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V. The Essence of Covenant Relationship: Love

A. Covenant Love outside and inside Deuteronomy

1. "Love" is a common part of treat relationships, in that suzerains and vassals "love" each other (i.e., are loyal to one another).
 - a. Outside the Bible:
 - i. "My lord, just as I love the king my lord, so do the king of Nuhasse, the king of Ni'i—all these kings are servants of my lord" (2nd millennium).
 - ii. "Behold the city of Byblos! Half of it love the sons of 'Abd-Asir-ta, half o it loves my lord" (2nd millennium).
 - iii. "You will love as yourselves Assurbanipal" (1st millennium).
 - iv. "The king of Assyria, our lord, we love" (1st millennium).
 - b. OT:
 - i. Hiram of Tyre was "loving" or "befriending" David (1 Kgs 5:1), which points to the treaty relationship they enjoyed.
 - ii. "Those who love" David are his servants (2 Sam 19:6–7).
2. Familial language of "love" characterized the titles enjoyed within treaties:
 - a. Overview:
 - i. Suzerains were "fathers."
 - ii. Suzerains counted vassals as adopted "sons."
 - iii. Fellow vassals were "brothers."
 - b. Examples:

- i. If PN1 (proper name of adopted child) fails to show respect for PN2 (adoptive father), then just as a man treats his son so too shall PN2 treat PN1” (2nd millennium).
 - ii. “The great king grasped me with his hand and said: When I will conquer the land Mittanni, I shall not reject you; I shall make you my son. I will stand by to help in war and will you sit on the throne of your father. The word that comes out of his mouth will not turn back” (2nd millennium).
 - iii. “Behold, I declared for you the young Labarna: He shall sit on the throne; I, the king, called him my son” (2nd millennium).
- 3. In Deuteronomy, God “loves” Israel and calls them to “love” him.
 - a. God’s love for Israel:
 - i. In accordance with his love for the patriarchs (4:37; 10:15), he set his affections on Israel, electing them (7:6; 14:2), redeeming them (7:8), becoming their covenant king (33:3, 5), and protecting them through the wilderness (23:5).
 - ii. He was Israel’s “father” (32:6), and they were his adopted “sons” (14:1) in order that they might become God’s “inheritance” (4:20; 9:26, 29; 32:9), “treasured possession” and “holy people” (7:6; 26:18–19; cf. 19:5–6).
 - b. God’s call for Israel’s love as the supreme command:
 - i. Love is the answer to a unique claim of allegiance (Deut 6:4–5).
 - ii. Love for Yahweh necessitated love for one’s “brother” (10:19; cf. 14:27–29; 15:11; Lev 19:18)—a title representative of everyone (male and female, Deut 15:12), unless specified otherwise (13:6).
 - iii. Love is a way of choosing life (30:20) and is an expression of:
 - (1) Fearing God (10:12)
 - (2) Keeping God’s commandments (11:13; 30:16[?])
 - (3) Keeping the whole commandment (11:22; 19:9; cf. John 14:15. Jesus said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments”).
 - iv. Love stands parallel to:
 - (1) Walking in all God’s ways (Deut 10:12; 11:22; 19:9; 30:16)
 - (2) Serving God with all one’s heart and soul (10:12; 11:13)
 - (3) Keeping God’s charge, statutes, rules, commandments (11:1; 30:16)
 - (4) Holding fast to God (11:22; 30:20)
 - (5) Heeding his voice (30:20)

B. The Centrality of Covenant Love in Deuteronomy

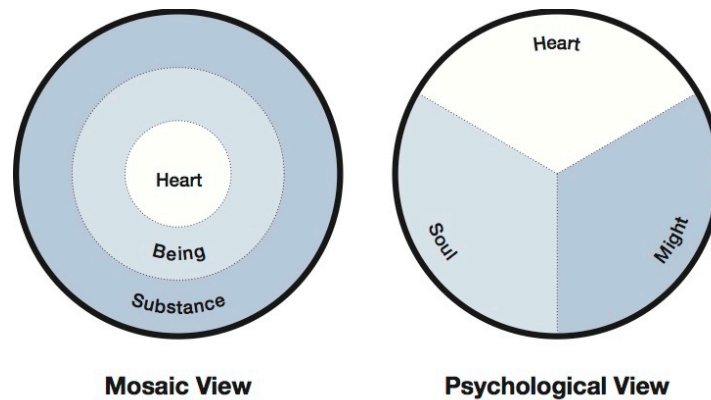
1. Deut 6:4–5 declares, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” Here loving God with *all* is an outgrowth of truly “hearing” the truth of God’s oneness and sole supremacy over all things.
2. Jesus tagged the call to love God “the great and first commandment” (Matt 22:38). It is *great* in the sense that there is no higher call than to love God with all and that in fulfilling this you fulfill everything else. It is *first* both in the sense of priority (everything starts with love) and in the sense that within the

