worship and sensitivity to His Word or response of aversion, enmity and avoidance of His Word. So that's the choice, that's the response, and that's what Moses is getting at. So you do evil and you provoke Him to anger. Then Moses says I'm going to call upon witnesses, and this is a theme in the Old Testament, [Deuteronomy 4:26] "I call heaven and earth to witness," and I'll go through this from time to time, but the Old Testament prophets, and in your handout I quote three verses there where he said this. By the way, on your handout where I deal with Baal, it's a perverted dominion, the blank there means perverted dominion in a world of illusion, and where I say that: Success and happiness starts with getting the gods on my side via manipulation rituals, that's basically what goes in that blank.

Okay, now when he calls heaven and earth to witness, very briefly here's the deal: Angels are watching history; there's a whole angelic realm in the invisible world that we know not a lot of. We know enough, however, to know that there are angelic watchers that are bearing covenant witnesses, such that when God invokes judgment He calls upon the angelic... He can't call upon men; why? Because men only live in one generation, but the intergenerational witness is done by angelic watchers and these angelic watchers in some way are called upon to witness God's judgments.

Now he says, then he says you do that, "you will soon utterly perish in the land," "utterly perish" I would dispute that translation a little bit. It doesn't mean that you will utterly perish in the sense you disappear from history. What it is, it's a verb with an infinitive after it that emphasizes the mood of the verb and what he means is you will certainly perish in the land; in other words, there's no doubt that you are going to be kicked out of the land, no doubt whatever, so keep it up and this is what's going to happen to you. And then he says in verse 27, "And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples," that's the exile, it happened



twice, it happened in 586, it happened to the Northern Kingdom in 721, it happened again in AD 70. "And the LORD will scatter you among the nations, [and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you.]"

Notice in verse 28 the first clause, "There you will" do something, and that's a hard verse there, "There you will serve gods," now I refer in the handout to 1 Samuel 26:19, if you do a concordance check you'll see that that same phrase is used there, and David complains to Saul because David was in exile and he had to live among the Philistines, and he said you know, you guys made me go serve other gods. Now does that mean that David became an idolater while he was in Philistia? No, what it means is, is that when you go into a Gentile culture, which values, which systems of ethics dominates? It's a pagan set of ethics, and therefore it's social customs and other things are designed around a pagan economy and a pagan theology. Remember that all societies are religious. If you look at the law codes, if you look at the social customs, you are looking at the expression, the behavioral expression of a religious faith of some sort. So when we live in a Gentile culture we suffer, it's like having schizophrenia, for example, Jews in Babylon and Persia.

And I list five things that they lost, and they had to go on living. Number one, they had no temple, no temple in Babylon and Persia, they lost it. Number two, they had no Levitical welfare systems that they had in the nation, so that means the whole social welfare system was totally changed. Three, they had no sabbatical rests from labor, so their whole labor and economic life was disrupted. They had no protections derived from the Ten Words of a sovereign God against a tyrannical state; they lived under tyranny. And finally, they were forced to support temple precincts through taxes. So it was a schizophrenic existence for believers to have to live in a pagan society and that's the same for us today. And we will see more of it, we are forced, our tax money is forced to finance things that we consider, if not amenable to our faith, certainly not blessed by our faith, certainly not blessed by our faith. But that's part of living outside of the kingdom of God; we don't live in the kingdom of God today, that's the whole point.

