

Clough Deuteronomy Session 26

Deuteronomy 10:1-22 Loving Yahweh: Pagan Ethics versus the Ethical Nature of God

Fellowship Chapel; 1 June 10

If you'll look at the handout on session 26..., before you do that though, I had some of the ladies point out to me that I did not last time go through some of the blanks on the handout, so let me do that before we go any further. On page 1, conclusion, down at the bottom, the field of influence, the answer to that is throughout our whole body. And then it says "and it radiates its rhythms outward so our total inner state can be measured." And that was the point about physical heart to make the analogy to the spiritual application of the word "heart."

Then on the next page, "From infancy our spiritual heart is functioning, our spiritual heart has fixed standards built into it." The idea there is that the physical heart can be measured against a state and we pointed out from neurocardiology that the resident state of the heart when it is optimum that it tends to entrain the respiration and the brain wave to .1 Hz or ten times a second. And this is not heartbeat, this is the changes in the heartbeat. And so these changes are played on top of the regular heartbeat and it's sort of... for engineers it's modulating the signal like a radio. And so the spiritual heart, as we said, in water face reflects face, so a man's heart reveals to man, Proverbs 27:19, so there's a standard for the spiritual heart too. The big idea there in the analogy, and we'll see it tonight too, is the heart is a transmitter, it's a pump that distributes blood and it's also a transmitter, things come out of it. So..., including now they've realized that the heart is also an endocrine organ because it's now, they've discovered, it secretes hormones. So the heart is electrical, it's magnetic, there's all kinds of things in it. And the spiritual heart, according to Jesus, out from the heart proceed the things that defile a person. And so the heart, again, is the source of spiritual truths that are coming out of the person, not out of God.

Then under Deuteronomy 8 on the last handout, where it says adversity test scenario, it's "the wilderness deprivation of the necessities of life," that was how God structured that adversity test in Deuteronomy 8, to remove "the necessities of life to show that man does not live by 'normal processes' alone." And the little footnote there or the little next sentence, Jesus used that very verse with Satan because in Kenosis Jesus gave up the voluntary use of His deity; He did not give up His deity, He gave up the voluntary use of His deity when facing trials. So He would use the deity if the Father so approved, which meant that when He faced Satan's trials He had to trust the Father and the Holy Spirit to empower His humanity, and that's why He said to Satan that yeah, I can go ahead and make stones into bread, but man does not live by processes like that, man is to live by the logistical grace of God. So it fits together very well when you put these together.

Then it says, "Jesus chose to trust the Father to supply bread, however and whenever He chose to do so," so that's just like with us. The prosperity test is "when 'normal processes' seem to be sufficient, does the heart retain creature awareness," that's the test, that's the one we usually flunk most of the time because we get so used to seeing everything

normal, everything proceed normally out from what we're doing so we tend to think it's all us and we've finished and we've done it and there's no dimension of the Lord supplying that because it doesn't look like the Lord supplying it, it looks like we're doing it all.

I think that is it except on the next page under military dominion, we went into the first part of chapter 9, there's one more, "The judgment upon evil terminates evil's dominion," "terminates evil's dominion," it's power. And that should do it for that handout.

Now tonight we'll look at the first part there, where I go through the outline. This is the last section, we only have one more session here and then we'll have a break for the summer until August or so, but that last section cleans up that chapter 5-11 section in Deuteronomy. And if you look on the outline, number 5-11, Loving Yahweh with all the heart, the emphasis in every single chapter so far has been on what goes on in the heart. We haven't got into any of the social details, the Mishpatim, the judgments, we haven't got into that; that's one reason why I need a break because I need to study a lot of that case law to make it sensible to us today. So we're coming down to the last part and I always show that outline, it'll get progressively longer as we go through it, but the reason why that is important in your personal Bible study is that you can't go into the Scriptures and yank a verse and use it without being careful; sometimes you can because it's obvious what it means. But you really need to be able to think, okay, like John 3:16, "God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son," and so on, a very popular verse, but how many of us know the context of 3:16, and what the flow is because when these verses were written they weren't written as pieces and chunks and fragments, they were written as a stream of thought. So that's why, when you look at this, you want to see the stream of thought. Moses is going through very methodically, this is his last address before he's going to die, to the nation; it's his farewell. So it's thought out, very well thought out, there's an argument to that.

Now what we're going to do here tonight is we want to look at the structure of chapters 8 and 9, just get the big picture because now we're going to go into details, a lot of details, and we risk losing the forest for the details. In Deuteronomy 8 there's the adversity test, deprivation of the necessities of life, in order to teach a lesson and the lesson is awareness of God's providential supply under the appearance of (quote) "our efforts." And that had to be, that adversity test, God gave the generation years and years, He gave the one adversity test after another adversity test, another adversity test, no water, no food, no clothing, and all these tests, and people got weary of those tests, but God supplied in every single one of those tests, miraculously, water, food, and clothing. So that chapter 8 was very important to prepare them for the prosperity that was to come in history.

