

Clough Deuteronomy Session 25

Deuteronomy 9:1-29 The Heart of the Military Victory Test & Self-righteousness

Fellowship Chapel; 25 May 10

I try to keep going back to the flow because, remember this was all an unbroken exhortation and it took some time to go through the whole thing. So to get the details we want to look at the text and get all the treaties, then we lose the forest. So that's why I try to put that diagram every time, every week, in your handout so that you can see the flow. If you start interpreting the Scriptures in such minutia that you lose the overall flow you also distort your understanding of the meaning. I mean, this is a human being that got up before a group of people he had something on his mind that he wanted to communicate, and we have to grant him that He has coherence. So last time in chapter 8 you'll see where it is surviving success by maintaining the mental attitude of creaturehood. And Moses was concerned that these folks would not remember the lessons learned in the wilderness wandering from their parents, the first generation, and not realize that when they got into prosperity they have a harder test under conditions of prosperity than they would have under conditions of adversity. Prosperity testing is usually more difficult to survive spiritually than adversity testing. And so he gave us all kinds of arguments there, all based on history.

So now in chapter 9, all the way through chapter 10, we get to the end of chapter 10 there'll be another section, chapter 11, and that'll be two weeks, and then we'll break. I'm going to be teaching a course out at Chafer Seminary so we'll have two more Tuesdays after tonight and then we'll break for July and come back in August because at that point we're halfway through the book, and when we come back we're going to deal with the minutia of the statutes and judgments that everybody kind of blows away and reads fast, not realizing that's where you see the implications all across society, in areas of public health, you see implications as far as banking systems go, you see implications as far as human interaction with animals, human interaction with immigrants to a nation, and so a lot of the social questions that we're grappling with in our country are handled but only if you deal with the statutes and judgments in their details. So that's a different mental process than what we're in here; as you can see the large thing from 5:1-11:32, so we want to cover up to 11:32.

So tonight, in bold print you'll see that there's a parallel between chapter 8 and chapter 9; chapter 8 he's dealing with surviving success. Chapter 9 is also dealing with surviving success, but there's a slightly different nuance here in chapter 9 compared to chapter 8. In chapter 8 people took normal processes for granted. In chapter 9 there's sort of a self-righteousness that can be triggered, and so Moses has to deal with that too. So what we want to do on the first slide is look at some of these verses and just notice, so far notice chapter 5, chapter 6, chapter 7, chapter 8, notice the emphasis on h-e-a-r-t. You see that noun over and over and over. That's why the theme in chapters 5-11 is loving Yahweh with your heart. It's the heart condition and Deuteronomy 5:29, "Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me," that was spoken by God Himself at Mount Sinai.

And the reason these verses are so important is because if you don't read the Old Testament and you just read the New Testament you get this false image that the Old Testament was this legalistic thing and you get that because of Galatians, because of Matthew, but Matthew and Paul, they're dealing with a Pharisaic distortion of the Old Testament. So if you only read the New Testament what you get is a feeling for the distortion of the Old. So that's why Deuteronomy is so important. Deuteronomy is the central theological book of the Old Testament. The prophets, whether you study Isaiah, whether you study Jeremiah, whether you study Hosea, all those guys are building on the Mosaic foundation here. So that's why Deuteronomy is absolutely crucial to understand the thinking that goes on in the Old Testament. And Jesus, of course, went back to this text very often in His personal life.

So in Deuteronomy 5:29, here's God saying, after the people have said we can do it, basically they heard the Ten Commandments, the Decalogue, and they said all that you said we will do. And they didn't have a clue, these poor people, that they were in hostile territory, that they were fallen beings, their hearts were going to rebel against God, they were clueless. And the frustration, you can see how verse 29 begins, "Oh," and it's an emotional response as God addresses the situation; He says gosh, you know, these people don't know what they're talking about. "Oh, that they had such a heart in them," and then notice the condition, because God puts two universals in this sentence, "Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep ALL My commandments," see how universal that statement is. What God is saying is that they need a heart circumcision, a change in the heart, in order to live the life of the kingdom of God.

So right away this has profound political implications because people always want to have the perfect society and the Marxists always have this idea if you just tear apart the institutions and toss them around in a box somehow of that chaos will come order of some sort, sort of like evolution. And inevitably if you ask a good intellectual Marxist why he thinks he's ever going to get a good society, is because he thinks in terms of economic pressures or he thinks in terms of psychological things, or in terms of the cultural Marxists that came out of Frankfurt, Germany, the cultural Marxists, they're thinking terms of cultural forces and so on. None of them think of the heart. You find this even in areas of Islamic theology, that imposing sharia law externally is going to create an orderly and just society. It doesn't work that way.