So our existence is schizophrenic, in other words, we have a heart orientation and yet we're compelled by social structures around us. The latest instance of this was the University of Minnesota race, class, culture and gender task group that wants all education majors to accept cultural Marxism, they want them to learn the society of white privilege, institutional racism, and the myth of meritocracy in the United States and basically it will be forced and mandated by the state upon every student. That's this working group of PhD educators. So that's again an expression of a religious position legally. We find a group in the University of North Carolina that doesn't want to teach American history before the end of the Civil War, so everything prior to the Civil War is a big blank, so don't learn... including the Constitution, of course. So this is how history is revised. And you will always see this; unbelief has got to hide elements of history. Have any of you taken a history course in which in the 1st and 2nd centuries Jesus Christ was considered number one. I don't think there's a person here tonight who's ever had a course, any time at all in their education, grammar school, Jr. high, Sr. high, college, graduate level, have you ever had a history course that Jesus Christ was the most outstanding thing that ever happened in world

history? I don't think so. Now why is that? Is that because He wasn't? No, that's because He was a "religious story" that we peripheralize off to the side but we can't possibly allow that sort of "religious" truth to contaminate "real" history. So that's the manufactured and phony environment in which we are brought up, and the expression and it's compulsory, bringing up, because that's what the laws say, but it's all phony and it's all directed to suppress the truths of God. For example, in a history course, have you ever dealt with God speaking on Mount Sinai? I don't think so.

Okay, verse 29, "But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him [if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul]." [30] "When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days," there's the first mention of the Tribulation, in the latter days there will be distress, in other words, at some point, Moses isn't clear here because this is centuries earlier, there's going to be a time when you people are out in among the Gentile nations, you've been thrown out of the land and you're going to be in great distress. This has happened, of course, repetitively in history, but there's one grand culmination of this sort of things. And "these things will come upon you [in the latter days] when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice, [31] (for the LORD your God is a merciful God)," now here we find the great covenants of history; here's the source of hope. The source of hope is "He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the contract of your fathers which He swore to you." There is progress in history. The progress, notice, is not guaranteeing the survival of a particular generation because each generation is held accountable. And notice before that it said, "when you are in distress, all these things will come upon you ... when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice," then He will give the blessings of the covenant; the covenant doesn't go away, it just sits there and waits for some responsible believers. But there's the combination of God's sovereignty and at the same time a vigorous reassertion of human responsibility, that we are accountable and there are consequences.

Then finally, in the last section of this chapter, from verses 32 down to 40, basically 40 is the end of the chapter; verse 41 and following is sort of a fragment that connects the next large section. [32] "For ask now," see, what is he doing; now having understood what we've done with the slides, remember this slide, here's the distortion of unbelief. Now this is behind this text so let's look at the text and ask ourselves why is Moses saying what he's saying in verse 32? "For ask now concerning the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether any such thing like this has happened, or anything like it has been heard. [33] Did any people ever hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live? [34] Or did God ever try to go and take for Himself a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?"

Now can you invent any kind of language expression that more vigorously asserts the uniqueness and centrality of Mount Sinai than the Exodus? Again, think about how you learned history, think about all those times

that you spent studying for history exams. Was this ever the center of the history exam? That means you've been brought up and I've been brought up with basically a profound and highly filtered view of history. This is the real deal, and that's what Moses wants his people to realize; this happened in history once. If it ever is true that this happened, the God of the cosmos, not of the solar system, the God of the cosmos, the entire universe, spoke on a mountain before millions of people, if that ever has occurred in history, doesn't that make the Bible the most important book on earth? Doesn't that invalidate the rest of the library on an authority structure or scale? Doesn't that make the Scriptures central to history. This isn't something that happened to a mystic sitting in a monastery some place; this was open, this was a history that could have been photographed, it could have been filmed. That's what Moses is arguing about.

Now, he goes on to say... there's a reason why he keeps saying this, this is about the third time he's said this, and that's found in verse 35; here's the purpose of that history. "To you it was shown that," purpose clause, "To you it was shown that you might know that the LORD Himself is God; there is none besides Him. [36] Out of heaven He let you hear His voice, that He might instruct you; on earth He showed you His great fire, and you heard His words out of the midst of the fire." There is the intimate picture of the fact that our God is a knowable God who communicates to us and who has done so in an objective loud and public manner. That's the God of the Scriptures; that's what revelation looks like and that is the most important section of all of history. [36] "And because," now he goes on and he explains there's a pattern to history. "And because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them; and He brought you out of Egypt with His presence and His mighty power," there's you see, he's saying history is progressing and you people in Israel, he says, ought to have a personal sense of destiny. And so should we, living in the church age. We're in union with Jesus Christ who has ascended to the Father's right hand. Talk about the communists or the Muslims, look what our personal sense of destiny is; it outmatches any competitor, and this is what you need to live the Christian life, just to withstand the pressures, to withstand the trials, to withstand the disappointments in life, to have a personal sense of destiny that is anchored this way. "He loved your fathers, He chose their descendants after them; and He brought you out of Egypt [with His Presence, with His mighty power. [38] driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land as an inheritance, as it is this day."

