

Clough Deuteronomy Session 22

Deuteronomy 7:6-16 Moses on Operational Doctrine and Personal Relationship
Fellowship Chapel; 4 May 10

If you look on the handout, the outline section, once again we don't want to lose the forest for the trees as we work through this. In chapters 5-11, this whole section is devoted to a principle and it's repeated and repeated and repeated. 50% of this sermon that Moses is preaching, his last address to the nation, his farewell address to the nation, 50% of it is devoted to the heart attitude, not the statutes and judgments, which demands reflection. Why does Moses spend 50% of his time on this point. And we've emphasized that if you analyze the Ten Commandments, remember we went through the chiasmic structure a few lessons back and we said out of that chiasm you see a structure. And the way God seems to look down on human society that it has these levels. And what Moses understood from the failure of that first generation was that you cannot have a viable living prosperous society up here without something down here, and that is a heart allegiance to God. So it starts with a mental attitude, inner mental attitude.

And I'm stressing this because this is exactly opposite, this is 180 degrees opposite to modern sociology and political theory making, which (quote) "law redeems." And the idea is that you structure it up in the government level here, down, and this sort of follows somehow. Well, it doesn't and the history shows that without a heart allegiance you will never achieve a stable society. So that's Moses' point here as he goes on.

Now he develops that and again, to review the argument, he develops that further and in the outline I've indicated those same three questions. We keep going back to these same three questions, these same three areas because they are so important. Not to grasp this means that we don't really grasp the force of the Old Testament text. We have an advantage because we've had 25 centuries of thinking about things so we have categories that they did not have mentally. But what they did have is, they had in their minds what idolatry was and we kind of have lost that. So to retrieve and go back centuries in time to have empathy with Moses is getting at we have to sort of see idolatry as to how "we" (quote, end quote) in the 21st century would view it. So that's why we keep going through these three questions and this chart contrasts the God of the Bible with idolatry and goes through these same three levels.

The first one, see, on the handout, is the metaphysics, what is existence all about. This is a fundamental question; what is the meaning and purpose of my life. Every person, every man, every woman, every child that reaches some sort of sophistication intellectually, has to answer this question. And it's not being asked, let alone being answered, in a secular society; the question just never even seems to come up. And this is why we have a seeking which seems so strange in our day of a highly technical advanced civilization slipping back into the cults, the mystery cults of ancient Rome. A lot of the New Age stuff is really not new at all, it's just a regurgitation of the mystery cults of the first and second century. So what's the fascination; you say how can people be fascinated with this. The reason is because nowhere in our society are these questions being asked, let alone even answered. So these are

conversation pieces of that. And it's good to remind yourself of these. These questions show you the richness of what we have as Christians with a divine revelation in the Bible.

So we have this question of what is life all about, and there's only two answers. There's not fifteen answers to this question, there's only one, that God is the Creator. Here's where we see God as the Creator, He is the designer of created existence, to reveal Himself to us. All around us He has designed reality and it's not random; He designed the trees, the sun, the planets, the stars, everything around us has been designed to reveal Himself to us. So environment is revelatory in the biblical view. However, if you reject that you wind up over here and you can invent fifteen different terminologies for this but the essence of the only option to the metaphysical question is that we have an eternal, generally, most people hold to an eternal existence, purposelessness, unintelligent chaos. And I deliberately use those vocabulary words to get antonymic pair over against what the Bible is saying.

So we have a purposelessness; I'm not making this up, you can read any of the evolutionary philosophers, a fellow at Harvard, J. Gould, has gone on record as saying this. He says the sooner we recognize that we are the product of a totally meaningless process that does not have us in mind at all the better off we're going to be. And we can thank Dr. Gould for saying that because he is an unbeliever who is very sophisticated, he understood historical views, and he said this is what we have to do. Bertrand Russell said the same thing, only on the foundation of unyielding despair can we built our lives.

So that's the serious alternative. This is not optimism. This is why given, this situation, no wonder you want to take a pill to get real, no wonder you want to go into drugs, because the human heart isn't made for that kind of an answer. Something cries out from the inside that no, this is wrong, but I don't have an answer to this question. So in order to relieve the pain, and the pain here is not physiological pain that we're talking about, this is an existential pain, this is a soul pain, the pain of having to feel that you're absolutely meaningless, that your life has no purpose, and ultimately leads to suicide. Back, decades ago, there was an existentialist philosopher that Frances Schaeffer always spoke about in Switzerland, and he would warn his students not to commit suicide before the semester was over and he was serious about this because he was the fellow who had gone through a lot of the thinking and by the time you go through six or seven weeks in his class he had basically shattered your optimism.