So this is the great idea that comes out of this section, from chapters 5 to 11, before Moses gets to the details of the case law he has to deal with this issue. And Moses was very sensitive because remember, for 80 years he watched this. He lived through 40 years of failure because this issue was not addressed. You cannot have a perfect society without a change deep in the human heart, and that change can only happen through regeneration and the Holy Spirit working in people's heart. And men have fought and we have lost millions of men in battle down through history, always trying to create the social just society and they always fail, and they fail because they don't heed this lesson.

This is why we are premillennialists. As Ron Merryman pointed out Sunday, we are premillennialists because we're realists, we know that the only way

that evil can be dealt with is for Jesus Christ to come back and deal with it, in a catastrophic way. The Millennial Kingdom is going to be administered, the administration of the King in the Millennial Kingdom of resurrected people, resurrected people are incorruptible, so the reason you can get a Millennial Kingdom is because you have an incorruptible leadership and even that fails because after a thousand years what happens? Let Satan loose for a while and we have another overhaul. So how many times in history does God have to show us that we're sinners?

Then in Deuteronomy 6:5, that was the chapter when he was talking about living in the Word and how to get that. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart," see these universals, not part, ALL. That's repeated for a reason, it's part of Old Testament theology, ALL. "...these words which I command you this day shall be in your heart," you remember that happens through the home, through the family. Chapter 7 dealt with the conquest pressures, joining Yahweh's war, he says, "If you say in your heart, 'These nations are greater....'" So chapter 7:17 shows you there's a battle going on in our heart. God wants a certain heart condition and it's constantly being challenged. This is why we say the battleground is in the heart.

Deuteronomy 8:2, "God led you ... in the wilderness to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart," and so I went last time and the time before I mentioned it briefly, to look at the physical heart in order to understand the spiritual connotation. And the reason we do that is because in the Bible man is made of the dust of the earth into which God breathed a human spirit, and out of that combination of the material and immaterial we have nephesh, which is translated soul. Too many people come to the Bible when they see s-o-u-l they think like a Greek and in Greece, in the philosophical areas, Plato and Aristotle, s-o-u-l to them meant the spirit. That is not the way you read the Bible. The Jewish mentality is that s-o-u-l includes the physical body as well as the spirit.

So in the ancient world when they said it's in my "heart," they were doing pretty much what we are doing in our every day vernacular, it's heart-felt, it's heart-warming, so and so has a broken heart. We use these idioms in our language all the time. I think the reason we do that is because we can sense physically the emotions in our heart. That's why people think that way. The heart manifests itself so you can feel it, you can sense it. And so this is why I made a big point quoting from that book, The Coherent Heart, which is basically a neurocardiology research, because the Bible doesn't employ language casually so when we have a term like that we want to think, God used the word "heart," He uses the word "sheep," He uses the word "oxen," these words connote physical things but the physical things are His design. So He has pre-designed these features in us so He can speak to us and we can understand.

And this is why on the next slide I quote another quote from this book and this is a fascinating quote to show how new research shows you how much more important the heart is to our whole being, constantly, that it's not just a pump. As it says, the heart is in continuous connection with the brain, therefore it's affecting our mind, and that's why you see this, you shall say in your heart, your thinking, you shall say in your heart. The

heart is in continuous connection with the brain and other bodily organs and systems through multiple pathways.

Look at the four different ways the heart communicates. One is neurologically, and that is through the transmission of neural impulses, that's the nerve system. Second, it's biochemically, through hormones and neurotransmitters. This is a new area that they discovered, in fact, I was reading something where only in the last several decades have they classified the heart as part of the endocrine system, and the reason they've done it is because the heart is secreting hormones; the heart is a hormone secretor also. So that's another way the heart communicates, neurologically; it communicates biochemically, it communicates biophysically through pressure and sound waves. In fact, the pulses in our blood system, when they're in coherence, like that diagram, mimic the heart, the changes in the heartbeat, and it's all synchronized to a certain standard which is coming up here in a minute. So it's biophysically, that's the third way the heart communicates and then finally, a fourth way is energetically through electromagnetic fields because the heart is generating an electromagnetic field. And all the cells, which also are electrical in our body are within the field transmission of the heart. So the heart is not just some little casual organ. God has designed it in an amazing way and the more you study it and the more research is done, holy mackerel, we just don't know the half of it.

So when the Bible says "heart" we haven't got a clue yet what it is doing, it's thinking, the heart is part of our thinking process. And the brain is operating, according to this research, at its top efficiency when the heart and the system is coordinated in rhythm, and the optimum rhythm that seems to be true is

.1 Hz, or ten times a second. And that's when these changes in the beat to beat occur once on a cycle of every ten seconds, that seems to be... the brain alpha waves like it, and the other organs seem to just really like that; it's calming, it's soothing, and it allows them to work.

