

Clough Deuteronomy Session 15

Deuteronomy 4:41-49: Summary of 1:6-4:40 with a Deuteronomy Editorial Note
Fellowship Chapel; 2 Mar 10

To set the situation for tonight let's turn to Deuteronomy 4:41 and what we want to do is look, just quickly we're going to look at the structure of chapter 4, this section, just make a few comments and then we're going to go back and we're going to try to tie together everything we've done up to this point for a particular reason. If you look on the handout, in the outline under Introduction & Review, I always keep sort of a roadmap of where we're going through the book. If you look at that you'll see that at verse 40 we've come to the end of a section. In other words, Moses has spoken from verse 6 of chapter 1 on through chapter 40 verse 40; this is all Moses teaching the people. And then obviously, if you look at verse 41, it's not Moses speaking, so it's something that an editor, probably, that the Holy Spirit used to compile this Scripture, because obviously the book of Deuteronomy recounts Moses death so it had to be compiled after his death, this was an editorial remark in verses 40-49. Then you'll notice, beginning next time we meet that Moses, Deuteronomy 5:1, Moses calls, so now we have a second exposition. And this is the second exposition of the Torah and it is a long, long, LONG section in the book.

So there's a gap here between 4:40 and 5:1 and this is an editor's comment. So what we need to do is eventually, as we get toward the end of the session tonight we want to pull together why did the editor put those things in there. Certainly there's no new information; verses 41-49 simply review what we've already done, so why do we have to do it a second time. When you see things like that, particularly repetition in the Word of God you want to ask yourself why. The Holy Spirit used an economy of words in Scripture; there's no wasted words. So whenever you see repetition you need to not dismiss it and say well, I've read that before and I already know that; what you need to ask yourself is why did the Holy Spirit seek to do this again. And that leads to insights that you wouldn't normally get if you just hastily dismissed the thing.

So we want to review now from Deuteronomy 1:6-4:40 and we've talked about that first exposition as a motivation thing. And that's not going to be true of the second exposition. So this is why I'm making a point of this; this is a unique characteristic of the first exposition. Moses is motivating and it becomes a model for us in motivating ourselves because we often run out of gas in the Christian life and drag around. And so it's important that we understand how, in this model motivation, how did Moses pull it off, and how can we mimic that in our lives.

And one of the verses that I've outlined there and given the text in italics is an important verse in Paul's epistle to the Corinthians that tells us about our hearts, our heart condition. Not our physical heart but our spiritual heart, and that's the location of the great battle in the Christian life. The Old Testament Jews fought a battle over physical real estate; we fight a battle over psychological real estate, inside our heart, and the Holy War motif that people object to and say oohh, that's ethically poor stuff in the Bible, it's so vicious, that is the same imprecatory spirit of Holy War in the Old Testament that comes across in the New Testament to be applied to our hearts, that we are to be as adamant about conquering our flesh, its motivations, its thoughts, and

controlling what we think, as they were in controlling that land. "And this is no new insight, many devotional writers have made that point. If you read commentaries on Joshua particularly, the book of Joshua, the conquest of the land, there's dozens of commentaries that are devotional type commentaries that inevitably pick the conquest period as a model for our mental struggles that we have in the Christian life.

So if you look at that box where it says: "PRINCIPLE of 2 Corinthians 10:4-5," follow the italic text and see if you can get the whole attitude that's involved here. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, so this is not an Islamic Jihadism of social war, it is not... "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal," the Lord Jesus Christ will eventually come into history again and when He comes it will be carnal, it will be flesh, it will be physical and political. But right now "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God for the pulling down of strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled." He was applying it there to the Corinthians. But the whole point is, see that phrase, "casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against missing the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ," and that was a challenge, and it's with us for the rest of our Christian life of controlling our thought life. That's where the battle is lost.

So, now we're face to face with the how do you motivate. And we have to, in order to motivate, deal with the arguments "in every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God." So we're not talking about a rah-rah session, and it's nice to have, you know, emotional music and so on, but that lasts for about five and a half minutes while you're doing the singing. What you need is something that is going to hang in there and last, something that when you're in the middle of a discussion somewhere or you're just by yourself and trying to deal with thoughts that you know are not biblical, then what do you do.

So we're going to progress down, if you look at the handout, we're going to go back to Deuteronomy 1:6, we're not going to go through every verse like we've already done, we don't have to because we've already done it but we want to review some principles here, principles that we can use to cast down vain imaginations.