constitution of Deuteronomy it is the first formal commandment given (the recollection of the Ten Words in 5:6–21 simply provides backdrop for the call to love that follows). From Jesus’ perspective (Mark 12:34), the following summary of Deut 6:4–5 supplied by a scribe characterizes a “wise” understanding of the passage: “You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices” (Mark 12:32–33).

3. The call to love God with all in Deut 6:5 is captured in the first four commandments of the Decalogue, each of which includes an explicit use of “the LORD your God.”
 - a. “I am *the LORD your God*... You shall have no other gods before me.... You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I *the LORD your God* am a jealous God” (5:6–7, 9).
 - b. “You shall not take the name of *the LORD your God* in vain...” (5:11).
 - c. “Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as *the LORD your God* commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to *the LORD your God*.... *The LORD your God* commanded you to keep the Sabbath day” (5:12–14).
 - d. “Honor your father and your mother, as *the LORD your God* commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that *the LORD your God* is giving you” (5:16).

C. The Context and Scope of Loving God

1. Deut 6:5 is Deuteronomy’s supreme command. Love for God is both life encompassing and community impacting.
 - a. It includes *all* one’s heart, soul, and strength, which are likely three expanding, yet overlapping, human spheres of life, all of which are to proclaim God’s supremacy.
 - i. Heart: *all things internal*—one’s desires, will, emotions, attitudes, perceptions, and thoughts (see Deut 29:3[4]; Jer. 5:21; Hos. 7:11).
 - ii. Soul: *one’s whole “being”* as a living person, whether referring to humans (Gen. 2:7; 9:5; Lev. 21:11; cf. 2 Sam. 23:17) or to God (Lev. 26:11).
 - iii. Might: *one’s substance or resources*.

Fig. 7.4. The Spheres of Covenant Love in Deuteronomy 6:5

- b. The Spring of God-centered Living: Covenant Love (6:4–9)
- i. The call to covenant love (6:4–5)
 - (1) The generator of covenant love: affirming Yahweh’s singularity (6:4)
 - (2) The call to and scope of covenant love (6:5)
 - ii. The plea to personally appropriate and apply the call to covenant love (6:6–9)
 - (1) The plea for personal appropriation (6:6; cf. Jer 31:33)
 - (2) The plea for personal application (Deut 6:7–9)
 - (a) In parenting (6:7; cf. 6:20–25; 11:19)
 - (b) In public witness (6:8–9)
 - (i) In deeds and worldview (6:8; cf. 21:7; Exod 3:9, 16)
 - (ii) At home and in the public square (Deut 6:9)
2. Love for God demands that we value his image in others. As such, our love for God is the spring from which love of neighbor flows, and the latter identifies whether or not love for God is actually present (Deut 10:12–19).
- a. The call to love God (Deut 10:12–13)
 - b. The backdrop for loving God (10:14–15)
 - c. Obstacles to loving God (10:16–18)
 - i. Loving God is a heart issue (v. 16)
 - ii. Loving God is an idolatry issue (v. 17a)
 - iii. Loving God is about caring for others as God cares (vv. 17b–18)
 - d. The test of loving God: Loving God is about loving others as God has loved us (v. 19)

D. The Nature of Covenant Love

1. The call to love God and neighbor necessitates the need to maintain a radical God-centeredness (6:10–25) and the need to remove all obstacles to such God-centeredness (7:1–26). As Moses highlights in 6:25, keeping the supreme command would result in “righteousness,” which was the goal of old covenant life.