Now in verse 39 and 40 he is going to explicitly answer the epistemological and the metaphysical question. In verse 39 notice, "Therefore know this day, and consider it in your heart," when you see an expression, consider something in your heart, and we'll get into what the heart is all about because Moses mentions it a lot, he's talking about the depths of your mind. He's not talking about the surface, the everyday stuff. He's talking about... you can use an illustration from the ocean, he's not talking about the surface waves on the ocean, he's talking about the tides and the great undercurrents. That's what is our heart, and so he says, "Therefore know this day, and consider it in your heart," in other words your deep knowledge, "consider it in your deep knowledge, that

the LORD Himself is God in heaven above and on earth beneath; and there is no other."

See how adamant this is; over and over and over again, there's not a mention here of immorality. Not that that's not important, but the point is, first things first, and if we lose our theology we lose everything else and we lose our ethics. That's verse 39, that's the metaphysical answer. What is the meaning and purpose of life? A personal sense of destiny before my Creator, before my Judge and before my Savior. That's my personal sense of destiny and that's your personal sense of destiny if you're a believer. So one can take that away, no force in history can remove it; it is impermeable to any state, any tyranny, any persecution, any assault. No one can remove that other than you and me in our hearts. We have to deeply plant it, know and consider in the depths of your thinking this.

Then in verse 40 he answers the epistemological question, why should I believe what you're saying, why should I accept what you're saying is true? Well, verse 40 answers it. He says, "You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you this day, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you [for all time]." Notice in verse 40 he says the statutes and judgments "which I command you," now you see Moses is the intermediary, so what he's saying is, here's the reason why you should accept what I am teaching you; this isn't what God spoke on Mount Sinai directly to the people, those are the Ten Words, but indirectly He gave these concepts to Moses, then Moses was the intercessor or the in-between mediator, between God and the nation. Now he says I am commanding these statutes and judgments for you.

Now why should you accept what Moses says is true? And his answer is "that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time." In other words, it's true because it's part of the plan of God. That's where truth is located; it's not located in human speculation, it's embedded in this grand plan for history. And when we violate that, because we're violating the plan of history, we're violating the design of history, we reap suffering. Suffering, ultimately in the Scriptures, the fall, is self-inflicted, it's the rebellion of the creature against the Creator. And all the fallout, the cascading effects going all over the place, like a sack of marbles that just blew up and they're rolling all over the place, and we're chasing marbles in our suffering because the bag broke, and the reason is because we've violated, and Israel is going to face this again and again because they've been given certain rules, certain laws, certain ways they're to administer their judicial system, certain ways they are to run their family, certain way to train their children, certain ways they are to farm, certain ways they are to raise their herds, certain ways they are to worship, because God designed it that way. And when they don't they're going to go into exile and the number of years in their exile is related to the fact in their businesses they short-circuited the sabbatical rules, so God said okay, okay, now I'm going to make you take the seventy. So now we're just going to multiply it and you can enjoy the rest, meanwhile living in a pagan society. God is harsh in passages like this.