So in the first part, if you look again in the outline, remember we said from 1:6 through 3:29 is a historical analysis of Israel from Sinai to the Transjordanian victories; that is a section of historical experience in the past. And then from chapter 4 is historical experience yet to come, in the future. So what Moses is going to do, he's going to about, in a ratio of three to one, he's going to emphasize what God has done in the past, specifically, one, two, three, four, five, six, all these events, all these things that that second generation was very well aware of, and then he's going to look down the corridors of time in the future. So he's going to bracket where they are in the present with a fore view of the future plus an analysis of the text. So when it says in Deuteronomy 1:6, "The LORD our God spoke to us in Horeb," next time when we meet we're going to deal with the Ten Commandments, this is where the flashing lights

happen, and the smoke, and the roar of the holiness of God come off, communicating the Ten Commandments into human history for the first time.

But right now we just want to look at a principle: God spoke. And when we do that we want to go back to this chart that we had several sessions back and we're going to look at the aseity of God, a-s-e-i-t-y, the aseity of God. What does that word mean, the aseity of God? It means that He is independent and self-contained. In other words, God does not have a source of existence outside of Himself. He did not have to... another way of thinking about this, you have to kind of come at this from different angles to grab it, but another way of thinking is this: imagine that God never created, would God be incomplete? And in the Bible God is a Trinity, so the Father, Son and Holy Spirit had a delightful personal relationship for eternity; they did not need us. The Trinity did not need something outside of itself. That is not true where the Trinity is denied. Wherever you have solitary monotheism, such as in Islam and some forms of Rabbinic Judaism, you have God eternally alone. Now you've got a problem here. A god who is eternally alone can't exercise love, and theologies of solitary monotheism habitually and historically lack the attribute of love in any vibrant way. And there's a reason for it, because a god who is perpetually alone has no object for his love. But in the Trinity the Father has the Son for all eternity to love; the Son has the Father for all eternity to love; so what I'm getting is that these so-called fine points of theology are not just fine points; these are not just academic. Behind this word "aseity" and the Trinity lies the fact that we have ultimate personality in the universe. And that's very important for motivation which I want to show you in a moment. But let's just digest this.

He is independent, self-contained, and now we're going to say versus, so we're going to set the truth in contrast to something else, a denial of the truth, because we grasp truths sometimes better when we see what it isn't. So if you'll look in the little box in your notes there's a little word called "contra" there, meaning against. So this truth of the aseity of God is against another idea; these are big, big basic concepts, they are powerful, they cause damage, if you don't get them right, across the whole spectrum of life. So the Bible doctrine of aseity, God is the Triune eternally existing personal God. What that means is that God exists therefore everything else exists. So everything has its existence derivative of the Creator. The Creator is the one that supports existence as we know it. Now again, that sounds like an academic principle and, you know, abstract, but let me go inside the box.

Now look at the inside of that box, you'll see where it says "Contra:" This is the opposite of what the Bible is teaching, and that is we have an impersonal universe. Now all pagan positions ultimately believe in an impersonal universe. Now the problem that every unbelieving system has outside of the Scripture is they're meaningless. You can't have meaning as a person in your life unless the whole universe has meaning. You can try to drum something up on the inside but you don't have any valid meaning. If the whole doesn't have meaning the parts can't. So the point is that when you have an impersonal universe you have meaninglessness, and the impersonal universe that accidentally brought us into existence as the most recent link in a causal evolutionary process, and I put in parenthesis different words that have been used down through history to

describe the cause of existence. The ancients believed in Fate; Faith comes from the Latin word. The Romans believed in Fate. Before the Romans, before the Greeks, if you looked down the Ancient Near Eastern literature, they had a different word than Fate, they used this next word, Tables of Destiny. Look at the mythologies of Tiamat and the idea there was that what was controlling history wasn't really known, it's just that we have Tables of Destiny.

If you ever get a chance to pull out of Blockbuster or something, or the videos at the library, go back some day and pull out the movie 2001; it was done by Stanley Cooper; Cooper was very philosophically acute, he was an existentialist, and at the beginning of this movie he plays the music score is Thus Spoke Zarathustra and then you find out there's a blackness of the universe, and there's a picture and he has a tablet that looks just like the biblical Ten Commandments and it's sort of going like this in space with "Thus Spoke Zarathustra." It was Cooper's way of saying we don't have a God but somehow we have to get meaning into our lives so for the sake of the human race, which that movie is about, we've got to have meaning from somewhere so subliminally he has to borrow a biblical image from Mount Sinai, oddly enough, to get that connotation of meaning. But it's only a connotation, the meaning isn't there.

So again I direct your attention to that Contra, look very seriously, "impersonal universe," that is the only option you have if you dump the Scriptures. If the revelation of God is not true, then we have impersonal universe and if we are intellectually honest you'll do what Bertrand Russell said and that is we have to make the best of an impersonal meaningless existence. And I find it's interesting that unbelievers will tend to want to have purpose, because they're made in God's image, that's why, but the problem is that few of them have the intellectual courage to take that position to its logical conclusion which is meaninglessness.