So this is a serious war and there's only two answers here. So that's the metaphysical question; the epistemological question is why is what you're telling me true. This deals with how do you know things. How do I know that everything isn't an illusion? How do I know that it's not just a big dream? How do I know there's reality? So the answer here is God is a speaking Creator, an acting Creator. Now why do we say this? Look carefully at the second question. It's not just God a designer but He is a speaker and actor. That distinguishes this position from deism. In deism God creates, and he goes away somewhere. And so we have a nice design but we... you know, God is in absentia, He's absconded. Well, that's not the biblical picture so that's why we have to add these two

nouns to fortify our thinking that God didn't stop speaking and acting when He created. He has continually done that down through history and that means that He reveals to us and gives meaning and clues to us so we can interpret reality. That's the epistemological base that we have. It's because God has spoken, He has created us linguistically so we can understand His creation because why was the purpose of the creation in the first place? To reveal Himself to us. So that's why we have capabilities of knowing truth.

The problem is, that if you reject this what you are left with when you boil it all down, you get through all the excuses and all the sophisticated arguments, when you boil it all down you are left with this-human speculation. I mean, what other options are there here? Either God speaks and acts and has told us things about history to interpret, or He hasn't, and if He hasn't we're left to our own. The problem is we're all finite, we're all limited. So therefore we have to speculate and guess what's out there. So we're left with human speculation and language now serves as a toll of manipulation only. It's how I can get my way with someone else, how I can be persuasive. That was the ancient Greek Sophist emphasis; Sophism developed after Aristotle and Plato went away, the Greeks became pessimistic that you could ever attain truth, so therefore they taught rhetoric and they taught rhetoric for one reason; it didn't matter whether what you were persuading me of was true or false, it just mattered that you could persuade me.

Now it doesn't require too much thinking to see that that's exactly what's happening today. You see, these are laws, you don't break these; you either succumb to the God of the Scriptures or you reap the consequences of rebelling; it doesn't matter what your IQ is, it doesn't matter how many degrees you have, ultimately you wind up with these consequences.

Then the third thing down here deals with the ethical question, who are you to tell me how I ought to live my life. And I've insisted that when we talk in a serious fashion not to be flippant in doing this, to be gracious in doing this, but we need to question those who question our faith by turning the question around and asking them what their moral authority is. When you hear somebody pronouncing that this is right or this is a social justice, say just wait a minute here, what is your moral source for making that claim. And then sit back and just see what kind of an answer you get because nine times out of ten many of them haven't even asked the question; nobody has ever challenged them-what is your moral authority. You're making these judgments about me, not just about you, you're telling what I should do, now I'm just asking you, where's your moral authority for prescribing something for me.

And so in the Bible we have a Judge, so here we have God as the Creator, God who speaks and acts, and the God who is a Judge, and He is a Judge who reveals His integrity, that is eternally unchanging. God's character doesn't change, there's a stability to His character. So we have, then, a standard. Now if we reject that then the consequence is we're back over here and we went through that last time, the subjective view that ultimately moral judgments just come from here; ultimately moral judgments are just autobiographies; your moral judgments become just what you think, so when you make a moral judgment what I'm hearing is what you feel. It's nothing about what happened, it's just what you feel, what you're telling

me; that's all you've got, you haven't said anything about the nature of the act itself.

So these are tremendously powerful questions and you have to go one way or the other with these. So that is the background of what's going on here. Now let's go to Deuteronomy 7 tonight, we're looking at chapters 6 and 7 of Deuteronomy and we notice there's a structure to these chapters, and my contention is that the structure is there because of the way Moses is thinking when he's speaking this, and whoever took notes and compiled it and wrote a book, but remember when we went back to chapter 6 and I'm going to again review this too because we're getting into the nature of what it means to have a personal relationship with God. Now we throw that out all the time and it's correct that Christianity is not a religion, it's a personal relationship with God. But what happened, what are we talking about, "a personal relationship with God?" Do we shake His hand? Do we hear Him speak? How do we explain this personal relationship with God.

So chapter 6, Moses is dealing there with the means of living in the Word, that's my label for claiming a summary of the statement, you notice in your handout what we did two lessons ago, chapter 6:1-9 and then we skipped in chapter 6 to 20-25 and what we found was that Moses there, in those verses, goes through the commands and the procedures. So those are what, in this sandwich... in your outline there's a blank there, Moses uses a "sandwich" presentation that balances the personal relationship between Yahweh and Israel, and specific "hot to" procedures of what the military refers to as the "doctrine of operations."