Chapter 9 was basically a failure review to stem self-righteousness, from the very beginning at Mt. Sinai till years later there was failure, failure, failure, failure, failure, failure, failure. And that is to show Israel that they're not some very high pious people and that God just couldn't help but pick them to do this work in history. It was a humility test, basically, and it's awareness of the need of a Mediator. Now I said that one of the things, surviving success, up above in that first one, "Surviving success by maintaining the mental attitude of fallen creature-

hood," and I'm just refining it there a little bit, summarizing it, "awareness of the need for a mediator." We'll see why tonight.

But I put on your first page an extended quotation; it was so big I couldn't put it on a slide so I think it's easier for you if you just follow that quotation. This was a Senate Resolution, and this is a great point of history, it'd sort of fit in Glen Beck's Friday evening series on the founding of our country. Let's read through this and think about the fact that here we have a Senate Resolution, written by the senator, who, by the way, his daughter, the senator who wrote this, his daughter was the one who married Abraham Lincoln's son. So this senator had a personal relationship with Lincoln. But what I want you to see as you read this, this is a guy in the United States Senate. Now just think today, a 100 years later, 140 years later, would there be anybody in our United States Senate that would have the theological finesse that this guy had. This man has basically taken Deuteronomy 8 truths and he has petitioned the President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln at the time, for a time of fasting, which meant in that day a time of praying, a time of seeking the Lord out and confessing the sins that had caused the war, because this was 1863, it's the middle of the Civil War with all the horrendous stuff, we think we have it bad with modern war; we have nothing compared to what the horrors of the Civil War were and the proportion of population that was wounded and killed during those horrible battles. So in the middle of all that, follow with me and see if you can pick out the lesson of Deuteronomy 8.

"...we know that by His divine law, nations like individuals are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world, may we not justify fear that the awful calamity of civil war, which now desolates the land, may be a punishment, inflicted upon us, for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole People? We have been the recipients," watch this now, this guy has got it down excellently; "We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us!

It behooves us then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness."

Can you imagine anybody in the media today that would even have the theological knowledge to... I mean, somebody could put cute words together, make it sound cute, but if you look at the sentence structure this guy has learned Deuteronomy 8; he has learned the adversity test and the danger when you don't have this expose between the logistical grace of God that really is the one that is making it look like we're the ones that are doing it. So that's an example of what at one point in our country we had leaders that thought that way.

All right, we want to go now to this others slide, there's a diagram on your second one, this is an extension of the one we did last week, and it covers from chapter 9 all the way down to the end of chapter 10, verse 11, and I've deliberately put all these details on there because I want to make a point so that when you read the Scriptures and you hear somebody in conversation some time, particularly in an academic environment where they say well, the Bible, you know, gee, you can't hardly read it, it's all screwed up, historically it puts one thing here and another thing there, and so forth. Now this is an example, but the point is that Moses is addressing a group of people and he is not going to follow chronological sequence; that's not his point. He's not narrating history here for the sake of scholars.

What Moses is dealing with is real people facing a real problem in their personal life and community life. So he's got to deal with ideas. And so he's going to take a sequence of ideas and he's going to re-order and re-sequence the acts that went on. So in the left column, just for the kicks, I've tried to sequence what these would look like if they were in orderly sequence, like it's from 1 to 10. Now you can see by just looking at column 1 how disordered the sequence is in time. Notice 9:22-24, halfway down the chart, look at the middle part of column 1 and you see that that sequence, verses 22-24 contains elements that are both 1 and 9; that brackets it. So look at the text now, look at chapter 9 and see what we're talking about there so we understand what's going on.

Deuteronomy 9, look at verse 22, 23 and 24. Verse 22, "Also at Taberah and Massah and Kibroth Hattaavah you provoked the LORD to wrath." Okay, so that is a place, a series of places that they were doing these things, [23] "...when the LORD sent you from Kadesh Barnea," well now, those follow the Kadesh-Barnea situation, but Kadesh Barnea was when God told them to invade, which was after Mount Sinai, so this is out of the order because if you look in verse 21 he's talking about when he came down the mountain and threw the calf, took the idol and smashed it. So verse 22 doesn't follow historically from verse 21. "...when the LORD sent you from Kadesh Barnea, saying, 'Go up and possess the land, ... and you did not believe Him nor obey His voice.'" Then in verse 24 he's making a point, "You have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you." So he's taking these together to make a point.

Now last time we got through chapter 9, we got down to about the 7th or 8th line, with Deuteronomy 9:25-29 and we ended right here, the intercessory of logic, the logic of Moses with God. So now we want to trace this, trace the big ideas because we want to think about this. There's a discussion question there right under the table, "Why does Moses stress upfront verses 9:9-20, the contractual relationship between Yahweh and Israel?" Because that is not in historical sequence. Look on the chart and you'll see the first three lines, verses 9-11, verses 12-17, verses 18-20 are the second, third and sixth set of events, but Moses picks those out, packs them together, and has a theme. And the theme is over here. The first verse deals with getting the two copies of the covenant; this one deals with the destruction of the copies, and then going back for mediation.