So, "impersonal universe that accidentally brought us into existence," all that's wrapped up in aseity, it's all wrapped up in the fact that here you have at a point in time in the 15th century BC the God of the universe actually spoke in an audible fashion. We call that revelation, verbal revelation. Therefore, again following in the box, "fundamental distinction from the origin mythology of contemporary culture-meaning and purpose," now watch this, "meaning and purpose pre-exist you and me," we do not bring up meaning and purpose by some psychological operation bootstrap. And it preexists. Why does it preexist? Because God preexists and He's personal, and He has a meaning. So purpose preexists you and me so we don't have to try and gin up meaning and purpose via some psychological device, some psychological thing.

And this is very, very basic, very fundamental; it's a very precious truth. So I'm doing this because we're dealing with motivation, we're dealing with what happens when we're depressed, what happens when we've had a stunning set of reversals in our life? What happens when we're just so beaten down it's hard to get up again? You go back to the fundamental truths, the basics. Don't worry about all the details, just go back and get to the bedrock of our faith, and that is that in the end, regardless of what is going on, we live in a universe that has meaning and therefore we have meaning, therefore we have purpose in our life because God created the universe with a plan in mind.

Then the second word, down below that box, we have the word condescension and remember that too is a big word but it's a very, very important word. That means that God comes down to the creature level to converse with man, made in His image, AND engages in binding contracts with man. See, you've got to think about aseity first, before you think about condescension or you don't appreciate condescension. If we have a God that is self-contained and independent, why does He have to enter into a binding contract with man? He doesn't; He chooses to. What does that tell you about His character? He seeks fellowship; He has created us in His image and He thinks so much of those He has made in His image that He comes down and He talks to us. He has talked to humankind in history and He has moreover done something phenomenal, He has entered into binding written contracts. You talk about a contract here, it's fundamental to the biblical faith that we grasp what a contract is all about. There are no contracts with God outside of the Bible, NONE! There has never been a nation on earth or in human history that has ever had a contract with God, only Israel, not the United States, not the Soviet Union, not Persia, not Rome, only Israel, because it was Israel to whom God spoke. Now in a general sense the Noahic Covenant is made to men too but right now let's focus just on the Israel covenant.

Now what does that mean? Let's look at the box again; we can sharpen our thinking about what it means, what a blessing, a God who condescends to come down to our level to talk to us, to have fellowship with us, what was the opposite of that? Okay: Contra: an abstract monotheistic deity absolutely separated by essence from ever having any personal contact with man, that's true of Islam, some forms of rabbinic Judaism and liberal Christian theology. What it amounts to is an existential loneliness. If God is so transcendent, so perfect, so righteous, so omniscient, so omnipotent that He cannot condescend to have a conversation with His creatures, the creatures are an abstract and total loneliness because He doesn't talk, there's no communication. And what's the essence of the personal relationship here? That's why this section of the Bible, why Deuteronomy is so important, why the Ten Commandments are so important. Jik was telling me about a thing that he had last Friday and there was a fellow that came up to him, well-schooled in religious thinking, but it was the typical liberal thinking in which God seems to be so transcendent you don't have contract, you don't have a literal verbal revelation. So this is why you hear me say over and over and over and over and over and I repeat this and repeat this and repeat this because I want you to remember it. If you're talking with someone or you're thinking through this yourself, watch out because the word "revelation" can mean something like it does in Buddhism or it's just a mystical theme that emerges from the heart, you can be on drugs and it emerges in your imagination, your mind's eye. That's not the biblical view of revelation.

To clarify in crisp, clear fashion, think of Mount Sinai; get that event in your head and think about standing down at the bottom of that mountain and hearing God speak to you in Hebrew. That is what we mean by revelation. There's information coming from God to me. Not only is there information coming but there's more than just the information; He's soliciting a relationship with me. Now if you don't have that, what are you left with? You're left with existential loneliness. You have to be, no revelation there's no absolute communication. Therefore, we have a personal confrontation with our Creator, Judge and Savior that forces us

to some set of response. And this is what's scary, this is why, as Romans 1:18 points out, this is what happens in paganism, this is what happens, in fact, whenever we sin, we hide in the bushes, just like Adam and Eve did. Why do we hide? Well, right here, God's communication forces us into some sort of response and either it's withdrawal, or it's looking for His grace in a personal relationship, knowing that truth and justice preexists you and me so we don't become seduced by the temptation to invent truth and rights; all of that is wrapped up in the relationship. So when God confronts us there's a plus and there's a minus, and the minus is that we're fallen beings and it's scary when the Holy God talks, when the Holy God reveals. This is the whole basic of the Law of Israel; it was to drive people to look for His grace, so that then we could enter into a relationship with Him.