So all that to say is the physical heart, in conclusion, has a field of influence throughout our whole body. So it's amazing how this works, and it radiates its rhythms outward. Now watch this, because I think this is getting at why God keeps using the word "heart." It radiates its rhythms outward so our total inner state can be measured against a known standard. In other words, that you can measure this heart rate and what it's doing and realize how far away it's departing from .1 Hz, or ten times a second optimum cycle. And if it's vastly different then there's chaos reigning; if it's close to that it's a coordinated system functioning.

So that means there's an objective standard by which the total inner state can be measured. Now if that's true of the physical heart, then there's an interesting parallel and we see this in the next few verses. There's dozens of these but I want you to look at four of these verses and let's think about what these verses are saying in the light of what we've already seen about the physical heart.

"As in water face reflects face," remember water was used as a mirror in the ancient world, "As in water face reflects face, so a man's heart reveals the man," so it's like saying if you want to see yourself in a mirror, then your heart is you and that's your state, spiritually. "As in

water face reflects face, so a man's heart reveals the man," Proverbs 27:19. That's why, now, we have these other verses repeated throughout the Scripture, all the way into the New Testament, what is God looking at when He searches us? He's looking at the heart, and just think of the guy that's physically trying to see what our heart is doing with all our organs and he's sitting there with a machine that's trying to tell him what is the pulse, what is the modulation of this, oh, it's .1 Hz, okay, we're close to optimization.

So, "I the LORD search the heart...to give every man according to his ways," so there obviously God is responding to what He sees and what He sees is the state of the heart, Jeremiah 17:10. And of course, we know from Jeremiah "the heart is desperately wicked, who can know it." God can, but we can't, in spite of Freud and Karl Gustav Jung. Then in Matthew 12:35 we have another statement, and this thinking in terms again that the heart radiates outward from itself a field of influence, neurologically, electronically, biophysically, hormonally, look at this verse. "A good man out of the good the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasures brings forth evil things. So it's like the heart is a repository and it is the source, just like it's a source of blood, it's the source of electromagnetic field, spiritually it's the source, that's why Jesus talks about what defiles a man is his mouth, the words that come out and they come out from the heart. Good works come out from the heart.

Now there's something else we want to see and so I've selected two more verses and that is Proverbs 4:23, typical of many, I'm just picking one verse out, there's probably 20 of these same kind of verses that you can find yourself in the concordance but I'm just bringing these to your attention because of the rationale that you see inside these verses. Look at Proverbs 4:23 and what it's saying: "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." See, the conception there is the heart is the source of things. And then Proverbs 4:23 is adding something is adding something. If the heart is the source of things, then we are responsible for it and for its state. So that's why the verb there is "Keep your heart with all diligence," so we have to be heart readers, not of other people but of own heart. "Keep thy heart with all diligence," see how this connects with what Moses is doing as he's trying to brief the nation before he dies?

And then Jesus, in Matthew 12:35, [A good man out of the good treasure of heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasures brings forth evil things."] he has that it's out of the heart thing, and so obviously you don't want to bring evil out of evil treasures, so the idea is to deal with those evil treasures. But now these next two verses add another little thing to this package of truth.

In 1 John 3:19-21 we have three verses that are problematical in translation; some of the translations aren't clear about this so I'm giving the translation that Zane Hodges worked on for about 20 years; he taught the Johannine literature at Dallas Theological Seminary and he's an expert at the logic of Johannine literature. And let me read it through so you'll see what the catch is. Follow me in 1 John 3:19, "And by this," "this" being in context helping another brother or sister, helping another Christian in other words, "by this we ... shall assure our hearts before

Him," now see, that's like that Proverbs thing, we can affect the state of our hearts, and this is where "assure" means convince, the heart needs to be convinced because the heart is also where the conscience is. And so the conscience has to be convinced, otherwise you can't believe the Lord, you can't trust the Lord if you don't have a signal in the heart saying so. And that's why it's so important, for example, in talking to someone about the gospel of Jesus Christ that you don't apply peer pressure. You don't want people to just make some verbal thing because their girlfriend or their boyfriend or their mother or the father or their children are watching or something because that's just a social pressure, that's external, that's not coming from the heart. A person could basically be saying to themselves, well, gee, I'm not really convinced of this but everybody's looking at me so I'd better do something. That's not what we want, that's false conversion.