So the question we need to think, and this is how you want to think when you get into texts like this, is what's his point? Why, of all the facts

that he could have said, why does he pick out from the stream of time those three and put them up front? Let's think about that. Why do you suppose he's doing that in this sequence, taking it out of chronological order but putting it in certain topical order? What's the definition of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel? It's the contract, it's the covenant. You can't talk about relationship without talking about the covenant. So that's what he's going to deal with, and remember what we said, in the Bible relationship is usually contractual. This is why today we have to fight the tendency in our heads because out there in the street the word relationship comes across like something casual, it's a casual thing, you can make it or break it or whatever. That's the modern idea of a relationship. That's not the biblical idea, so you have to kind of consciously in your heart you have to fudge it and say wait a minute, when I see the word relationship in the Bible I've got to think in terms of something that endures. We have promiscuous divorce, we have all kinds of living arrangements, and all these things are called relationships. They are not relationships as far as the Bible is concerned because the Bible concerns a relationship that has commitment to it, it has structure to it, it has a contractual exhibit to it.

So Moses starts off emphasizing that, and then in verses 21, 22, 23 and 24, remember he's progressing to verse 24 and at 24 he has a slant, "You have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you." So what has he just said? He's talking about the destruction of the golden calf, verse 21. So now these are the actual events and locations of rebellions because after he's talked about the contractual relationship between Yahweh and Israel being broken, then he's going to say this is what you always do, and then he pulls in these other events. So by this time, by the time you get down there to this second area you can pretty well see that Moses is getting at the point that Israel's relationship with Yahweh is problematical. It's not a guaranteed thing, we've got a problem here. It was broken right from the start.

Now we should be interested in this whole discussion because eternal security hinges on what's going on here. So we have to watch it, what's the deal, you mean, relationship between God can be ruptured? It was, the covenant was smashed. As far as Israel's eternal security goes they didn't have any eternal security, that was it. Boom, the two tablets gone. So then we have the extra thing going on. So then in here, verse 29-30, if you look at the text there, at verse 25, what is Moses doing there? "Thus I prostrated myself before the LORD: forty days and forty nights," now that's the response to the ruptured relationship and the destruction of security. "I prostrated myself before the LORD," so this is his second forty day tour here, got to do it all over again. "I kept prostrating myself because the LORD had said He would destroy you." See, there's no eternal security there at that point, the Lord said the threat, the divine threat was I'm through with you, period, that's it, I've had it.

[26] "Therefore I prayed to the LORD, and said: O Lord God, do not destroy Your people and Your inheritance whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand." Now he is going to start his logic. Watch how he's arguing with God. This is one of the most famous dialogues with God in all of Scripture because it hinges on the fact of whether Moses can bring Yahweh back into a

relationship with Israel. And it's contingent on one man and what he's talking and what he's arguing. This is an argument, now, between Moses and God; not an argument but a negotiation, a very high level negotiation. So we want to check to see, gosh, I mean in the middle of this negotiation what was his... how did he manage to pull it off with God? Watch.

[27] "Remember," now he's telling God to remember, "Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob;" now why, what's implicit in that sentence? The Abrahamic Covenant, there's the elective unconditional covenant, not the Sinaitic Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, that's the one that's elective. Now God could take the descendants of Abraham, destroy Israel and raise another nation and still fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant. But he says, "Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; do not look on the stubbornness of this people, or on their wickedness or their sin."

Now he's got the purpose clause, now watch what he's doing here; this is fundamental in praying.

[28] "Lest," purpose, don't look at this God, don't go out and destroy the nation, "lest the land from which You brought us," which is what land? Egypt. "lest the land from which You brought us," pagan Egypt, "should say, "Because the Yahweh was not able to bring them to the land which H promised them, and because He hated them, He has brought them out to ill them in the wilderness." What's the substance of His argument there? He's pressing a point. The reputation of who? God. Not the reputation of Israel, not the reputation of Moses, the reputation is the glory of God, and that is the heart of that prayer. What his negotiation is, is God, You screw up this nation and these guys, the ones You're supposed to be witnessing to, the one that You're supposed to be condemning, they're going to be sitting there with a total misinterpretation of what You've done. Look at what he's saying the misinterpretation will include, "because the LORD was not" what? "Because the LORD was not able," that's a slam on the essence of God. That's saying oh, this is the God that makes all kinds of promises and He can't pull them off, He's not sovereign, He's not omnipotent. The point is that Moses is defending the glory of God; this is an extremely Theocentric prayer and it's amazing to think about what he's doing here.

And verse 29, "Yet they are Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out by Your mighty hand with Your outstretched arm." In other words, You've got something started here in history, all the other nations know it, it's public, now what are You going to do about that. Can you think of any other religion on this planet where the proponent of that religion, Confucius, Buddha, Mohammed, any one of these guys, can you think of any of them doing this before God. This is what is so unique about Scripture. There is a real argument going on between God and Moses here, real negotiations that accomplishes something.