Okay all that in "God spoke." Then in verse 8, "See, I have set the land before you," so let's go to Deuteronomy 1:8, and keep in mind that what we have here is an instance of specific features of Scripture. There's a map, that map is for a later time in Israel's history but I just throw it up there to show you the vast expanse of the real estate that was given to Israel. Just think about what that map would do in today's discussions politically; think about the territories you're looking at. God gave all this area in Transjordan to Israel; that cuts into the modern state of Jordan, all the way north of the Sea of Galilee, up in here along Phoenicia, that's all of Lebanon, all up in here it's Syria, that is the original land that was to be given to Israel.

Now the thing to notice about verse 8 is God gave it and then He says I have given the land, "go in and possess the land which the LORD God swore to your fathers," so what is that talking about? It's talking about a prior existing covenant or contract with Abraham. Remember the three things, land, seed and worldwide blessing. That's the land. So number 1, what Moses is saying is not only do we have a God who speaks in history, not only do we have a God who is going to enter into contract with us, but we have a God who is faithful to His contracts; not only does He condescend, He doesn't play with us, He lays out the contract and He fulfills it. So Moses, as part of his motivation, is saying think back to the framework; what do you have? You have God who is sovereign, God who condescends, God who makes contracts and God who is faithful to what He said He would do. That's powerful motivation if we really grab that thought.

And so again in the little box on the back of that section we have: History is controlled by specific contracts between God and man that are intergenerational, in other words, this is not just a contract He makes with us in 2010 and it's going to be all over in 2011, this is a contract that He made with Abraham roughly 2000 BC. What we're reading here in Moses' time is about... between 1400 and 1500, this is four centuries later we have this deal that hey, the contract is still good. The contract, after 400 years is valid. It would be like us saying that there was a contract that controlled the disposition of property in the United States written in 1610; today is 2010, that was four hundred years ago. Can you imagine somebody, what the average person would think about a contract that's four hundred years old today? They'd blow it away, you know, it's meaningless, just a piece of paper, probably would be a living document or something that could be interpreted any way they wanted. So

the Scriptures don't use that approach. So here it refers to a contract and it says that history is going somewhere.

So again, see, these are big ideas; this is the Abrahamic Covenant, the call, the signing, the symbol, the confirmation, unconditional blessing, it's a royal grant, just like the royal grants in the Ancient East, it's a royal grant type document and God promised this to Abraham and his descendants. And that means that history is going somewhere and there's the evil chart that we use again and again, but again we have to review this. There are not answers to the evil problem, it's funny how people always seem to think that Christianity has a problem with evil. Christianity doesn't have a problem with evil, there's no logical contradiction in Scripture about evil. God has a morally sufficient plan for it, whether we know that plan or not doesn't change the logic; the logic is He has a plan and He's moving in an ethically perfect way toward that consummation.

Here's the problem though, if I do not accept the Scriptures this is where I am; this is the Yin Yang, the good and evil mixture that goes on and on and on and on, it has always gone on and on and on and on, will always go on and on, there's no resolution. Is this what you want? But in the Scriptures we have creation and fall, and during this interval between creation and fall you have physical reality without sin; now this doesn't go over with anybody thinking in Greek terms because the Greeks always thought of matter as evil, inherently evil, Gnosticism. They couldn't think of matter, physical bodies that weren't evil, but that's because they didn't have revelation. Then at the fall we have good and evil, which we are now involved in, but the difference is God is always good, has never compromised His character, He's the same yesterday, today and forever, and He's moving history forward, remember we talked last time about history is linear and progressive in the Bible to a point of judgment with eternal separation of good and evil never to mix again, heaven and hell. So heaven and hell are good news because it resolves the evil problem forever. There is no resolution of good and evil outside of Scripture. So once again we have this point; these are important points that God is moving toward future history.

Then in Deuteronomy 1:9, again part of His motivational remembrance, Moses has in verse 9, "And I spoke to you at that time, saying: I alone am not able to bear you." Now you have to ask yourself if this is motivational material, why is verse 9 there? Is verse 9 a complaint? Is Moses at this point fussing because he's got a big mess managerially? Well, he did have a problem managerially but why is verse 9 there in this place in the text? What's been the argument? What was the argument in verse 8? The argument in verse 8 was God is giving them the land which He promised by the Abrahamic Covenant. What were the three positions in the Abrahamic Covenant? Land, seed, worldwide blessing. So number one is land, and verse 8, isn't it interesting, He's talking about land. See, God was faithful to the Abrahamic Covenant. Now in verse 9 He goes on about the multitude and look at verse 10, "The LORD your God has multiplied you, and here you are today, as the stars of heaven in multitude." That's a direct quote from the Abrahamic Covenant, item two, seed, I will bless your seed Abraham until it becomes as the stars of heaven and the sand on the beaches. So there he's pointing to a managerial problem but the

managerial problem that he has is a manifestation of God's faithfulness, God has provided a land, God is providing the sea.