So "by this," now he's talking to believers here, "buy this we shall assure our hearts before Him that," now some translations in place of "that" add "because" and the reason is that the Greek word is the same, it doesn't do any good to look in a Greek concordance because these are the two main uses of the word, so you've got to look at context, just like you have to do in English. So this is how Hodges translates this and I'm convinced he's absolutely right here. "By this we shall assure our hearts before Him that," content, "if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and knows all things. In other words, the idea in context there is you've helped a brother in need and you've done it sincerely, and what John wants you to know is that you know you're in fellowship when your heart says well, you know you're a stinker, and you didn't do this and you didn't do that and you're a sinner and blah, blah, blah, blah. And so now the heart is condemning. But what the argument here, what John says is one way of convincing the heart is to go back to the fact that God is omniscient. He saw what you did and so therefore you did it as unto Him, He saw that, He knows that, and you can back test the heart and convince it, because the next clause, "if our heart does not condemn us we have confidence toward God," and in the context that's talking about prayer. So again the confidence in prayer comes when the heart gives its consent, a heart consent because the heart is located where the conscience is. So all this to say that there's a struggle and we are responsible for our heart condition spiritually, and we can do something about it. And so when you get into verses like Proverbs 4:23 or 1 John 3, when you see those kind of verses just pay attention to them because the Holy Spirit is telling us through those texts here's how to handle your heart. And then finally, Romans 2:15 tells us God has written His law in our hearts, and that's all men. So everyone has written in their hearts God's moral principles. That's the basis of the fact that God holds people responsible. He couldn't hold persons responsible if they didn't know the truth, but Romans 2 asserts that all people have a code written in their hearts. Now this is sort of against a lot of thinking in psychology and sociology because the tendency is to think that babies are born with tabula rasa, that is, a blank slate, and it's the parents, it's the experience after birth that programs the children. And this is why in the post modern era, well, gee, my mother dropped me on my head when I was a baby and therefore I go out and kill people. So there's all this extra business because of my unique bringing up has affected me. Well, it has affected me but that doesn't make me irresponsible.

Now here's an interesting piece of research. Yale University, I just came across this, John Cross at Good Seed sent me this little tidbit this week in fact, and I thought this was fascinating in this light. Let me read you the report, it comes from Canadian TV, apparently we're too busy worrying about the Gulf thing to get into this sort of thing. "New research suggests that babies as young as six months have already developed a sense of right and wrong. The study from the Infant Cognition center at Yale University theorizes that the notion of morality is hard wired into the brain at birth." What did Romans 2:15 say?

"A lot of philosophers and psychologists used to believe that babies start off knowing nothing and in the domain of morality many people believe that babies start off as little psychopaths, indifferent to the suffering of others, not knowing right from wrong, Yale University psychologist Paul Bloom told

Canada A.M. Tuesday. But in our own lab and in other labs we are finding a surprisingly rich understanding of morality even in the youngest babies we could test. In one experiment babies between the ages of six months and one year watched an animated film in which a red ball tried to climb a hill while a yellow square tries to help it up and a green triangle tries to push the ball down." So here's the little baby watching this screen, there's the little ball and there's a guy that comes up to help him and then there's this bad guy that pushes him down. So the baby sits there and he sees this little drama going on on the screen. So scientists tested which shape the babies preferred by measuring how long they spent looking at a picture of each one. In 80% of the cases babies chose the helpful shape over the unhelpful one. In another experiment researchers devised one act morality plays with puppets, with good animals and bad animals. The babies preferred the good animals when tested, going so far as to reward the good animal with a treat and take away a treat from the bad animal. We've done some even more recent studies that showed that babies have a rudimentary sense of justice, so if they see a different character punish a bad guy and reward a good guy they like that character. But if they see a character reward the bad guy and punish the good guy they dislike this character. All of this speaks to an early moral sense of understanding of what is going on in that sort of relationship."

And he comments for parents, "If you're happy with how you're interacting with your baby or child as terrific our research tells you nothing new about how to do that, what it does tell us," and I don't know, this man probably is not a believer, but I thought this was a neat last sentence to the story, "what it does tell us is I think parents can learn a lot and appreciate a lot by knowing just how smart and moral their babies are." So I don't think... this is the kind of testing that I think confirms the Word of God, what the Word of God has been saying all along, babies don't come tabula rasa, babies don't come as psychopaths, they come as fallen beings but they have a sense, because God has written on the little baby's heart His law, and He can't articulate a lot but he knows there's a standard there... a tremendous point.

Okay, so our spiritual heart, conclusion, has fixed standards built into it... fixed standards. It's not a piece of rubber, it's not plastic, it's not arbitrary, it has fixed standards. So conclusion: just as the physical heart reveals the bodily systems' state, so the spiritual heart reveals our true spiritual state compared to God's designed standard. Just as the whole physical heart has that 0.1 Hz, optimum cycling, so the

human heart has God's laws his conscience as the absolute standard. So the heart has within it a standard. We are responsible to subdue our heart and bring it into conformity with God's holiness. It's our "Promised Land" that must be conquered.