So now we come to chapter 10, we want to finish up the first 11 verses because that's the end of one section before we start the next one and the final one. In verses 1-10 Moses keeps on doing the same thing, so let's turn to the text and scan it and let's see if you can pick out why Moses is doing the next set of themes. "At that the LORD said to me, "Hew out two tablets of stone like the first, and come up to Me on the mountain [and make yourself an ark of wood]." Now when you look at that verse 1,

what do you see that doesn't follow from verse 29? Timeline, where is Moses when he's doing verse 29? He's on the mountain, He's already on the mountain, He's already gone up to the mountain after all the mess had happened. So now in verse 1 he comes back to when he was below. Now he came down the mountain and what did he do when he saw all the mess? He broke the tablets. And that...

I know Cecil DeMille, when he filmed it, it was a pretty amazing movie that Cecil DeMille made, The Ten Commandments, and he had Moses throw the things down, the problem with that script is Cecil DeMille didn't have time to develop all the details of it, but it looks like Moses is just angry, and in a fit of anger he takes the two tablets and he just smashes them down. That's not what the Scriptures are doing here; he smashes the tablets because the covenant is broken. Today we would say it's the mortgage agreement, we tear it. It's a loan, we tear it. It's a treaty between two nations, we tear it. That's the significance of the breaking of those tablets. So it's not whether he was personally angry, which he probably was, but it wasn't a fit of anger that he did that, it was the legal act that he did it.

So he goes down there and while he's down there, before he's done, verses 25-29, before he's done them, he says the Lord told me, while he's down there, after he's broken the first two tablets, after he's chastened Aaron, "At that time the LORD said to me, 'Hew for yourself two tablets of stone like the first,'" now the first two tablets apparently God cut out, the second two tablets He had Moses cut out. This is sort of a distancing here, I did it for you the first time, you do it next time. So you go down, you get those two tablets, then you "come up to Me on the mountain," and while you're down there, "make yourself an ark of wood, [2] And I will write on the tablets the words which you broke; and you shall put them in the ark." Watch the theme, see if you can pick out the thrust of this part of his speech. [3] So I made an ark of acacia wood hewed out two tablets of stone like the first, and went up the mountain, having the two tablets in my hand. [4] And He wrote on the tablets according to the first writing, the Ten Commandments, which the LORD had spoken to you in the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly; and the LORD gave them to me. [4] Then I turned and came down from the mountain, and put the tablets in the ark which I made; and there they are, just as the LORD commanded me."

Then he has this editorial comment, [6] "Now the children of Israel journeyed from the wells of Bene Jaakan to Moserah, where Aaron died, and where he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered as priest in his stead. [7] From there they journeyed to [Gudgodah, and from Gudgodah to Jobathan, a land of rivers of water] this place, that place, [8] And at that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister to Him and to bless in His name, to this day. [9] Therefore Levi has no portion nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD is his inheritance, just as the LORD your God promised him. [10] As at the first time, I stayed in the mountain forty days and forty nights; the LORD also heard me at that time, and the LORD chose not to destroy you. [11] Then the LORD said to me, Arise, begin your journey before the people, that they may go in and possess [the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.]" So what's the emphasis there? Out of chronological sequence, but what is he

tying those particular beads together with for? What do you see introduced; what subject do you see now introduced into the text that you never saw before? The ark, and what else? The people that take care of the ark are the priests.

Now this involves Aaron. So now all of a sudden we've got a cluster of new ideas here, and so we come down here, now it's the tablets and the custodians of the tablets because the priests are the ones that are basically the vault, or you could say the safe deposit box where the copies of the tablets are kept. So we've gone from the contractual relationship over to Israel's rebellion, to the glory of God that is the central issue here, then the redoing of the tablets and the servicing of those tablets all the rest of their history. Then we have the end of it, Israel is saved and ready to conquer; they're ready to roll now.

So that's the sequence. Now some questions; if you look on your handout we've already dealt with why does Moses stress upfront [in 9:9-20] the contractual relationship, we've already talked about that. Now the next question, what do you see and what is the importance of it in 9:21, the last clause? Look at the last clause in verse 21, what do you observe in that last clause. Why do you think it's there; it almost looks like an incidental point. Better watch out for these incidental points. He's talking about he throws the thing down but he goes to the detail of where he threw it down. Why would he do that? Because it's historical evidence, it's these little details that show you this is real history. This isn't a story, this happened in a time and a place and he's giving us details, I did it in that brook that you can go back to, that's where I did this. Then if you go to verse 22, the first clause, he deals with these three places; we don't even know where they are but evidently they knew then. He says you remember the place, you remember the camp, when we camped there, we camped there, we camped there, and then look at Deuteronomy 10:6-9, all these little details about where they're going because that tracks the implications for all of this history for the priesthood that would be the custodians of the ark.