Then in Deuteronomy 1:19-46 we have Kadesh, remember they fussed around in Kadesh and fiddled and fiddled and fiddled, and so there they had been given the plan, we went through the disobedience of the first generation, verse 45 tells about what happened, and all that whole section in chapter 1, what's that got to do with motivation? Remember, motivation is the big argument here. He's going back and saying one of the things when you want to motivate yourself is learn from your mistakes. What is depressing is to see something that you did wrong and not get out of it, but just sit there and dig a hole and keep thinking about it. Well, what Moses is going to do, he's going to go back and say look, you're not the first generation, he's talking to the second generation here, just learn from what your dad and your mom didn't do, they screwed up, they didn't obey the Lord and they suffered. God waited till they died off, and so they lost out. They could have entered the land in their generation and they didn't. And what does that show?

That shows that God honors personal choice, that God sets personal responsibility and part of growing up is to be responsible. So there's genuine responsibility there, the problem we have in our society today, everybody wants to be bailed out of bad choices. And that's not the way God does it; God is gracious but He doesn't always bail you out from a bad choice. What He does so is He makes us learn from the bad choice, and the bad choice now becomes a new training ground so we don't make that choice again. But to take away the consequences of bad choices is simply to groom a repeat of the bad choice, so we never learn. Part of the learning experience is actually feeling and experiencing the consequences. And this is why our generation is basically headed for a time when we have a maximum number of fools because fools are people who have been coddled, who have not been allowed to experience consequences of their foolishness and so they're foolishness becomes greater and greater and greater, they become expert fools. And this is what happens, and parents need to learn this because this is how you enable little foolish brats, by allowing them, coddling them, protecting them, and so on, from getting bounced around. And they need to experience that to that when you tell them that something is this way they understand well, that means I can obey, I can disobey but if I disobey the parents generally know what they're talking about, it means I'm going to have a little problem down the road. So that's part of the big picture here, as to how God rules in history.

Then in Deuteronomy 2, remember he was careful about not going into Esau Moab land because God had already dealt with those people and it was a lesson, God has plans for other people besides you; you are not the center of the universe. Even Israel had to be taught that, that God had plans for Moab, God had plans for Esau, God had plans for Ammon, you mind your business and they will mind their business, but you don't go on in life by sticking your nose in everybody's business. And so God had those people go around, leave them alone, I have a plan for them, I'm taking care of them, you mind your business and I'll take care of Moab, I'll take care of Esau and so on.

Then in Deuteronomy 2:24 we had the extra blessings that God did, because of evil, because there was persecution that set in, verse 24, the Holy War

surprises, this is encouraging because what it says is that when Satan attacks, when evil comes against us, oftentimes that itself is a source of a blessing. It sounds funny but here was a case where two nations came against Israel uncalled for, unprovoked assault against Israel, and yet those two things, those two events, turned out to bless Israel because what happened is that Israel inherited all of Transjordan; that wasn't part of the original land. Transjordan was not part of the original land, that was an extra blessing simply because Israel was attacked, Israel remained faithful and God blessed her sox off by giving them all this extra real estate.

Now on the handout in the back I have two exercises; one exercise in this section about looking in the past and this is a suggestion if you've never done this in your life, the guy that led me to the Lord and led many college students to the Lord had us do an exercise when we were new believers, and that was to write a short testimony, to yourself; just take a piece of paper, not a lengthy thing, it's got to be brief, but if you look in the box [it says] can we write a short essay of our past life with a divine viewpoint interpretation of it," not just the Bible, but an interpretation of what God was doing in our past life, "utilizing a creationist and providential view of our personal history, specific references to biblical revelation, and a sense of a real personal relationship with the Lord?" You can cover "before conversion, after conversion, means of conversion, lessons learned in sanctification, blessings and answered prayers." Those are things to think about, and can you take one paragraph in four or five sentences and write about your life in the past?

And what that does for you is it causes you to think about the fact that you are connected as a believer with the Lord and He is faithful, He was faithful, He was faithful, so in the middle of the present muck that you have something to go back to other than your own emotions; you have a record, a personal record of how the Lord has dealt with you. This is what Moses is doing here, he's giving a personal record to the nation. As I said, it's a model in motivation. So what we want to do is copy Moses, make an analogous thing and for ourselves think about how God has worked in our life.