And now I want to link it theologically. All this has been to think about the heart and the mind. Now we talked about this chapter after chapter in Deuteronomy, now let me try to bring some of this together. At this point in Israel's history there's one of the most troublesome things for readers of the Bible and that's holy war, the genocide. And in chapter 7 Moses deals with the genocide, and they have to go through this, they have to engage in a holy war that's Yahweh's war as part of getting rid of evil. Now that genocide is limited to Israel, to a time in Israel's history, and to a place, a certain area of land. However, out of that came an imprecatory mental attitude that is manifested in some of the Psalms that also give people a lot of trouble—bash their babies heads against the wall; it's in the Psalms. And what do you make of passages like this? Those passages are teaching us an imprecatory attitude toward evil and the reason the Bible has those things in it is because that attitude is the attitude we need to deal with our heart to subdue it. Our heart is fallen, it is desperately wicked, it is a battle zone and it has to be cleaned up and only the Lord can help us do that, but all of us have a "Promised Land," so to speak, in our heart that has to be cleared and we have to deal ruthlessly with high places, the vain imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the law of God and root it out. And it never finishes until... you know, we rapture and go to the Lord.

But the point is, we have that struggle and I think that's why there's imprecatory attitudes in the Scripture, not to go out and kill somebody, it's an attitude toward evil. Yes, it does involve killing other people when other people are confirmed evil, but we don't know they're confirmed evil, Israel knew it only in the 4th generation of the Amorites, they were confirmed evil people and that, then, an attitude toward evil means we go after them, not because it's our war, though. Okay, so much now for where we got with the heart.

Okay, now tonight we want to come with chapter 9 and we will, by the way, in the next 20 minutes we will actually finish the chapter. So if you look in the outline the next prosperity test... first the adversity test scenario: wilderness deprivation of the necessities of life to show man does not live by "normal processes" alone, I'm paraphrasing it to get the meaning, "man does not live by bread alone, but by every thing that proceeds out of the mouth of God." But the substance and meaning of that is man does not live by normal processes; in other words, you don't go out and grow grain to grow bread when you're in the wilderness, you can't do it, yet you still need food. So God strips away the normal processes in order to make us cognizant of His logistical grace underlying those processes. Satan sought to get Jesus to use His omnipotence to make bread, and we won't get into Christology here but there's a doctrine called the doctrine of kenosis, Ron Merryman got into some of that in Philippians 2 Sunday in fact. The idea of kenosis is this, that Jesus Christ remained as true deity but what He gave up was the voluntary use of His attributes. In other words, Jesus Christ could not exercise His divine attributes except as the Father gave Him permission, and what Satan tried to do is to get Him to exercise his divine attributes to feed

Himself, and Jesus went back to the principle of the adversity test because He said that, look, I'm hungry, I know that I can make bread, but I'm not going to do that because I am depending on My Father to provide the bread whenever and wherever He so chooses. So the Lord Jesus was tempted to make bread differently than we would make bread, but the principle is the same: in His omnipotence He could tell the rocks to turn into bread, but if He did that, He would violate the doctrine of kenosis and break the whole point of why He was here. So he models for us, using Deuteronomy 8, the idea of trusting the Lord for this logistical grace. The prosperity test scenario is when "normal procedures" seem to be sufficient does the heart retain creature awareness. That's why prosperity testing is so hard, does the heart retain creature awareness, that is, are we cognizant of the fact that even though (quote) "we" do it, "we" do this and "we" do that, "we" do this, and we're so used to it, and we never think about the fact that well, actually we were creatures and God is maintaining our structures while we're doing all of this. And it's hard, it's hard to maintain creature awareness when everything seems to be going fine.

But now in chapter 9, now they have another prosperity test and this is after they whip the Canaanites they are going to be subject to a problem and the problem is we whipped them because we're better than they are. In other words, we're more righteous than they are so we sort of deserved to beat them anyway. So that's a no-no. The structure of this, verses 1-6 give the teaching, 7-9:29 give the historical refutation of Israel's self-righteous response, and chapter 10 is going to give the real historical basis of their success and every other success. You'll notice I've underlined the word "historical." I want you to observe how Moses argues. We have seen this again and again and again and this is why I have the framework. What got me started in the framework many, many years ago was I had to think through how do biblical writers argue their case. And every time I looked to see whether it's Stephen, whether it's Paul, whether it's Matthew, whether it's the prophets, whether it's Moses, they're arguing not like a Greek philosopher, they're arguing by repeating history. And so that's why we want to follow this line of argument.

