

Deuteronomy
Vineland Park Baptist Church
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Study # 06
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COVENANT AND COMMITMENT

This lesson will focus on a few select passages from Deuteronomy chapters 5 – 11.

Moses' second sermon runs from 5:1 to 28:68.

The second sermon is primarily Moses' commentary on the Ten Commandments.

COVENANT IS A WORD that is rich in meaning. If you buy real property, you enter into a covenant with the seller. Marriage is a covenant. Both parties make promises and guarantees. Individuals and nations make covenants all the time. God made covenants too.

God makes unilateral covenants. By unilateral is meant that the other party does not have to agree with God for the covenant to be enforced by God. Some covenants were unconditional, e.g. God's covenant with Abraham was not conditioned on Abraham's subsequent behavior. Other covenants were conditional upon obedience of the people, viz. the covenant given at Horeb or Sinai. God keeps His covenant promises.

God's covenant with Abraham:

Gen 12:1-3

Now the LORD had said to Abram:

"Get out of your country,

From your family

And from your father's house,

To a land that I will show you.

² I will make you a great nation;

I will bless you

And make your name great;

And you shall be a blessing.

³ I will bless those who bless you,

And I will curse him who curses you;

And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Gen 15:1-6

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I *am* your shield, your exceedingly great reward."

² But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house *is* Eliezer of Damascus?" ³ Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!"

⁴ And behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." ⁵ Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

⁶ And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

Rom 4:1-4

What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?

² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has *something* to boast about, but not before God. ³ For what does the Scripture say? "*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*" ⁴ Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

Heb 11:8-10

⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

Perhaps a better translation of the Greek would have resulted in our Bibles containing the Old Covenant and the New Covenant instead of "Testament."

Moses reminds the people of the covenant God made at Horeb (Sinai), Deut 5:2.

"The Lord made a covenant with us."

The Lord Jesus Christ spoke of the new covenant in His blood, Luke 22:20.

Luke 22:19-20

¹⁹ And He took bread, gave thanks and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

²⁰ Likewise He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup *is* the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.

1. COVENANT and RELATIONSHIPS

Deuteronomy 5

We are constantly living with covenants in our lives. Marriage, employment, church affiliation, community organizations, etc. are all covenant relationships.

Moses, no doubt, wrote out these words as well as speaking them to the leaders of the tribes. "Hear, learn, observe or follow," 5:1.

In 5:3, "It was not only with our fathers..." The covenant continues with each new generation as they "hear, learn, and observe or follow."

Moses reminds the people of the law that God gave directly, face-to-face, at Sinai.

God's covenant with Israel was based on what God had done for them when He delivered them from bondage in Egypt.

In this covenant God placed obligations on the people of Israel. There were standards of moral behavior placed on Israel.

Deut 5:1-22

And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them. ²The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. ³The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who *are* here today, all of us who *are* alive. ⁴The LORD talked with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire. ⁵I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain. *He* said:

⁶'I *am* the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

⁷'You shall have no other gods before Me.

⁸'You shall not make for yourself a carved image — any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; ⁹you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, ¹⁰but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

¹¹'You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.

¹² 'Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. ¹³ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁴ but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. ¹⁵ And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

¹⁶ 'Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

¹⁷ 'You shall not murder.

¹⁸ 'You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁹ 'You shall not steal.

²⁰ 'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

²¹ 'You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that *is* your neighbor's.'

²² "These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly, in the mountain from the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and He added no more. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.

If you want to earn a personal righteousness all you have to do is to keep the commandments, perfectly, with no exceptions or excuses.

Jesus summarized the commandments and referred to Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18; let's see if He made it any easier to be perfect in God's sight?

Matt 22:34-40

³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ Then one of them, a lawyer, asked *Him a question*, testing Him, and saying, ³⁶ "Teacher, which *is* the great commandment in the law?"

³⁷ Jesus said to him, "*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*" ³⁸ This is *the* first and great commandment. ³⁹ And *the* second *is* like it: '*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*' ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

The apostle Paul tells us what God did for those who believe in His Son.

Rom 8:1-4

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. ³For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Let's refer back to the Ten Commandments for a couple of interesting observations.

First in the matter of the law of the Sabbath there was a change, not in the law itself, but in the basis for the law.

Ex 20:8-11

⁸"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. ¹¹For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

In Exodus the basis for the Sabbath is on God resting after the six days of creation.

In Deuteronomy the basis is on the deliverance from Egypt.

¹⁵And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

These two bases are not mutually exclusive; but are complimentary: Creator and Deliverer.

The second modification is in the 10th commandment regarding property.

In Exodus:

Ex 20:17

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbor's."

In Deuteronomy:

²¹ 'You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that *is* your neighbor's.'

In Deuteronomy the man's wife comes before his house. The man's "field" was added. The people are about to enter a land where the sacredness of marriage is virtually nonexistent. Also, they are about to become land owners instead of nomads.

These modifications do not change the law of the Sabbath or of property any more than what Jesus did in His summary of the law.

2. CONTINUING the COVENANT

Deuteronomy 6

The covenant was to be continued in Canaan and was dependent on their obedience. By the time of Jesus and the apostles Israel ignored these warnings and, except for a remnant, was destroyed.