And one final point, look at the last clause in 10:5, there's an incidental detail, now why is that there? He says, "they are there," there they are, "just as the LORD commanded me." What is that an invitation to? To check it out. We've seen this several times. Remember back when he was talking, he says the bed of Og, this big guy, it's over there, go check it out. See, this is the power of the text here, you pick this stuff up and it's exciting because these guys are talking about something that you could photograph, something that you could document, something you could check. It's all specific. Do you ever read this in Buddha? Confucius ever have stuff like this? None of these other religions have anything like this because this is history; this is historic revelation.

Okay, conclusion... oh by the way, lest I forget the blank, on this page, up at the top, verses 1-6, the "succinct summary of the principle," last sentence, "Proper mental attitude keeps one's fallen nature in view," "one's fallen nature in view." That's the humility part. Then down, the conclusion, "Consequences of being," and this is something to remember about the argument with God, and the powerful soteriological implication to us; the "consequences of being sinful men and women in relationship

with a holy God is termination of the relationship unless," blank... "unless grace prevails." See that rupture in the smashing of the covenants, that was the revelation that God did not have to bring men back into a relationship; did NOT have to do it. He did it because He had a mediator that came to Him, talked to Him and He extended grace. There's a picture of salvation by grace; it wasn't by works, because a Holy God does not have to save. He saves because there's a mediator now, the Greater Moses, the Lord Jesus Christ, who makes intercession, and who has done a complete thing for us. Then "The only salvation is the existence of a mediator between God and such men." The "basis for mediation is the glory of God." Not us, the glory of God is the basis. So the conclusion is powerful; this whole section looks like it's kind of obscure but when you look at the theology here, this is heavy stuff.

Now we want to look at the last section and next time we'll finish it but tonight we're going to get into it, is from verse 12 and we'll probably get down to the end of chapter 10, we won't even bother with 11 tonight. If you'll look at the text, we'll do some observing here. And remember, this is the last appeal of Moses before he gets into the statutes and judgments. This is his last address that deals with the mental attitude. "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, [13] and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your own good?" [14] Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, also the earth with all that is in it. [15] The LORD delights only in your fathers, to love them, and chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as it is this day. [16] Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart and be stiff-necked no longer. [17] For the LORD your God is a God of gods, and the Lord of hosts, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and takes no bribe." And we'll see why that all of a sudden comes up.

[18] "He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and He loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. [19] Therefore love the stranger for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. [20] You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him, and to Him you shall hold fast, and take oaths in His name." See, there's... again, wait a minute, what's that got to do with it. [21] "He is your praise, and He is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen. [22] Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons, and now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of heaven in multitude."

Now we want to unpack this and see what Moses is getting at. First of all, when you look at verse 12 what does it remind you of? Very famous text, you've heard this before; maybe you don't remember where the text comes from but surely you've heard, as it says in the handout, Micah 6:8. And I showed Micah 6:8 there because Micah is a prophet centuries after Moses, and you'll see that the lapse of time doesn't change the theology; the lapse of time does NOT change the theology; the relationship in the latter days of Micah the prophet is exactly the same as the attitudes expounded in Deuteronomy chapters 5-11. This is so tight that liberals in the 19th century argue that Deuteronomy is late, that it was a construction made up by the prophets to fit what they were trying to do, so they wrote this in Moses name. Of course, what they failed to

understand was that Deuteronomy has Egyptian loan words in it and the prophets don't, so it was written to totally different problems, totally different source of origin.

Now if you look at the verbs in verses 12-13, list what he says God expects. (1) to fear the Lord, that's respect His authority. (2) walk in all His ways, that's doing something day by day. (3) to love Him, that's allegiance. [4] to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul. And then in verse 13 he introduces, "and keep the commandments and His statutes which I command you," this introduction to the next section where he's going to deal with those statutes. He hasn't dealt with statutes so far, he's just dealt with what goes on in the heart. So now we're starting to get into that area. And then he says, these "statutes which I command you" this day. When you see the verb "command" and the obligation is to submit to those commands as unto the Lord, but the subject of the verb isn't Yahweh, it's Moses, what is our doctrine? It's inspiration, because if inspiration isn't there then this is arrogance, because what Moses is arguing for is my words that I'm telling you ARE God's words. Now no politician would try to say that; I mean, he would like to say that, but I don't think you'd catch one that arrogant to actually claim that that's what he was doing. But look, this is what the text is saying. You see, you can't read this literature without getting confronted with these basic truths. How else are you going to interpret this, that I am commanding you, that is Moses is command you today, for your good, unless Moses is generally a prophet.

So this is why we want to review something here; I'm going to give you just a quick review, it comes from Lesson 18, a pagan way of trying to create ethics and moral obligations. Your neighbors, your friends, maybe people in your own family, are going to throw these things out and you need to know how to respond to these things. You don't take it, you challenge it. Don't let people make moral judgments without asking them on what basis are they making that moral judgment. And we went through one of them and that was number 1, the non-biblical answer to "who are you to tell me how I ought to live" is subjectivism, moral relativism, which is defined here as "Ethical judgments merely express an individual's emotions or attitudes toward an action." That's the content of what a relativistic subjective ethic is.