I use the military word for that second category tonight just to distinguish it in your minds. But in the military when they talk about doctrine they're talking about what you and I would call procedures. So we have, for example, in Iraq the Army developed a doctrine of convoy escort and everybody has to learn the doctrine of convoy escort. The guys flying above, air cover, they have to know the doctrine of convoy escort, because how are they going to help that convoy if it gets in trouble all flows out of preconceived rules, who coordinates with who, who orders the counter attack, who orders the cover, how many times does this fighter aircraft have to refuel so it has loiter time so that it can reach the convey in a certain amount of time, what's the doctrinal time limit to come to the aid of a convoy in trouble. All this is spelled out in hundreds of pages of plans and we refer to that as a doctrine.

Now what you want to take away from what I'm saying here is that when Moses is speaking he doesn't just talk of the personal relationship with Yahweh in vague terms. He gets down to "how to" procedures one, two, three, here's what we do. And this is why in verses 1-6 he's talking about where education starts, that education starts in the home. So he says in verse 6, "These words, "And these words which I command you shall be in your heart." Well, how do they get in your heart? They don't get there by osmosis, so he outlines a doctrine of education. And that's what those first procedures are. And then he gets into verse 20-25 at the end of that chapter and he gives you more procedures; he talks about what happens when the son comes to the father and he asks him certain questions. So that's the procedure side, right there; these are the how to's.

Now the balance to this is we have to keep going back to the fact that it's not just legalistic impersonal rules, otherwise we slide into legalism. So in order to prevent the doctrine from becoming just a stale set of impersonal rules, Moses then, in the middle of this, see his break, see the break between verse 9 and 20, now he's going to deal with verses 10-19 and he deals with the heart relationship with God. And you remember, I outlined them there in your handout, we went through all five of those things that he said to watch for in a personal relationship with God because every one of these five things tear at that relationship. So to keep the relationship part going he gives five things that will hinder the relationship.

Now in chapter 7 we move from living in the Word of God, the saturation of the heart with the Word of God, to chapter 7 where we're going to deal with a future battle with evil because we're in the middle of a cosmic battle between good and evil, it's been going on for millennia, and when we are believers we are taking sides in that cosmic conflict, so there's always going to be pressure and so forth. So yes, this is holy war that was valid for a particular time and a particular place, but the holy war reveals principles that carry over into every age, every dispensation.

Okay, so verses 1-2, we'll just review now, verses 1-5 which we did last time, and verses 17-26, again notice the split between verse 5 and verse 17; there's a gap again, two sides of the sandwich. So the first five verses and 17-26 deal with holy war and the procedures of executing the holy war. So this is the operating doctrine. So he's teaching people specific how to's and I summarized those so that we don't have to go through all the text tonight. But there are some vital lessons here, that's why I wanted to show you these.

The first one, if you follow the outline under operating doctrine, verses 1-2 means finish the job, do not quit just because you've had a few victories. And I've got a little box there in which I've tried to answer a question that came up after the session: what's the significance of the Canaanites. The significance of the Canaanites at that particular juncture of history is that they become the historical example, the precursor of what is going to happen globally at the return of Christ. What we see in the Canaanite population is what the world population is going to look like at the end of the Tribulation, an utterly damned culture. And Christ is going to come back this time and He's going to do the holy war. So people have a hard time, get all bent out of shape by holy war in the Old Testament, wait till you see what's coming. So this becomes the historical manifestation that you can actually see in history what it looks like in the future.

Now that's analogous, as I pointed out a historical person, Antiochus Epiphanes was a ruler in the inter-testament period and the Maccabean wars came out of the interaction of Antiochus Epiphanes and the Jews.

Antiochus Epiphanes is singled out in the way Daniel's prophecies unfold when it concerns him, is that he becomes the type of the final antichrist; he is a literal historical man who has the characteristics and manifested the characteristics in actual history, he's a real guy, and God fixed it up so that this fellow, in his personality and in his policies, would show us what the antichrist is going to look like. Antiochus Epiphanes was a very gracious person, he appeared to be very reconciling, he wanted to

have all the religions come together. Do you know what his problem was? Guess which religion would never go along with him? Judaism, the Jews would not succumb to Antiochus ecumenical movement. And then he turned from being a very gracious, wonderful, diplomatic negotiator to a vindictive killer who mocked the Jewish people, who sacrificed pigs, made them sacrifice pigs and so forth. So he becomes the man who utterly hates the uncompromising Bible believing person. He drops the polite courteous facade and becomes a very vicious person. That's a picture of the antichrist. So these historical pictures are important because they fill out things.