Now chapter 4 as we recently went along that, you know what chapter 4 is all about, it's the uniqueness of Israel, how God spoke them, no other nation had this, and then the warnings against idolatry, the idea here that you can just go so far and you don't know what the future is going to hold. So what do you do about the future? Well, you think about the plan of God, you go from the past into the future and we then have here, as he says in Deuteronomy 4:7, he talks about the uniqueness, "what great nation is there that has God so near to it," now maybe from what we've said tonight this will give you extra insight into the word n-e-a-r, near. What do we have to have to be near God? He has to speak to us, He has to reveal Himself to us. And so what he's reminding Israel, God spoke to you, you've got revelation, the other guys don't have it. God is near to you, "as the LORD our God is to us," and then he says teach them to your children and your grandchildren, and there's a sense of destiny. Remember we talked about a personal sense of destiny.

So another exercise that we can do and this is kind of a challenge but again, the same fashion as writing a paragraph or two about your past life and how God worked in it, think about writing a paragraph about your future life. You say well I can't write a paragraph about my future life, I don't know what my future life is going to hold. Well you know from Scripture certain things that are going to happen. Look at the box: "Can we write a short outlook on our future life-utilizing eschatological truths as well as a creationist and providential view of our personal history. A sense of our specific calling in life and our spouse's role in that calling, plans for 'passing the baton' to the next generation," see this is all involved with what Moses is doing; isn't that what he's doing? He's giving the destiny of the nation, and he's saying here's what I want you to do, and then he says teach them to your children and your grandchildren for a reason, that in your family you are passing the baton to the next generation, you're taking steps to do that so that the Word of God can propagate into that next generation.

Then what else is in our future? Not only passing the baton to the next generation our eventual death. If the rapture doesn't happen we are all going to die, so is that the end of the train? No, "transport into the presence of the Lord," to be "absent from the body is to be face to face with the Lord." That is something that every Christian can write in your future picture or paragraph of where you're headed, to die and be in the presence of the Lord, our evaluation at the Bema Seat, that's 2 Corinthians 5, where all the phony stuff in our life is burned up and the good stuff remains. And our future life and resurrection, we don't know what the details are in resurrection but we're not going to sit around holding hands contemplating our navel for eternity; there's going to be some action and some work because God is a God of production. There obviously is something happening forever and ever and ever, I mean, history was pretty busy so eternity is not going to be a state of suspended animation here. So that's our future, and by writing those two paragraphs of how the Lord worked in the past and how He's going to work in our life, even though we don't know the details we know the basic outline, then we can go back and say now what was the problem we had? You see what it does? It shrinks the problem because it brackets the problem with all these powerful truths. And that's what Moses is doing in his generation.

Okay, now having said all that, that's the motivation, now we come to the editorial comment, Deuteronomy 4:41, and he has a theme there, and you wonder, what has this got to do with the motivation. "Moses set apart three cities on this side of the Jordan, toward the rising of the sun, [42] that the manslayer may flee there," now what he's doing, he's talking about Transjordan here, and there's going to be three places from about the north end of the Dead Sea, somewhere down in here, we don't know where some of these places are archeologically, all the way up to this little nodule just northeast of the Sea of Galilee. The text here says you can see it. Well, it turns out there are enough high hills down in here that if you stand on them on a clear day you can look all the way north and see the snow on Mount Hermon; that's Mount Hermon, that's the source, by the way, for Israel's national reservoir, the Sea of Galilee is actually called a lake, Lake Kinneret, and it stores the water coming off the melted snows from Mount Hermon. So that's how Israel, the modern state, gets its water supply.

Well, what Moses does here, he's setting apart three cities, for what? "...this side of Jordan ... [42] that the manslayer may flee there, who kills his neighbor unintentionally, without having hated him in time past, and that by fleeing to one of these cities he may live. [43] Bezer," and then he lists them. As I say, we don't always know where those three cities are but somewhere in the Transjordan. So, if you'll look on your handout I've kind of summarized, we'll get into capital punishment later in the commentary here as we work through, but if you'll look at the capital punishment, I'm going to take you quickly to Deuteronomy 19 because that is an exposition of what we call accidental homicide, and you wonder why is this in the middle of a motivational passage. Well, there's a theme to this, there's a rationale behind it.