The arguments for it: Circumstances differ from person to person, culture to culture, generation to generation. You hear that all the time. This isn't strange, this is the going thing out there on the street, and that is, we're a different generation, that's old school, we don't mess with that, that's old school. So it's an argument, changing circumstances invalidates constant ethical norms. Another one, it's intolerant to impose one's values on others, who do you think you are imposing your value on someone else? And then, what, well, you can have two or three people different, that's okay, you can have two people's conflicting judgments because they both accurately reflect the individual attitudes, that's truth for you, it's truth for me, so what's the problem? The problem is that we've got an anarchy going on because in effect we've got two colliding values.

So the counterargument that we went through is subjective ethics say nothing about the actions, they're just autobiographies; it's what you

think. Well, I'm not really ultimately interested in what you think, I'm interested in what happened here; something happened here, now what are we going to do with this, not what we're going to do with five different people's opinions in response to this. The issue isn't the response, the issue is the thing that happened here. So that's one of the central problems, it says nothing about the act.

And the second problem is no one can live this way consistently because inevitably the most subjective subjectivist will object to something and say it's wrong for you to treat me this way, to which you can reply, well, you know, how I'm treating you is irrelevant, it's just that you don't like how I'm treating you but that's okay. And that's why we told the story of the professor who had his student who argued and gave an eloquent term paper on this system, and he turned his term paper in and the professor gave him an F, and the guy said wait a minute, I did a lot of research, this is a good paper, what did you give me an F for? Because it's got a blue cover, I don't like blue covers. You've got to be kidding... well, haven't you been arguing that we make moral judgments on the basis of opinion, I just don't like blue covers, sorry. And of course, later he gave the... it was a real story, by the way, he gave the student an A but he was trying to show something, that if you argue this way you'd better be prepared to live this way. And then finally, politically it results in tyranny.

Okay, now the next group that we want to look at, number 2, and I'm doing this because of Moses' statement here, so you'll see how this works in a minute. Number two non-biblical answer in the area of ethics is the humanist answer. This is more typical of older people. Young people don't think this way but older people, the people that were active, some of the people still in our government, the baby boomers, they tend to think this way and it is that ethical judgments start with the assumption that violation of human nature or needs is wrong. And the reason they're doing that is because human nature and needs together are constant. In other words, there's stability in this, it's not up to individual opinions; human nature and needs are a constant throughout history, so there's a stable non-subjective standard for moral judgment against violation of the nature, it's wrong for slavery, for example. It's always been wrong for slavery, maybe people didn't like it but it was wrong because that treats people less than a human being, so it's hurtful to them. It's wrong to starve people, they have a need for food. So this is an attempt to get around subjectivism by having some sort of an abiding consistent ethic.

Here's the counter-argument, however, and remember, you have to think through, this is not a Bible argument, it's not based on the Bible, it's not based on God, it's based on human nature. So let's see what happens. The first thing that happens is the value judgment that it is wrong to violate human nature doesn't follow from the violation of human nature. You can't get a value from a fact. Just because we are violating someone's nature, we're treating them as slaves, depriving them of food, that is an act, that's something that's happening. But to condemn that means you have to add to that act a value judgment. So we're still skating around the ice pond here trying to get hold of a value because all we're doing is saying that's wrong. But wait a minute, that's the whole point- is it wrong?

The second thing, people will say, to save the argument they will say well, if you have social agreement, if society says this then we've established a stable ethic. But the problem is if the ethic is stable because it's agreed upon, that is an agreed upon ethic, not an objective one. For example, in 1845 in South Carolina it was okay to own slaves and that was an agreed upon standard. And it was an agreed upon standard because slaves weren't considered fully human. So now what are you going to do? That was an agreed upon ethic, but the point was, it's not objective, it was just there because everybody agreed to it. But later on, they didn't agree to it. So again we've got a problem.

And finally, the modern generation, the younger people can destroy this argument in two minutes by simply raising one point; why set violation of human nature and needs above animal's needs, or the environment's needs, why pick on human nature? What about the bugs? What about the plants? Don't they have rights? And that's the whole ecology movement. So the old humanist ethic has kind of weakened today. But that was, you know, when I was growing up that was pretty much the non-Christian consensus ethic, the human ethic.