2. If love is *what* Israel was to do, all the other commandments detailed *how* they were to do it. Deut 12–26 highlight the various “statutes and rules” that Israel needed to follow as expressions of their love for God (12:1; 26:16), and this love would impact all aspects of human existence, whether criminal offenses, civil cases, family relationships, societal norms, or community worship. Moses charged the people, “Righteousness, righteousness you shall pursue!” (16:20). This life of love would include three spheres:
 - a. Righteousness in community worship (12:1–16:17)
 - b. Righteousness in community oversight (16:18–18:22)
 - c. Righteousness in daily community life (19:1–26:15)
3. Covenant love was an internal surrender that was to go public through outward loyalty to God and care for the needy (4:39; 6:5–6; 8:5; 10:12–13, 16; 11:18; 26:16; 32:46). That God so clearly articulated the nature of love was an amazing grace that, if heeded, would distinguish Israel from the nations that surrounded her (4:5–8; 26:18–19; 32:46–47; Ps 19:9–10).
 - Deut 4:5–8. See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. ⁶ Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” ⁷ For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? ⁸ And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?
 - Deut 4:39. Know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.
 - Deut 6:5–6. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.
 - Deut 8:5. Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you.
 - Deut 10:12–13. 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, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good? ... ¹⁶ Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.
 - Deut 11:18. You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.
 - Deut 26:16. This day the LORD your God commands you to do these statutes and rules. You shall therefore be careful to do them with all your heart and with all your soul.
 - Deut 26:18–19. And the LORD has declared today that you are a people for his treasured possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all his commandments, ¹⁹ and that he will set you in praise and in fame and in honor high above all nations that he has made, and that you shall be a people holy to the LORD your God, as he promised.”
 - Deut 32:46–47. Take to heart all the words by which I am warning you today, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law. ⁴⁷ For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess.
 - Ps 19:9–10. the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. ¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.

4. Nevertheless, Moses is clear that Israel was sickened by a spiritual disability (Deut 29:4[3]). They were not righteous but stubborn (9:6), which meant that they needed heart surgery in order to love rightly (10:16). While heart circumcision was rare in the old covenant age (but see Pss 37:31; 40:8; 119:10–11; Isa 51:7), Moses and the later prophets anticipated a day when God’s people would love and obey truly with all their heart and soul (Deut 30:6, 8; Jer. 31:33–34; Ezek 36:26–27; cf. Rom 2:25–29; 8:3–9, 13; 13:8–10).
- Deut 9:6. Know, therefore, that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stubborn people.
 - Deut 10:16. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.
 - Deut 29:4[3]. But to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.
 - Deut 30:6, 8. And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live....⁸ And you shall again obey the voice of the LORD and keep all his commandments that I command you today.
 - Ps 37:31. The law of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip.
 - Ps 40:8. I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.
 - Ps 119:10–11. With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments!¹¹ I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.
 - Isa 51:7. Listen to me, you who know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear not the reproach of man, nor be dismayed at their revilings.
 - Jer 31:33–34. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”
 - Ezek 36:26–27. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.
 - Rom 2:25–29. For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision.²⁶ So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?²⁷ Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law.²⁸ For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical.²⁹ But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.
 - Rom 8:3–9, 13. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.⁶ For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.⁷ For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.⁸ Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.⁹ You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him....¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.
 - Rom 13:8–10. Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.⁹ For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are

summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

E. Excursus: The Makeup of OT Laws

- Moses’ laws come to us in two forms: *Apodictic* laws are those that are base principles stated in such a way that there is no qualification or exception. *Casuistic* laws are always situational, related to specific circumstances. Casuistic laws are often applications of apodictic laws.

Fig. 7.5. Formal Distinctions in OT Law

Apodictic	Casuistic
<u>Deut 5:7</u> . You shall have no other gods before me. <u>Deut 5:20</u> . You shall never bear false witness against your neighbor.	<u>Deut 21:22–23</u> . And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God.
Unconditional and imperative, usually beginning with a volitional verb	Conditional and declarative, usually beginning with “if” or “when”
2nd person	Usually 3rd person
General: without qualification or exception	Specific: based on actual situations, often with motive or exception clauses
Often in negative form	Usually in positive form

Adapted from Daniel I. Block, “Reading the Decalogue from Right to Left: The Ten Principles of Covenant Relationship in the Hebrew Bible,” in *How I Love Your Torah, O LORD! Studies in the Book of Deuteronomy* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011), 31.