In verses 3-4, remember, Moses said don't intermarry, you are to maintain family integrity, "they will turn away your sons from following Me," see verse 4 there, again I have a little box in your notes and I make a little comment. Modern paganism uses every trick in the book to infiltrate and gain control of a Christian family, and they've been fairly successful, even to the point of attacking the family institution itself by "gay marriage." So again, what did Moses say? See, it gets back to the design of society. Remember, you can't have life if you don't have a functioning family, you can't get there, what you have is death.

Verse 5, it says destroy every physical monument of paganism, go in there, I want you to burn their pillars, I want you to pull down their stone altars, I want you to cut up their phallic symbols, and I want it all out of here, I don't want to see any of it here. And again I have a comment there that modern paganism has waged a well-financed campaign to denigrate and eliminate from public display every artistic expression of biblical faith, and of course we in our evangelical camp have been, I think, a little backwards in not encouraging young people in the arts, to get out there and compete.

Then finally, one of the things, one of the great lessons he says in verses 17-21, what do you do when you deal with fear? And so he goes back and he gives an illustration and I want to go through this tonight, again by way of review, because this is the process in our heads that we have to go through day after day after day after day. So it behooves us to identify a little bit and realize that Moses knew this and so we go back to the simple faith-rest drill as I call it, just three steps. And Moses is dealing with this, he says in verse 17, he says when you go up against this you're going to "say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?'" That's the crisis. So mentally in order not to fall apart, in order to manage this crisis they have to do something. So this is the relationship, this is a doctrine now, an operating doctrine of how to do it. He says in verse 18, "You shall not be afraid of the, but you will remember," so we looked then at step number one: Grab a portion of Scripture.

Now what Moses is doing here, if you think about it, look what he says in verse 18 because in the faith-rest drill the idea is you hunt around for a portion of Scripture that best fits the assault that you're dealing with. You can grab any portion of Scripture and if you squeeze it hard enough you can get some truth out of it for that situation, but the skill that really motivates us and gives us that energy to endure is can we find an analogy in Scripture to what we're facing. So, they're going to face a combat situation. So where is Moses going to go to grab a portion of the

Scripture that fits the attack, mentally that they're dealing with. Well, he tells us here, he says you will remember what the Lord God did to Pharaoh in Egypt. So of all the events, he could have talked about Abraham, he could have talked about Noah, he could have talked about Adam, he could have talked about the flood, he could have talked about a number of things, but the one event that he picked out was the Exodus. When you face this kind of situation in that conquest, I want you to go back to the event of the Exodus, and you remember, he says, what He did through all these things.

So what that does, it unpacks its truths to surround the circumstances. Either we surround the circumstance with the Word of God or the circumstances are going to surround us, one or the other is going to win out and that's where the battle for the mind goes, is-are we allowing the Word of God to dominate or are we going to let unbelief dominate. It's my amoeba diagram here where you have a little chunk of Scripture and what happens is that unbelief surrounds it, so what happens is unbelief controls my interpretation of the situation. I'm operating not much different from an unbeliever, I'm falling apart, panicking and so on because I'm scared because of this situation and so on. So, what we need to do is we have a network of truths, in this case it would be the Exodus event, and that blocks unbelief from taking over.

So Moses gives them a lesson here and he has gone now to number three where you get down to the fact where you can relax with the situation and not to think through now how am I going to deal with it, this doesn't necessarily give the answers but it least sets you mentally so you can get at the answers. So that's why, if you continue the text, he says [18] "...what God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt; [19] the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs and wonders," see how he details all these things.

If you look at what's going on in verse 19 and count the number of eyewitness observations, what he is doing, he is going through what you can imagine in your mind so that... it's like painting a canvas, he's not just talking about Exodus, but he's talking about this, this, this, this, this, until he paints a picture of the Exodus. So that's what that list is in verse 19. This is a very engineered text, every word counts. And he says, "the signs and wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out. So," and here's the conclusion, "So shall the LORD your God do all the peoples of whom you are afraid." So you can get to that point, if He did it to Pharaoh, argument from the greater to the lesser, if He did it to Pharaoh He can do it to these little tweaky Gibeonite kings and the rest of the Canaanites. These guys can't stand a candle to Pharaoh. Now if God did that to Pharaoh, greater to the lesser, if He did this He can do that.