If you look with me in Deuteronomy 19, we'll just skim down ten verses, I'll just look at different clauses here, [1] "When the LORD your God has cut off the nations whose land the LORD your God is giving you and you dispossess them and dwell in their cities and in their houses, [2] you shall separate three cities for yourself in the midst of your land," this is the other side of Jordan so the total is six. [3] You shall prepare roads," notice what's going on there in 3, verse 3 is an infrastructure, a transportation infrastructure, "You shall prepare roads for yourself, and divide into three parts the territory of your land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, that any manslayer may flee there. [4] And this is the case of the manslayer who flees there, that he may live: Whoever kills his neighbor unintentionally, not having hated him in the pass- [5] as when a man goes to the woods with his neighbor to cut timber, and his hand swings a stroke with the ax to cut down the tree, and the head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies," he gives you an example, this is called case law in the Bible; there may be 150 different variations of this particular legal point but he's giving one concrete illustration to show you the principle. So he gives you a principle, this is the guy with the ax, so here's a case where "he shall flee to one of these cities and live, [6] lest the avenger of blood, while his anger is hot, pursue the manslayer and overtake him, because the way is long, and kill him, though he was not deserving of death, since he had not hated the victim in time past. [7] Therefore, I command you, saying, 'You shall separate three cities for yourself.'"

So what's going on here? Well, if you follow the points in the handout, capital punishment was common in the Mosaic Law, it was a common punishment. People ridicule the Bible because it's got capital punishment, oh, how ugly. Now wait a minute, let's just read the second point; however, the laws of evidence were very, very strict, in fact, the laws of evidence in the Bible were stricter than they are here in Maryland. Eye witnesses were needed, you had to have eye witnesses to the crime of you could not convict of capital punishment. No conviction could be based on circumstantial evidence alone. So probably it was rarely exercised. It had a revelatory impact, capital punishment was revelatory of how much God honors life and we'll see that in a moment. Accidental homicide could have been witnessed, obviously, so the question was: is the perpetrator to be subjected to capital punishment? That's the question Moses is asking and answering by this infrastructure building these short paths, very clearly kept, so people could rapidly deploy to a city of refuge. The answer is no, based upon intent, understanding what "murder"

is in Scripture, notice Deuteronomy 19:6, "not deserving of death since he had not hated the victim in time past."

That's what murder is; murder in the Bible goes back to a mental attitude that precedes the action. The emphasis in the Bible is always on the mental attitude, not the externals. The externals are important obviously, but the externals are always viewed as the outworking, it's the fruit, the observable fruit of an inner mental attitude. That's why in 1 John 3 we have the first murder in history becomes a model of all homicide, and that's the fratricide of Cain killing Abel, and the Bible goes into that crime and it goes into it and specifies exactly what was going on. The first murder in history didn't happen because the brothers had a fight; the Bible says the first murder in history happened because Cain looked at Abel, Cain was in disobedience to God, Abel was obeying God, and he hated to be reminded of God's standards. This is the massively clear insight into the mind of criminal acts; it's a hatred. People steal because it's their right to have that property, because God didn't give it to me so I'm going to take it, that kind of attitude, it's ultimately a hatred for God. It manifests in the social dimension but the Bible insists that no, no, no, no, sociological analysis of crime is woefully incomplete because it doesn't get at the really primary underlying thing.

So the problem, then, the family advocate, who was the person who would pursue this, kind of like the family lawyer, thinking that capital punishment was justifiable and would be angry and take matters into his own hands, and so this is why twice in this passage it says... once here and once back in Deuteronomy 4, you see the purpose clause, "that he may live." The principle, then, is that God honors life. We will see that very vividly in the way the Ten Commandments are structured-God honors life. And all these laws, rules, and everything else in the Scripture are there to protect life. You'll see that, for example, in chapter 19, read down a little bit further and you'll see how this plays out. [Deuteronomy 19:8] "Now if the LORD your God enlarges your territory," so on and so forth and so on, [9] "...then you will add three more cities for yourself, beside these three, [10] lest," look at that, verse 10, "lest innocent blood be shed in the midst of your land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, and the guilt of bloodshed be upon you."

The "life is in the blood" in Scripture. Blood becomes the symbol of life itself, and in the murder the blood is looked upon as spilled on the ground. In the Scripture, and the way the Bible treats murder, it treats the blood as defiling the land. And we'll see later on, if unsolved homicides had to be dealt with, just because they couldn't find who killed Joe, and Joe is lying in an alley, they didn't leave Joe, or take his corpse over to the funeral home and just say ha-ha, we can't solve the crime and so on. No-no, there's an entire procedure for cleansing the alley where Joe's blood was, because if they don't cleanse it, if they don't offer sacrifice, that land becomes defiled. Now think of what that says about life, it's as though the whole environment yells and screams when life is destroyed. And then think of how much life we destroy in our country. So it gives you an idea... the standards of the Scriptures are fantastic.