Okay, let's go back to the text now. Moses is going to say in the end of verse 13 that the statutes that he is commanding them are for their good. So not only do you have a revealed ethic, but the ethic that is revealed fits the real world. Remember we said the subjective ethic doesn't work in practice because sooner or later the person, the subjective person gets caught making a moral judgment about himself against you. And he expects you to agree to that. So in this case, when God tells us something, and we'll see this in the statutes and judgments, this is kind of a look forward... let me give you a simple example, easy to see. God says to circumcise infants on the seventh day. They don't do that in the hospitals today but in the Torah it is the seventh day. Now they didn't have blood tests back in Moses' day, as far as we know, they didn't have blood chemistry analysis, but lo and behold, when we study blood chemistry guess when the ability of the blood to clot peaks in infants-seven days! Gee, I wonder how Moses knew that. Because Moses didn't stimulate the ethic, the ethic came from above, the guy who designed little babies and He knew what blood chemistry does, and so when He said religiously, we circumcise and cut the infant we don't do it until the seventh day because that's when I designed the clotting mechanism to work. So that's the whole point about biblical ethics; they work because they come out of the God who created history. Pagan imitations are painful because eventually they don't work in God's work and prices are paid, as women who have had abortions are now realizing. All of a sudden, gee, we've got rising breast cancer, well gee, why did that happen? Because you interrupted the whole chemical procedures of having a baby when you cut into the womb, stupid. And so now later on, years later, the woman pays a price for it because here chemistry is all screwed up because you did an abortion. So that's an example of why biblical ethics, that may not appear to work right away, but sooner or later, maybe years, you get cause/effect here, you'll see it works. So Moses says it's for your good.

Now from verse 14 on he is going to major on something. As you read through verses 14 on what do you sense he was emphasizing? Remember, he's talking about... his last shot, mental attitude. And what is the focus of our mental attitude? Is it life's problems or is it our God. Focusing on

the problem is always a recipe for defeat, always the recipe for pain, always the recipe for discouragement. The only encouragement and power and ability to sustain adversity comes from focusing on the nature of God Himself. And so, not surprisingly, this text deals with that.

So we have, verse 14, "Heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God and also the earth with all that is in it." So right now we have the Creator/creature distinction. Unknown in all of paganism. He makes that point, and you know, to emphasize it he says, "Heaven and the heavens of heavens" meaning the spiritual powers. Moses is saying it's not that just God is the... you know, He's the head, the Creator of the sun and the moon but He's the head of the heavens above those. He is the God of all the powers, so-called gods and goddesses obey our God.

[15] The LORD delighted only in your fathers," so now we have another thing that's terribly offensive to modern man and that's the exclusivity of divine revelation. So our blank there in 10:14 is "God our Creator," and the blank in 15, "Exclusivity of revelation denies inclusivity of unbelief. Unbelief keeps saying that you have no right to impose your ethic on me. What is the assumption in that statement? If someone says that to you, they're going to say it to you so you've got to have a come back. When somebody comes up to you and says you Christian, I don't accept your ethic, you have no right to tell me what's going on with your ethic, what are they doing here, and probably not aware they're doing it? [Someone answers] Okay, they're addressing us as peers, that's correct, but what about our peer-manship are they assuming. In other words, we've made a moral judgment, they accept us as peers, they're doing something more than just accepting us as peers, [more said] yes, see, it takes a Fulbright scholar back there to clarify the issue.

What the point is, that they're assuming that the ethic that we're articulating comes from us, and that begs the question; that's the whole point here. The point is, has God spoken in history and if He has, then it's not my opinion that I'm teaching here. You know, my dad taught me algebra and my dad taught me mathematics, but $2 + 2$ is 4, not because my father said so, it's because those were truths. My father was just the conduit that passed it on. That's the whole nature of truth here.

Okay, the basis of the exclusivity, why is the Bible so exclusivistic? It goes back to history, it goes back to the framework. What happened before God called Abraham and Israel into existence? You had the flood, you had Noah, you had the divine revelation was available to all people groups at one point in time, the Noahic Bible because everybody got off the same boat. So every people group at one time had the truth. But what happened? They turned aside, paganism, Romans 1:18. So therefore, it's not true that God's being a meany. We ought to be thankful He decided to do something about planet earth, period. So let's be thankful that we've got any revelation, since we lost all of the original stuff and the only reason why we have this in front of us, in our lap, is because of Moses preserving the text, or God working through him.

Okay, now he comes to verse 16 and this is one of these commands that is so critical in Old Testament theology. By the way, again, the blank "Question-begging nature of 'inclusivity'" means that "all religious claims originate from man." That's the secret assumption everybody is

making which begs the question because that's the whole point at stake, are all religious claims from man.

Now we come to the Abrahamic circumcision thing, we just have a few comments here. Go back to the physical circumcision of Abraham, what is going on in physical circumcision with the Abrahamic Covenant. What was God's promise to Abraham? A seed. When Abraham had the seed, not Ishmael, but he had Isaac, how was Isaac born? Was it a natural... it was a natural birth but what was miraculous about the conception of that boy? Both Sarah and Abraham were infertile. So the very first person of that seed is the one who is miraculously born and the circumcision points out that the initiation of conception is contaminated and has to be dealt with. So that's one of the reasons, that's the theology of circumcision. Reproduction, as in paganism, was natural; that's why you had the orgies out in the field, because Baal was the god of fertility and it's ironic that the Jewish people brought circumcision in at young age to show that from the time a young boy was a little baby his sperm was contaminated and therefore depravity is part of reproduction. That's not paganism; paganism uses reproduction. We still do, think of evolution, survival of the fittest, natural selection, it's all talking about reproduction. We're still relying on reproduction to replace creation. And it testified to the separation of Abraham's children. They could not intermarry without it being very obvious to the woman that this guy was different. So they had a mark.