- Another more general catalog of the OT’s commandments comes from the 12th century AD Jewish philosopher and exegete Maimonides. He published a definite list of laws in the whole Pentateuch titled *Sepher Mitvoth* (A Book of Commandments), wherein he catalogued 613 directives—248 positive and 365 negative. They addressed the following areas:

Fig. 7.6. Categories of the 613 Commandments in the Pentateuch (according to Maimonides)

Commands	1–9	Commands relating to one’s relationship with God (9)
	10–19	Commands relating to the study of the Torah (10)
	20–38	Commands relating to the temple (19)
	39–91	Commands dealing with sacrifices (53)
	92–95	Commands dealing with vows (4)
	96–113	Commands dealing with ritual purity (18)
	114–133	Commands dealing with donations to the temple (20)
	134–142	Commands dealing with the Sabbath year (9)
	143–153	Commands dealing with slaughtering of animals (11)
	154–170	Commands dealing with festivals (17)
	171–184	Commands dealing with order in community (14)
	185–189	Commands relating to idolatry (5)
	190–193	Commands dealing with war (4)
	194–208	Commands dealing with social structure (15)
	209–223	Commands relating to the family (15)
	224–231	Commands dealing with the administration of law (8)
	232–235	Commands dealing with treatment of servants (4)
236–248	General commands (13)	
oh ibi	1–45	Prohibitions relating to idolatry and false religion (45)
	46–59	Prohibitions relating to historical events (14)

60–66	Prohibitions relating to blasphemy (7)
67–88	Prohibitions relating to the temple (22)
89–157	Prohibitions relating to sacrifice (69)
158–171	Prohibitions relating to the priests (14)
172–201	Prohibitions relating to dietary laws (30)
202–209	Prohibitions relating to the Nazarite (8)
210–229	Prohibitions relating to agriculture (20)
230–272	Prohibitions relating to business affairs (43)
273–329	Prohibitions relating to the administration of justice (57)
330–361	Prohibitions relating to family relationships (32)
362–365	Prohibitions relating to the king (4)

For a listing of the specific commandments and texts that align with the various categories, see John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary*, Library of Biblical Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 482–516.

3. Finally, we can distinguish different types of laws based on their variations in content: criminal, civil, family, cultic/ceremonial, and compassion.

Fig. 7.7. Types of OT Laws by Content

<i>Criminal Laws</i>
Laws governing crimes or offenses that put the welfare of the whole community at risk; the offended party is the state or or national community, and therefore the punishment is on behalf of the whole community in the name of the highest state authority, which in Israel meant YHWH.
Kidnapping (Exod. 21:16; Deut. 24:7) Sustained insubordination to parents (Exod. 21:15, 17; Deut. 21:18–21) Homicide/Premeditated or avoidable murder (Exod. 21:14; Num. 35:16–21, 30–31; Deut. 19:11–13) Religious malpractice: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sabbath breaking (Exod. 31:14–15; 35:2; cf. Num. 15:32–36) False prophecy (Deut. 13:1–5; 18:20) Idolatry (Exod. 22:20; Lev. 19:4; Deut. 13:1–18; 17:2–7) Child sacrifice (Lev. 20:1–5) Witchcraft (Exod. 22:18; Lev. 19:26, 31; 20:27) Blasphemy (see Lev. 24:14–23) Sexual offenses: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Adultery when married or engaged (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22–24; cf. Gen. 38:24) Concealed premarital unchastity (Deut. 22:20–21) Rape of an engaged girl (Deut. 22:25) Prostitution of a priest's daughter (Lev. 21:9) Incest (Lev. 20:11–12, 14) Homosexuality (Lev. 20:13) Bestiality (Exod. 22:19; Lev. 20:15–16) False witness in a capital case (Deut. 19:16–21) Note: Nearly all the commands and prohibitions in the Decalogue are considered criminal offenses.
<i>Civil Laws</i>
Laws governing private disputes between citizens or organizations in which the public authorities are appealed to for judgment or called upon to intervene; the offended party is not the state or national community.
1. Non-premeditated killing: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Accidental death (Exod. 21:13; Num. 35:9–15; Deut. 19:1–13) Death due to self-defense (Exod. 22:2–3) Assault: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Human against human (Exod. 21:18–19, 22) Animal against human (21:28–32) Animal against animal (21:33–36) Breaches of trust: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Theft (Exod. 22:1–4, 7–9, 12; Lev. 19:11, 13) Destruction of property (Exod. 22:5, 6, 14) Falsehood as a witness: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> In non-capital case (Exod. 23:1–3) In commerce/trade (Lev. 19:35–36)