Now a similar reasoning with Paul, we have received all these things, if God did these things for us in Christ, "how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things," [Romans 8:32]that's that greater to the lesser argument again. Okay, so we've gone through, in chapter 7... let me say one more thing, verse 22, where he says realize that behind the appearances, oh yes, verse 22, remember we said that God is going to drive them out little by little, and I said well, that's a little thing about ecology in the Bible, but there's something else about verse 22 that

caught my eye. Verse 22 is in there to guard against something. Once you're convinced that God is going to do something and it's clear what He wants you to do, the next problem we have is that when we obey Him and start doing it, it seems like things don't fall into place right away. Sometimes you pray for something and it just seems like it's postponed, you know it's the Lord's will, but it just seems like, you know, He's not answering the phone. What's going on here? Why are we delaying.

And verse 22 is put in there as a very interesting piece of revelation. Look what it says. Now God has just told them to go in there and keep after the conquest, do not give up just because you won the first three battles, continue, continue, continue, continue till the end, "And the Lord will drive these nations out before you" but He does it "little by little; you will be unable to destroy them at once, lest the beasts of the field become too numerous for you." Now we could go on ecologically about what that means, but I want to back off to a spiritual principle here. The reason in obedience as they were conquering, conquering, conquering, conquering, but they weren't conquering fast, it was just slow, it was plodding, it was discouragingly slow and that could be interpreted as well, God has abandoned us. No, God has not abandoned us, there's something else going on that God is managing over here. So He's giving you what He said, he's going to allow you to do these things but He is dealing with something you know not of. And here's an example, they didn't know principles of ecology back then, but verse 22 lets us know that when God slowly does something and it seems like He's not really doing it on our timetable, it might be that He is doing three or four other things that He hasn't shared with us. So it's not that He's forsaken us, it's not that He's suddenly irrational, it's not that He forgot what He promised us, it's just that He's multitasking and we're part of the picture. So that's another principle.

And then, of course, in verse 25-26 the booty of this war is that the booty belongs to Yahweh, and that has an analogy in the New Testament. In Ephesians 4 Paul points out how, when we become believers, we become prisoners of war out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light and God uses us, and that's that whole chapter on spiritual gifts, it's as though when we become Christians we're God's booty in His argument and battle with Satan. And we're not to be used by somebody, it's we are God's property, we are His booty, we are His prisoners of war and He turns around and equips us for the body.

Okay, we've looked at this, we've made a point about the structures of the passages here and so now we want to look at the center point of chapter 7, so let's go to verse 6. We've covered the operating doctrine, the how to's, the specifics, we come to Deuteronomy 7:6-16, now we're going to talk about a relationship with God. And I find this fascinating because again it goes against the common view of what a personal relationship is like in our contemporary society. So here we want to look at the text and see, back then, how did Moses think of a personal relationship with God? How was it structured?

Okay, Deuteronomy 7:6, "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. [7] The LORD didn't set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number

than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples. [8] But because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD," or "Yahweh has brought you out with a mighty hand, redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh, and of Egypt."

Now, it's interesting, at the heart of a relationship with God is the fact that in the Bible the relationship with God is contractually framed. It's not just some sort of random thing that gee, at 2:30 in the afternoon we're going to have a personal relationship with God. It's something that is based on an enduring contractual frame of reference. This is why Albright said only in the Hebrew, so far as we know, made contracts with their gods or god. Contract one, Abrahamic Covenant, and so forth, contract two, Sinai, they had these contracts and those contracts defined the relationship, they controlled the personal relationship. It was controlled down through history, again remember the two unique things about Israel's history we should all know: #1, Israel is unique in history because they alone have contracts with their God, and #2 they have a chain, a line of apostle/prophets is unknown in paganism. No other religion, NO OTHER RELIGION has a line a millennia long of self-consistent prophets, who are actually spokesman of the covenant.

So now what do we notice? Well, if you'll follow in the notes, "NO OTHER NATION EVER HAD SUCH A CONTRACT α paganism in its idolatry does not have a basis for stable personal relationships." Why do we have contracts in business? Why are there contracts? In a marriage ceremony... we have all the fornicating couples together because they want to have a little sex but they don't want to have dedication to a contractual agreement because that involves maturity and responsibility they don't have. And the whole idea here is that you can't have enduring real personal relationship without a structure to it; that's why we have covenants, that's why we have a marriage ceremony that is witnessed by as many people as can be the witness to this, that we take oaths and we stand responsible for this. It's done out in the open. So this is one of the features, is then paganism does not have a basis for stable personal relationships.