So we come to the conclusion, then, that Israel is a divinely designed laboratory example of a nation with a unique relationship to God. Every other nation, including our nation, has been abandoned to the principalities and powers except for temporary regions where there's been positive volition to the Word of God. We are living in a generation which, if we do not respond to the Word of God like our forbearers we are going to reap suffering. And the blessings that this nation once had will go away because they were there in the first place not because America was so great, not because the founding fathers were brilliant men, not because of this or that; it was because there were at least a strong minority, there never were a majority, by the way, there was a strong minority of Bible-believing people who were very serious about living according to the standards of the Word of God whether King George III liked it or not, whether certain people from France who came here to teach people liked it or not, whether the Native Americans liked it or not, they lived their lives, imperfectly, yes, but they were attempting to live their lives out by trusting the Word. And that gave us a blessing. But America is not a special nation in the sovereignty of God, and we may well come to realize that in the next generation.

Secondly, it is to be, Israel is, to be a worldwide blessing per the Abrahamic Covenant. Remember the three things: land, seed and a worldwide blessing. The destiny of Israel is to be a worldwide blessing and that means in spite of themselves they are a channel of God. What has Israel given to the world? You're holding it in your lap, the Bible, a Jewish book, that's a product of Israel, and our Savior, whom we have trusted for our so great salvation is a produce of Israel.

And the third thing that Israel will one day give the world is world peace by a world government with the return of Messiah; that's not yet. To be a worldwide blessing for the Abrahamic Covenant, a historic example in fallen human history in what the Kingdom of God is to come upon the earth, in other words, it's a sample. When we're looking, we're going to get into the laws now, we're going to get into the Ten Commandments and we're going to go into this law, that law, statutes and judgments, you think holy mackerel, what are we doing with all this detail, and I don't want you to lose the forest for the trees here; what we're seeing is God reaching down into fallen because Israel is fallen, they had sinners, he reaches down and He twists, and He turns the society around and He moves it with special rules, He takes... the Gentiles are over here but in Israel He's doing something, and it's imperfect, it's not the final Kingdom of God but it's a laboratory historical example that we do well to look for wisdom. By the way, that's why there's a revelation of their sovereign destiny; that's the anchor of hope.

Finally, the individual's heart condition, and we'll see that now as Moses, he's going to expound the Ten Words, this is coming up in the next session, he's going to expound the Ten Words but then you will be amazed that all the way from chapter 5 through chapter 11, chapter 5, chapter 6, chapter 7, chapter 8 chapter 9, chapter 10, chapter 11, it's all about the heart, he doesn't even get into the statutes until chapter 12. So we have to ask ourselves, well, what's the deal, why is it he's spending almost half the book dealing with the heart. What had he just witnessed in the first generation? A generation that failed, a generation that heard the

Word of God, turned aside; a generation that every time God brought trials in their life they flunked.

And finally, they flunked the final exam and God says out of here, and that was the end of that first generation, except for Caleb and Joshua. So Moses is watching all this and he's saying, for crying out loud people, you know, we had the statutes and judgments, they aren't changed, so I'm telling you, the second generation, I'm telling you that you guys, it starts here; you can have all the laws in the land, it doesn't change hearts, they have got to come inside out. See, that's the problem we've got today, you can't change society by a government program. Yeah, you know, you can make some changes but that doesn't swing the deal. You can't change a society that has CEO's that are very, very powerful in large corporations who are basic pagans, who control the destinies of thousands of employees unless their heart is changed. This is why, for example, when Bret Hume spoke about Jesus Christ on Fox News in connection with the Tiger Wood thing, you'd thought the world collapsed, I mean, the people in Washington DC just absolutely freaked out on Brit Hume. Why is that? Why is it every time you mention the word Jesus Christ all the antichrists come out of the woodwork like a bunch of cockroaches, they crawl out. What brings all the bugs out? It's because there's a hatred for truth in a fallen world.

Why is Israel hated? Why were they hated in the Old Testament? Because they stood for truth. So that's part of our destiny, we stand for truth and we're going to get, you know, brick bats thrown at us and we're going to get attacked, and that's part of our destiny but we have a personal sense of destiny because we can see down to the end, at death, if you're a believer, your problems are over; at death an unbeliever's problems have just started.