Deuteronomy 9:1-2, Hear, O Israel: You are to cross over the Jordan today, and go in and to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourselves, cities great and fortified up to heaven, [2] a people great and tall, the descendants of the Anakim, whom you know, of whom you heard it says, 'Who can stand before the descendants of Anak?' Now the emphasis in this passage, of course, is on the military disparity between the two armies. The Anakim were real people; now they weren't a large population apparently, but in your outline I've summarized the history of these people. They go all the way down from Moses' day all the way to David's time, Goliath is one of them, somehow there's a genetic fame that goes on that's propagated here, Goliath had a couple of brothers and you know they're freaks because one of them had six fingers and six toes, whatever his name, Mr. X I call him because the Bible doesn't tell you what his name is, but there's a whole family of these guys and they're big. Goliath, he wasn't the tallest, apparently, but he was 9 and 3/4th feet tall, put him on the basketball court and see what happens. And his armor weighed 125 pounds and that wasn't a sack on him like soldiers wear, a hundred pound sack on their back, this was the armor they used in combat, this was the shield and the spear and everything else. Now you try

holding 125 pound shield and spear in your hand and be flexible enough to get somebody with it. So these guys were big. And the emphasis here is you are going to go up against the big guys.

But, verse 3 says, "Therefore understand today that Yahweh, Your God is He who goes over before you," that's all a Hebrew participle, which is a characteristic, in other words, He's the going one for you, it's part of His nature to be going with you, for you, because it's His battle. "He goes over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you; so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the LORD has said to you." Notice the construction in that sentence, there are four verbs; count the first 2 and then look at verb number 3 and verb number 4 and see what you notice. The first two verbs, what is the subject of the first two verbs, the subduing? It's Yahweh. The subject of verb number 3 and verb number 4 is Israel. And see, that's the cause/effect, God is going to do this and that makes you able to do it. So there's the divine enablement factor. "He will destroy them," He "will bring them down," that's God doing it, and "you will drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the LORD has said to you. Now that same principle applies in clearing out the crud in our hearts, that God has to help us do it because we don't even know where it is, but He helps us and it can happen.

Then he says, verse 4, and this is a test now, after they've conquered all these guys, "Do not think in your heart, after the LORD your God has cast them out [before you, saying,] because of my righteousness the Lord has brought me in to possess this land; but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out from before you. [5] It's not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go into possess the land, it is because of the wickedness of the nations that the LORD your God drives them out," and see, that gets back to the old slide that we've shown a thousand times and that is the biblical view of evil and how the fact is that God has got a program in history unlike any other non-biblical thought pattern. Every other person outside of the Scriptures has to believe that the good/evil mixture is forever normal; it has always been this way and always will be this way. Only in the Scriptures do you have the mix of good and evil bounded, bracketed. It started at a point in history and it was going to end at a point in history. It is bracketed. That is what gives us hope. It's the bracketing of evil and no one, apart from the Word of God, has an answer to this problem; NO one has ever come up with an answer to this issue, no matter what philosopher whenever, whatever century, there has never been an answer to this whole issue. But this is the answer and God has a war that's going on and He wants it straightened out.

Now, you'll notice in the construction of this text it says that God is driving them out before you, "It is not because of the righteousness or the uprightness of heart" that you're going to go in and possess, "but because of the wickedness of these nations that God drives them out before you, and that He may fulfill His Word which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." On your outline you'll see two boxes, and what I wanted to do in those two boxes is to run you through a little way of thinking about life. "In order that" introduces a purpose clause, okay, so now we're dealing with a purpose and if it's a purpose it means dealing with meaning, so the question we have to answer is, in life

period how do we identify the purpose of a historical event? How do we identify the purpose of something in our life? How do we even know there is a purpose?

Years ago Walter Kaufmann, he was an atheist philosopher at Princeton, he wrote a book called Faith of a Heretic, and it's a fascinating book to read because he deals with a little girl dying of cancer, he gives an illustration of that, and he says what are going to do, give her a little lollipop, hoping that everything is going to be better after she dies? He says no, but then he has to say because the whole universe, he has admitted, does not have a meaning or a purpose, he says that's all right, it doesn't follow that we can just make the meaning up. Well, that's not very inspiring, if I'm dying of cancer to sit there and saying if I take a pill maybe I can make something up to make myself feel good. But see, that's the desperation of the atheist worldview. It doesn't have a hope, it doesn't have a source. So how do we identify the purpose of an event, or how do we know? Well, in this text, after the purpose signal you'll see what it says, "that He may fulfill the word which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," in this particular case he's talking about the Abrahamic Covenant.