And what do we observe in our society? See how these principles, these sociological principles, they're all over the place. Without an enduring relationship, without integrity, you can't have stable marriages. You can't have stable families without stable marriages and so you can't have a stable society with unstable families. Oh, we're going to have a government program that's going to solve this-no, government program isn't going to solve that, you can pour billions down the toilet and you might as well do that as to try to solve this kind of a problem with a government program. So stability in a personal relationship. Today's increasingly casual nature in personal relationships in business and marriage alike, even in the demeaning, and here we go, in the judicial area the demeaning of the Constitutions of the States and of the Federal Government.

This past week, or last week, The Baltimore Sun, one of the professors of law at the University of Maryland writes: "Of course the judges make the law," they do? The American founding fathers didn't. The law is made by Congress and that only within the framework of the Constitution. When we went to the Tea Party one of my signs was Constitution #1, President,

Congress and the Courts #2. And every guy that's been in the military knows when you join the military you don't oath to protect the President of the United States; you don't make an oath to protect Congress, you don't make an oath to protect the courts, you make an oath to uphold the Constitution. But see, that's all... because the Constitution is sort of a contract, an inter-generational contract that was there to give stability to this country, and we don't like stability and we don't have a basis for generating that stability so we demean the country, just like we have divorce all over the place, just like we have collapsing families all over the place.

So when Yahweh says, you are a people for Myself, and then you see how he brings up the contract, [vs.7] "He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers," now that oath was made 600 years before they went into that land-600. Let's subtract here. Let's say the year 2000, minus 600 is 1400. Think about what's happened in the last six centuries. Now think, then, of a pre-Columbus contract that would still be in effect today. Can you find one? You can't. But this was how far in the distant past Abraham was to this generation, and Moses is reminding them that God, in His personal relationship with His nation, over 600 years obeyed to the letter His contract. He told you this land, He identified the people, and He said you are going to have this; now is the hour to have this.

So we have a little box there, and just comment on what's going on, today there's a comprehensive campaign of destruction of the integrity of language, seen very clearly in legal and theological circles. The appeal to the evolution of language and changing circumstances so time honored documents can't be read with understanding. And if they're not read with understanding you can't have an enduring contract. And what happens; now notice the dynamics here. this is how Satan works, very clever, very, very clever. If the document can't be read by ordinary people and you need specialists that sit in their offices and their academic suites, and they meditate and come out with their interpretation, we have changed the source of authority from the document to a new priesthood. Now we have virtual infallibility of the courts, we have a virtue infallibility of the theologians because the text of the Bible is so screwed up that you and I can't read it and understand it. So now we defer, you see.

So every time you see these things there's all kinds of ripples, there's all kinds of consequences that come out. So now you've moved infallibility from the text over to a group of (quote) "experts." You haven't... you haven't eliminated infallibility, all you've done is like shuffleboard, you've moved it from here over to here, but you haven't gotten rid of it. And the result, of course, is instability.

Now in verses 9-10, after talking about this 600 years contract and how God is faithful to it, look what he says in verse 9. Look at the structure of that sentence in verse 9, "Therefore, know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with them who love Him and keep His commandments; [10] And He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them." Now he's talking about a personal relationship here. And you'll notice, he doesn't talk about knowing the Lord until verse 9, but before verse 9 he's gone through all this business about God's behavior to be observed in conforming with His Words. After that we can say we know God. We know

God now as a set of principles. So in the little box I have three observations.

The Principles in Knowing God, in this text. #1, You know God, and you know that the God of the Bible is the true God, it's not Allah, not some Mormon deity, not Buddha, or one of the thousands gods of Hinduism. This is an absolute claim α and it's very offensive to a relativistic generation, but the reason Moses can claim what he's claiming in verse 9 is because verses 6, 7 and 8, he's talking about a God who speaks and acts in history and you've been given a yardstick to calibrate His behavior by His covenant promises. So you've got calibration of character here. That's what covenants do, they're a calibration of somebody's character. Do they or do they not adhere to the principles of the contract. Then, after that, now we can know someone, now we have a personal relationship because we understand their character. Until we see their character we can't have a personal relationship, we can have an acquaintance but it's not a personal relationship. See the difference of how biblically we're talking about personal relationship here.

And then he says in the Hebrew, he says, "The LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God," and in the Hebrew I've kind of translated it roughly there, point 2, El, which is another name for God, El the Confirmed One who keeps contract [BERITH] and CHESED to the ones who choose Him and keep His commandments. So there we have it. Moses is focusing on you know Him to be the confirmed One; why is He called the Confirmed one or the validated El, the validated God? Context, verses 6, 7 and 8. That's how he knows El is the Confirmed One. Did Baal ever do this? Did the gods of Egypt ever make contracts that you could measure their behavior. Did Sophist, the sun god, ever have a contract that you could measure his behavior, you know he comes up every day and goes down at night but that doesn't really help me with my personal problems and it's not giving any progressive idea to history, it's just history is going around in a circle, that's kind of nice but it gets boring after a while and it's actually meaningless because it's not going anywhere. So there's no other answers out there. There are NO OTHER answers except this one. That's what Moses is saying.