Let's go back to chapter 4 and we'll finish up here. So that's the cities of refuge and you obviously have a question here, and that is, why is this stuck in, in an editorial remark between the first and exposition and the second exposition. I suggest the reason is it lays the foundation of why you need statutes and judgments; in other words, the editor is saying look, we've got a real human society functioning here, we're fallen sinners, and we're going to need statutes and judgments. So by saying and pointing to the fact that Moses, in his dying moments, is establishing these protections for life, we have a reminder that you cannot have a community of fallen people without having a crime problem, without having a sin problem. Hence, therefore, we're going to go to the Ten Commandments and we're going to lay out the laws.

Then finally he has this last section in 44-49 and it's just a quick review that "this is the law is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel. [45] These are the testimonies, the statutes and the judgments which Moses spoke to the children of Israel [after they came out of Egypt] [46] on this side," and there's all this detail about real estate, what happened in history and so on. Why is that there? Well, it goes back to what we have said before about the theology of the Old Testament. Remember I showed this slide an evening or so ago, this is the difference between Ancient Near East theology of the surrounding nations and Israel. What do you notice that's unique to Yahweh that was not true of the pagans? Look at the quote: "What distinguishes Yahweh so sharply from Baal is His intimate association with history. He was not bound to the cycle of the seasons but guided His people through history toward a goal. The decisive event..." and so forth.

The point that Moses makes again and again the Scripture makes this; 1 Corinthians 15 makes this. What we are talking about is historic revelation. I happened in a time, it happened in a place, you can date it and you can locate it; it's not an abstract theological idea that's just sort of floating in limbo that somebody thought up somewhere. It's anchored in history and so the details of this editorial remark remind us again that you have revelation anchored.

Finally I want to give you this quote; watch it carefully. This man is a liberal theologian and I want you to notice some of the grease; you've got to watch it because we're in a zone here when unbelievers and professing Christians will do this, to skirt around the implications of Scripture we kind of use the words but we use the words deceptively. See if you can spot what's going on here in this quote. "There is no such thing as revealed truth. There are truths of revelation, that is to say, propositions which express the results of correct thinking concerning revelation; but they are not themselves directly revealed." Anybody see a problem with the statement. Notice his statement here, "there are truths of revelation" that "express the results of correct thinking," where's my standard for "correct thinking" if there's no revelation? How do I know that my thinking is correct? I can't. If there's no information that I'm measuring my thoughts against how do I know if my thinking is correct. Maybe Moses was on drugs on the top of Mount Sinai and he hallucinated, and thought God spoke to him.

So this is what happens, people, this is where we're at in our contemporary culture. Don't be deceived and hooked because somebody say

oh, I believe in revelation, but what they mean by the word "revelation" isn't what you ought to mean by the word "revelation." And the test question is for someone like Reverend [William] Temple, Sir, if you were on Mount Sinai, at the base of it, when God spoke, could you have recorded His voice? The grease stops with that question because a person like Reverend Temple would have to say well no, what we have here in the Bible is Moses had some sort of mystical experience on the top of Mount Sinai and he came down and had all these nice thoughts. But you see what happens, once you do that this whole thing becomes a human product. Why should I bother with it, there's plenty of other books in the library. It only makes sense if we have a God who reveals Himself.

So we have all these details and they are checkable. One of the things about the Bible is that it's got guts to lay out claims that you can personally check. So, here's a guy that did study, an English scholar, and he went back and he reviewed some of the details of this section in his editorial remarks. Here's what he came to in conclusion, look at it: "When we review the geographical data as a whole the details appear to be much too accurate to be due either to chance or to oral tradition." See, one of the liberal views of the book of Deuteronomy is that it's all made up, you know, they lived in the land but you know, we can't trust the details, gosh, if they're details that would really mean they were there and we don't believe that. But here, as he says, "the details appear to be much too accurate to be due either to chance or to oral tradition. The account of the journeyings in chapters 1-3 is altogether realistic and quite unlike an introduction prefixed to a collection of old laws," look at that sentence, right there; see what he's talking about? In the liberal view you had this corpus of legal legislation and then somebody tacked on the story of how it happens to kind of give it interest; that's the liberal Bible. Someone really ought to make a rubber Bible then you could twist it either way you want, it'd be the first liberal edition.

"The account of the journeyings is altogether realistic and quite unlike..." "unlike an introduction prefixed to a collection of old laws; it bears every sign of originality. The views described ... of the Moabite country ... must have been seen by human eyes; the antiquarian notes also belong to the period are not the result of archaeological research," in the sense that somebody went back and dug all this stuff up."

Okay so that gets us down to the end of chapter 4; now we've finished the whole deal about motivation, we've seen the model of motivation, we have looked at what revelation is, so next time we're going to start with chapter 5, verse 1 on the Ten Commandments.