But let's generalize that so this becomes a useful operating term. We know there is a purpose because we know God acts that way according to His revelation. God acts according to His verbal revelation; He speaks and He acts and His actions are coherent and rationally consistent with His Word. So because we don't know everything, but we certainly have examples, like this, where we see God acting in history in a fantastic way through millions of people, through all kinds of political dynamics and sociological and cultural dynamics to bring about exactly what he promised literally in the Abrahamic Covenant. Now doesn't that demonstrate the fact that we know there is a purpose and we know it only because, in this case they would know it only because what happened? The Abrahamic Covenant, only because God told them that. So do you see something here? and that is here is the intellectual reason why revelation is important. Apart from verbal revelation from God, we have no anchor for purpose and interpretation of history. Even if God were there and He didn't speak to us we'd still be in a mess. If God is mute we would never know His intentions. And therefore we'd still be sitting around floundering, well, maybe there's a purpose but boy, I don't know anything about it. It's only because He has spoken in history.

So point 2, we know what the purpose is if He has put it in one of His contracts. The application to our personal experience is that we have to go on the basis of what the Word of God says. There's about eleven reasons why Christians suffer in the New Testament epistles; now in every individual case we don't know why we lose our job, we don't know why we're sick, we don't know why so and so died, we don't know exactly that, but we have the assurance as Christians, there are at least ten or eleven in the Scripture for it, and maybe reason number three and five together, we don't know, but at least we know there are reasons, and that means that I know that there's rationality in life. Now if I don't know that, that is severely damaging to me because that takes away purpose, that takes away meaning, that takes away the reason to live. And this is why it's no surprise that after 20 years or 30 years of an intensely secular education we have the rise in suicides. I mean, why can't we find out that $2 + 2$ is

4? Of course we have drugs, drugs are an anesthesia, it's an anesthesia against the pain, not physically but the existential pain of trying to live without a purpose. So at least I take a drug and it diverts my attention, or I can sit there and be distracted by all kinds of texting and all the rest of it, just so that I don't get quiet, because when I get quiet and I pause, now the haunting questions come.

Do you know what led me to Christ? When I was in high school, my senior year, I never forget this, God worked in different ways but I was not a Christian then, in my senior year I got a bunch of awards and I can remember, we had an auditorium and you go down for this award and that award and it was embarrassing because I did have a number of awards because I had won some science contests and so on in the state of New York, and my girlfriend was sitting there in the thing and she said why don't you just stay up on stage. The point was that I got all these awards, but when I walked back to that seat and I sat down, the thought occurred to me, this is it? This is it? I don't know why I thought that but I can think years later, as I've thought about what I was thinking, that was an existential moment of despair because evidently what I must have been thinking as a non-Christian is if I do this it's going to fill me, if I do that it's going to give me purpose. And then when I got it, it was like cotton candy, there's nothing there, "this is it?" So that's what we're talking about, that loneliness, and that helplessness that is very, very deep in every person. And this is why when we see places like "God is going to do this because He's doing that," that should ring bells. You know, that's good news.

In verse 6, he says, "Therefore understand that the Lord your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people." The word stiff-necked came from their farming; a stiff-necked animal was one who would not, when they were yoked they wouldn't bow their head and pull, they'd just stand back up and so it got to be a pride, self-righteousness, and we see that, it's very easy to get into this pride mode. Whenever we say, you see it in court cases, political elections, crucial votes, international relations, whenever we see the bad guys put down, naturally that's encouraging from the standpoint of justice but where you have to kind of control your heart is you can't rejoice "yeah, he got it and I didn't." There's a difference of rejoicing that justice is done but thinking to yourself is that there by the grace of God go I. So there's a certain humility here, and that's the point, flunking the prosperity test here is a problem and it's going to be a problem with Israel.

Now from Deuteronomy 7:9 down to verse 29, the rest of this, you can read it, it's about the history and it's about what happened at Mount Sinai, let's just skim it and then I want to show you something about the structure. This is a lesson because often we are challenged as Christians, Bible-believing Christian, by people who read texts like this and say ooh, this isn't chronological, and there's an error, there's a problem with the Bible. So we're going to see that, we're going to have an explanation for it right now.

In verse 7, "[Remember!] Do not forget how you provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the Lord. [8] Also in Horeb you provoked the Lord to wrath, so that the

Lord was angry enough with you to have destroyed you." And he recounts the fact that he went up on Mount Sinai for forty days, while he was up there, he comes down, forty days is a long time by the way, that's five weeks, and so he comes down off the mountain and what's happened already. Aaron's got a whole new religion going on, worshipping the calf, the bull, which is the fertility god that they had in Egypt. So now Moses comes down, and he comes down, God tells him about it, and verse 12, "Then the Lord said to me, 'Arise, go down quickly from here, for your people," I love it in the Hebrew, it's so cool the way God talks to Moses, "your people," now Moses, you see, before it was His people. Okay, "your people, whom you brought out of Egypt have acted corruptly; they have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them," and so on.