Then point 3, you have to KNOW His contracts and INTERPRET history in their light. See, the contract is a measure of behavior and you have to, therefore, apply it to the behavior. This is why, in the conquest books like Joshua, sometimes a little bit in Judges, you'll see all of this what looks like very, very boring text, well they went up here and this is to the river here and then they went over to this town and so forth, and the valley of some place and this and that, and they're describing boundaries. Boundaries-hmm, that's interesting, why is the text describing boundaries? Promise of the land, promise of twelve tribes, boundaries. This is what God's given, He's given all this boundary information because He's following the contract. That's what He said he would do. So there it is, you can measure it, pace it off, see what God said. It's a very, very concrete.

And I have a little comment in here that people like Will Durant, a very popular history book a generation ago, it was on everybody's book shelf, Will Durant... and of course the more recent one, the DaVinci Code and all, claim that Christianity came out of the pagan mystery cults of the

first century, and they find all kinds of bazaar things, in one of the mystery cults they think they see Christian baptism and here's the cult; now you can see Christian baptism in this, of course, their initiate would be put in a pit and then they would put a screen on top of the pit, so this guy is down there in the pit and then they'd slaughter a bull and the blood drips down on the person, and this, these scholars says, see, that's where Christianity got its idea of baptism. Of course, we all can see that, can't we... it's very obvious. But this is the height of ingenuity that unbelieving scholars have to come to because they are ignorant of the Old Testament; Christianity didn't come from paganism, it came out of the Old Testament, and they never engage that; amazing, they always talk about the Greeks and what Mithraism is and what Dionysius did and all the rest of the cults but there's no reference to Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel. How come? These are Jewish people, guys, come one. How do you think Paul was thinking? What was he trained in to be a rabbi. He studied under Gamaliel, what do you suppose he studied? Mithraism? Dionysian cults? Or did they study the Old Testament text. See, this is the foolishness that goes on today.

So in verse 11 we read, "Therefore, you will keep the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them." And you'll notice "I," the subject of the verb "command" is "I" so what does the pronoun "I" refer to? The pronoun "I" refers to Moses, but that means that He is claiming inspiration. So this is another of many verses, when you see this, that's the doctrine of inspiration showing up in the text, because Israel is to treat Moses' words and they would treat God's Words spoken from Mount Sinai. Moses' words have taken on the authority of God Himself. So the way he speaks is a revelation, then, of the inspiration of Scripture.

Then verse 12, and we'll complete this, go down to verse 16 and we'll be done, again this is the inner part of the sandwich. Moses has gone on about procedures, we've just seen beginning in verse 6 on down through the end of verse 11, he's talking about a relationship. See, there's no procedures here, nothing in verse 6-11, do you see any procedures there? There's no procedures like there are in the first part of the chapter and the last part of the chapter because he's dealing with a relationship between Israel and God. So now in verse 12 he continues with that relationship. He says, "Then it will come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that Yahweh, your God, will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers."

Now here we have an interesting case where there's conditionality and there's an election, a sovereign election. It is sovereignly and unconditionally true that the Abrahamic Covenant will be executed in history. But it's also Israel's personal responsibility to respond to this. And you can debate how sovereignty and human free will work; I don't like the term "free will" because it has a connotation in certain philosophical circles that I'm free of all external things. Well, not really, I prefer the term human responsibility because God holds me responsible, you responsible because if He didn't He couldn't judge us; you can't judge robots. So there is a responsibility and you can see it here; he says, "It shall come to pass because you listen to the judgments," "because you listen and then God will keep His side of this, 13, "He will love you and He will bless you and He will multiply you."

Now the fact that there are consequences in verses 12 and 13 is a radical truth of history and here's why that's important. Is all of this, all of history, going back to your birth on forward, you parents, your grandparents going back, is this history that you're aware of? Does it have a rationale behind it? Now if you didn't have the Bible would you be sure that your life has a purpose, that your parent's life had a purpose, that there's been some change, some progress from your grandmother, your grandfather to you? Do you see that? Can you see that outside of the Scripture? Now the Jews introduced, through God, the idea that history is going somewhere and is rational. You can make a choice and it has consequences.