Now let's take those same two points and apply it spiritually. When you circumcise the heart what's happening? It's confessing, the fact you have to have circumcision of the heart confesses that our hearts are wicked and depraved. And the second thing is, when they are changed by God working in our hearts that marks us off as different. So it's the same two principles that apply to physical circumcision as the other one and I've given you verses, we don't have time tonight, but in the little box you'll see where circumcision is sort of an analogy to New Testament regeneration.

And then he says, finally in these verses, that... remember we said when we read through the text, what is going on after it says [17]"God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, the great God," by the way, the word "great God" means heroic God, the hero God, "mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe," then he goes into social justice. [18] He administers mishpat for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger [giving him food and clothing]. [19] Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers," and so on, then it says, [21] "He is your praise, [and He is your God] who has done for you these great and wonderful things," Oh, verse 10, "...take oaths in His name," the key to this, this is not so simple as being charitable to people. That's going to come, there's a charity in here which is to the stranger, but the first one, in verse 17, going back, "shows no partiality nor takes a bribe," that sets up the context of verse 18. So when you have "administers" or "does mishpat for the fatherless and the widow," mishpat means case law. So the setting in verse 18 is case law, it's a judicial proceeding.

So let's hook that back with verse 17, what's going on there with Yahweh doesn't take a bribe? He doesn't affect the court outcomes and it says "He administers mishpat for the fatherless and the widow," what was true

of the fatherless or the orphan, and the widow that was not true of other people, that would put them at disadvantage in a mishpat? They have nobody to defend them, and in particular their economic structure so they can't have anybody, they can't hold title to land. The land was transferred to the male name. So now you've got this poor lady, she lost her husband and now what happens to the title. Remember, the land was the inheritance, that's their capital asset. So they're economically vulnerable which makes them vulnerable in the justice system and they don't have someone to stand up for them. So God administers mishpat. And notice the verb, mishpat, "administers mishpat" in verse 18, the subject is God, not the judges. Now that unfolds in the prophets because later on the damnation against certain practices in the nation comes about and the prophets announce this, you went after the widows and the orphans; that is an indictment of the judicial system. And this is one reason why God brought this nation down, because they went into discipline and into exile for the destruction of integrity in the judicial system. So God makes a point of this, and this is critical in the history of the world, God's integrity for the integrity of the judicial system.

And then it says He "loves the stranger," ger, the stranger would be a businessman who would be traveling through the country; if something happened to him and he lost his money it wasn't like he went to the ATM machine with his Amex card, he was himself vulnerable and at points where he lost his money or something happened, he was to be given food and clothing, in other words, he was to share the welfare that a normal Jewish man would do, so the assets of charity were to be opened to the ger or the foreigner, or the person passing through the land. And why? Verse 19 says why, "love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." [20] "...you shall serve Him," and so forth, and then you will "take oaths in His name," verse 20 shows you, by the way, why Quakers are not correct when they exegete Scripture to say you shouldn't make oaths in God's name; this is a command to take oaths in His name but just do it in His name, not some other god's name.

And that gets back to our little diagram that we've shown, God's design of society, we're not even up to labor and property or marriage or life, we're still down here in the heart area and we've just moved up a little bit into the integrity of communication; oaths in Yahweh's name involves the integrity of language and testimony in a court of law. So one of the primary social functions that begins now, as we've come up the ladder, is going to be the integrity of the judicial system. If that is lacking the basis for order in that society is lacking. And we could apply that today. I was just reading an interesting comment where one of the men who is now being indicted who worked for Goldman Sachs bragged to his girlfriend that yeah, I sold bad bonds to widows and orphans. Now, I mean, gosh, the guy, he's using biblical metaphor to condemn himself because he knew, he knew the CEO's were corrupt so he sold them to investors that didn't know any better and he calls the investors widows and orphans and laughs about it to his girlfriend. Now these are the kind of people we have in our society. So it gets back these simple things that aren't quite so simple.

So anyway, verse 21, he's done these things, notice what it says, "which your eyes have seen." Now conclusion, verse 20, why do you suppose he's talking about numbers. What is it about verse 22? What do you think is on

Moses' mind? Why does he even bring this thing up? Why that, of all things, at the termination of this section? What does it show? God is faithful. He took that family of Abraham and now it's multiplied into a nation. See, he's testifying to God's faithfulness. So all during this, in conclusion to this whole section of 10, and we'll be on 11 next time, this whole section is to conclude by putting our focus on who our God is, and what He has told us, and what He has done. And if we will get our eyes on who God is, what He has told us, and what He has done for us, then we can handle life as it gives us all kinds of trials and tribulations.