And then he says, [13 "Furthermore the Lord spoke to me, saying,] 'I have seen this people, [and indeed they are a stiff-necked people.] 14 Let Me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.' [15] So I turned and came down from the mountain," and he describes what he does, and in verse 17 look what he does when he goes down the mountain. He takes the two tablets and he threw them and he broke them. When you break the tablets what are you doing to the covenant of the tablets? It's an official statement, it's not just that he's angry and he's just going to smash them, that's not what he's doing. It's like if you had a mortgage and you paid it off, it's nice, you like tear it up, it's just almost like a ceremony because you're finished with it. It's not because you're mad at the piece of paper, you're doing that because of the nature of the contract, it's over, it's broken. So now there's no contract. Then he fell down, it says, verse 18, for another forty days. Now he has to mediate between Yahweh and the nation to try to get another covenant. And then he goes on and he describes the calf down in verse 21, and then he talks about in verse 22, "... you provoked the Lord to wrath," at other places. And then Kadesh Barnea, Taberah and Massah were before Sinai, Kadesh Barnea is after Sinai. See, it's all chronologically messed up here. [24] "You have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you." [25] "And so I prostrated myself before the Lord; forty days," and then he repeats on what he is doing.

So I have one more slide to show tonight, and that is the nature of this text, and we won't spend undue time on it because we don't have the time but I want you to notice something, something when you read the Bible and you read exhortation narratives, remember, this is not just a narrative of history, this is Moses addressing a group of people. Now on the top of this diagram and on your handout you will see that I have ordered the verses by their chronology. So here, verse 22 actually speaks of something that comes first. Then 9, then 11, then 10, 12-17, 21, 18 to 20, 25 to 29, 23 to 24, and you look at that sequence and you say somebody messed up here. No, they didn't mess up; Moses is speaking as a news reporter would speak. News reporters don't necessarily give the story chronologically, they do it with themes, emphases involved. So what I've done in the structure and it's on your handout, you can look at it later, what I've tried to do is I've tried to take them in the sequence in which you find them in the text and describe the thought in these three segments, and then notice what these three segments are doing.

Notice, verses 9-11, a forty day wait for the first two tablets; relationship, verses 12-17 ruptured relationships, two tablets destroyed;

18-20 forty day wait for the second two tablets, relationship restored and announced in verse 19. So if you see that, then what is it that you could summarize that section? What is Moses getting at? Why is he throwing the discourse out of chronological order? The reason is because he's emphasizing the contractual relationship that is established, broken and then restored. So the emphasis there, the point he wants to get across is trace the relationship; you broke it, I broke the tablets, and then we had to reanalyze it and so forth.

Then he casually adds verse 21... oh, by the way, I threw the idol down the mountain stream, then in verses 22-24 he talks of other incidents, both before and after Sinai, that confirm the self-righteousness of the nation, and then verses 25-29. These two here, verse 21, 22-24 they all speak of actual locations so now again we see why do we have an actual location? What is the Hebrew mind? Remember when we were conquering the land, after it was all over what did he do? He said you want to see the bedpost of the king, it's over there. See that mentality, in other words, here it happened, there it happened, this has happened and this has happened. So whereas this section he was emphasizing the relationship, in this section he's emphasizing the events, where they happened.

And then he concludes the chapter, verses 25-29 and we'll speak more of that, the logic that he used to renegotiate the contract, that logic that he uses to renegotiate the contract is very, very important because that is a fore view of the Lord Jesus Christ. At that point Moses is acting as the mediator, as the intercessor, and you don't ever get what an intercessor does except in the New Testament it mentions it, but the New Testament sort of assumes that you already know what a mediator does. And this event gives you an example of what happens here.

So, conclusion, success, particularly involving the triumph of good over evil, sets one up for another prosperity test, whether to deny or affirm my fallen creaturehood; it's not just my creaturehood, but the fact is that I'm fallen, that I do not deserve this, that our God is a God of grace. And the refutation from verse 9, all the way to 29, how has Moses argued it? Is this a theological argument? Well, yes, it's a theological argument, but it's historical. You see, what's he talking about? Covenant, written on tablets, broken, restored, actual locations where this happened, restored relationship because of forty days of negotiation. That's how he argues his case and that's the biblical way of thinking these things through. Remember, *zakar*, the Hebrew verb to remember. Remember, remember, remember, we have to remember these events in time.