Now people get a bad view of this; they say well, you know, I hate the law because it's always saying this is going to happen and this is going to happen, this is not going to happen. Wait a minute, wait, wait, wait. The very fact that the law says there are going to be consequences makes my existence predictable. If there were no consequences that were knowable I would be in an unpredictable environment. Now how frustrating is that, when you couldn't be sure that if you do X then Y will follow. The very fact that you can do X and Y follows is because He is a speaker and actor of a created history. So now it shall come to pass... it shall come to pass, that God will keep with you, He will keep the covenant, He will love you, and He will bless you. Now let's look at some of the blessings because we're here and we're looking at how He views blessing.

Verse 13, look now, these are specifics, these aren't procedures, these are blessings from a personal relationship and the are blessings that are stipulated in the contract that structures that relationship. So this is not just talking about some vague relationship that started at 2:30 yesterday; this is talking about a contractual relationship where God is very, very detailed, He says I'm going to do this, I'm going to do this, I'm going to this and I'm going to do this. Now look at the details here, look at verse 13. This is so comforting, this is a part of the Old Testament that to me is very comforting because it gives predictability to my life. "He will love you, He will bless you... He will bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain, and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock, in the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you."

What areas of life do you see summarized in that verse? Well, family, and what do you notice when he says I will "bless the fruit of your womb," what does that say about God's view of children? Are they a blessing or a curse? They're a blessing and I can tell you right now, with the environmental movement, children are going to become a curse. The government policies will oppose childbirth. UCLA did a study, it was financed by our tax money, in which the guy has formally proposed that this generation should have one or less children to lower the carbon footprint. That's where it's going. The environmental movement has always been anti children, too many people just abuse the environment, give nature a break. So God apparently not knowing about Ralph Waldo Emerson and the romantics decided that children are a blessing, not a cursing.

Now you also notice what else? I will bless you, the fruit of your womb, the increase of your cattle, the offspring of your flock, what was their main businesses? Farming and ranching. And what are the two areas where we see blessing? We're talking about economic blessing. Now, you can say well this doesn't always work today. Well, lit doesn't work today because we're not in a covenant relationship like this today. It worked in Israel because they were in a special covenant relationship. It works generally, wisdom principles in business today, but there's a lag time, sometimes there's an awful lot of effort you spend trying to get a job, trying to get the training before you get any fruit, there's a gap but that gap was very tight in Israel because Israel nationally had a role to manifest God's working in history. They were a laboratory example.

So the blessing goes on, and now look what else, look at verse 15, isn't this interesting. "And the LORD will take away from you all sickness, and will afflict you with none of the [terrible] diseases of Egypt which you have known, but will lay on all those who hate you." Now that's talking about public health, and it's interesting, we'll see that more in the stipulation section, there are health codes in the Old Testament text. Now let's consider one easy one; if you violate fidelity and chastity you wind up with sexually transmitted diseases. If you get involved with abortion, the gals who do this now they are discovering, oh gee, we have a higher incident of cancer. Well, of course you did because when your body was preparing a baby you screwed up and you went in there and you interfered with the process, biochemically, and now forty years later you're paying a price for it. So that's why God has these rules and principles. And He says if they will obey Yahweh there will be a marvelous difference, health costs will be less in Israel than in Egypt, and it will be due to a conformity to God's laws.

And then finally, verse 16, "You will destroy all the peoples whom the LORD your God delivers over to you; your eye shall have no pity on them," and that, of course, is a transition to the next section in which Moses is going to deal with procedures.

So to conclude tonight, we have in the conclusion the two areas of chapter 7. [1] regarding Yahweh's holy war, he gives six points of operating doctrine. These are specific things: to do's, how to's, so it's not a vague personal relationship that doesn't have content to it. Finish the job. [2] Maintain family integrity. [3] Destroy every physical monument of paganism. [4] Manage fear by correctly utilizing the faith-rest drill procedure. [5] Realize that behind appearances is a greater reality which you may not understand, and that God's strategy is perfectly managing that unseen unknown reality. [6] In Yahweh's war the booty is His, and not yours. It's his business. So those are the how to's.

Then, verses 6-16 the personal relationship. [2] You can't have a personal relationship without a stable measure of behavior and Moses, God through Moses, is pointing out His covenant behavior. That's what the word chesed means; chesed is the Hebrew word for covenant love, it means conformity, I tell you something and I keep my word, it's that simple. That's what he's talking about, character. [2] Once the stability of character is shown there can be confidence in the future of that relationship. So that's what personal relationship looks like in the Scripture, in contrast to the

arbitrary, sporadic up and down trivial stuff that substitutes for personal relationships in our society.