Rom 11:1-6

I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. ² God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, ³ "LORD, *they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life*"? ⁴ But what does the divine response say to him? "*I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.*" ⁵ Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. ⁶ And if by grace, then *it is* no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if *it is* of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and discuss how its principles may be applied to our day.

Deut 6:4-5

⁴"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one! ⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

The Jews call Deuteronomy 6:4-5 the *Shema* from the word "hear."

Jewish children are taught this and each synagogue service is opened with it as a confession of faith.

The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one! was a most important truth for the people to remember. The Egyptians had over 500 gods and this second generation from those who were delivered from Egypt are about to enter a land where nearly everything was a "god." All manner of beasts and birds, even insects were gods of a sort.

The religion in Canaan cannot be discussed in mixed company, or at least it cannot be explicitly described. Male and female deities were worshipped in grossly immoral practices.

A review of Romans One would be the best way to describe the worship of the creation rather than the Creator as well as the downward spiral into homosexual perversions. The final rebellion against God is for men and women to rebel against their own nature as men and women.

Rom 1:18-27

¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ²¹because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man – and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

²⁴Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, ²⁵who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. ²⁷ Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

Well, that was then and we have progressed beyond such idolatry and sexual perversion, haven't we?

In Ur and Haran the generation of Abraham worshipped the moon. In Egypt the generation of Moses worshipped the sun. The Israelites will find the Moabites worshipping images made of clay and stone.

The chief religion of our day is "science." Evolution has been declared a fact and many people are willingly ignorant and believe that there is actually some evidence for this theory of beginnings. The Bible confronts us with the choice of our "world view:" God and creation or chance and time.

The New Age Movement which is not new at all has morphed into Postmodernism. According to the NAM; there is no objective God, i.e., God separate from His creation, because everything is god-even you; therefore, there can be no objective truth-you determine your own "truth;" sin is not acknowledged since there is no higher authority than self.

Therefore, the one commandment of NAM and Postmodernism is "Thou shall make no moral judgment on thy fellow man!"

Just recently I read an article in support of evolution that held up the millions of light years that it takes light to travel from a distant star to be observed on earth as the absolute proof of evolution.

How about considering that when God said, "Let there be light!" that at that instant light stood in the expanse between the stars immediately; the light did not need to "travel" anywhere! Genesis 1:3, 16.

3. KEEPING the COVENANT in CANAAN

a) Possess the Land

Deuteronomy 7

7:1 "When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, ² and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them *and* utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.

Some people are uneasy with God's command to utterly destroy the pagans:

On what basis? Their "goodness?" Their "innocence?"

Romans 9 gives us the principle that we are not to presume to set in judgment on God no matter how little we understand His deeds. And I would add do you really believe that all men, including you, deserve to go to hell?

Rom 9:14-21

¹⁴What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! ¹⁵ For He says to Moses, "*I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.*" ¹⁶ So then *it is* not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. ¹⁷ For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "*For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.*" ¹⁸ Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

¹⁹ You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" ²⁰ But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed *it*, "Why have you made me like this?" ²¹ Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

The prohibitions against intermarriage [7:3-4] had nothing to do with race.

Deut 7:3-5

³ Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. ⁴ For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. ⁵ But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.

God tells Israel why He chose them and who would benefit:

Deut 7:6-8

⁶"For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. ⁷The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; ⁸but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

b) The Peril of Forgetting

Deuteronomy 8

Remember and don't forget.

Deut 8

"Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers. ²And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you *and* test you, to know what *was* in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. ³So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every *word* that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. ⁴Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. ⁵You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you.

⁶"Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. ⁷For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; ⁸a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; ⁹a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones *are* iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. ¹⁰When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.

¹¹"Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, ¹²lest – *when* you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell *in them*; ¹³and *when* your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; ¹⁴when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; ¹⁵who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, *in which were* fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water; who brought water for you out of the flinty rock;

¹⁶ who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end – ¹⁷ then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.'

¹⁸ "And you shall remember the LORD your God, for *it is* He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day. ¹⁹ Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the LORD your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish. ²⁰ As the nations which the LORD destroys before you, so you shall perish, because you would not be obedient to the voice of the LORD your God.

4. MINDFUL of HIS MERCY

Deuteronomy 9:1-10:11

The best way to keep from becoming proud is to remember your past failures.

Except for the grace of God not a one of us would have an interest in the things of God, nor would we be restrained from any sin yet conceived.

5. CALL to COMMITMENT

Deuteronomy 10:12-11:32

Moses gives two more commands from God before they go into Canaan. One has to do with their relationship with God and the other with the aliens who choose to live with Israel.

Circumcision of the heart [10:16] is commitment to God in regeneration; not physical circumcision.

Does 10:19 contradict 7:2?

Deut 10:19

Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Deut 7:1-2

"When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, ² and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them *and* utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.

Chapter 7 has to do with conquering the land and Chapter 10 has to do with individuals as neighbors.

We have only touched on a few highlights in these chapters; as I have said I did not intend to do an exhaustive exposition of the book.

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We too have covenant obligations.

When we profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ we are obliged to keep His moral law, raise our children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” to “not forsake the assembling of ourselves together...,” to respect our husband/love our wife..., and many other precepts.