<p>Limited family issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Premarital unchastity between consenting adults, whether real (Exod. 22:16–17; Lev. 19:20–22; Deut. 22:28–29) or potential (Deut. 22:13–21) Post-divorce situations (Deut. 24:1–3) The mistreatment of slaves (Exod. 21:20–21, 26–27) The handling of runaway slaves (Deut. 23:15–16) Failure to accept levirate marriage duties (25:7–10)
<p>Family Laws</p>
<p>Non-civil, domestic laws governing the Israelite household.</p> <p>Levirate marriage (Deut. 25:5–6) Inheritance (Deut. 21:15–16) Jubilee and the redemption of land and persons (Lev. 25) Family discipleship (Deut. 6:6–9, 20–25; 11:18–21) Respect of and obedience to parents (Exod. 20:12; Lev. 19:3; Deut. 5:16) Turning a daughter into a prostitute (Lev. 19:29) Slavery including limits of service, inheritance, and protection (Exod. 21:2–11; Deut. 15:1–23) Maintaining gender distinctions (Deut. 22:5)</p>
<p>Cultic/Ceremonial Laws</p>
<p>Laws governing the visible forms and rituals of Israel’s religious life.</p> <p>Sacrifice:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Altar and sacrifices (Exod. 20:24–26) Offering of firstfruits (Exod. 22:29–30; 23:19) Sacrifices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General guidelines (Exod. 23:18; 29:38–46; Lev. 1–7; 19:5–8) Day of Atonement (Lev. 16) Location (Lev. 17:1–9; Deut. 12) <p>Sacred Calendar:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly Sabbaths (Exod. 20:8–11; 23:12; 31:12–17; 35:1–3; Lev. 19:3, 30; Deut. 5:12–15) Sabbatical year (Exod. 23:10–11; Lev. 25:3–7; Deut. 15:1–6) Feasts and sacred days (Exod. 23:14–19; 34:22–23; Lev. 23:9–22; Deut. 16:1–17) Jubilee (Lev. 25:8–55) <p>Sacred Symbolism and Distinction:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Tabernacle (Exod. 25–30) Priesthood: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garments (Exod. 28) Consecration (Exod. 29:1–37; Lev. 8) Administration of sacrifices (Exod. 29:38–46; Lev. 6–7) Ritual Purity (Clean/Unclean): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food laws (Lev. 11:2–47; 20:24–26; Deut. 14:4–20) and the eating of blood (Lev. 17:10–16; 19:26) Childbirth (Lev. 12) Leprosy (Lev. 13–14) Bodily discharges (Lev. 15) Distinction from the pagan nations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interbreeding/mixing of cattle, seeds, garments (Lev. 19:19; Deut. 22:9–11) Trimming of sideburns, cutting of body, tattoos (Lev. 19:27–28; Deut. 14:1)
<p>Compassion Laws</p>
<p>“Laws” dealing with charity, justice, and mercy toward others. These are not exactly the kind of laws that can be brought to court, but God knows the heart.</p> <p>Protection and care of others:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The sojourner (Exods. 22:21; 23:9; Lev. 19:9–10, 33–34; Deut. 14:28–29; 24:19–22) The widow and orphan (Exod. 22:22–24; Deut. 14:28–29; 24:19–22) The poor (Exod. 22:25–27; 23:6; Lev. 19:9–10; Deut. 15:7–11; 24:10–13, 19–22) One’s neighbor (19:13, 16–18) The disabled (Lev. 19:14; Deut. 27:18) The Levite (Deut. 14:28–29) The released slave (Deut. 15:12–15) The hired servant (Deut. 24:14–15) <p>Justice and impartiality (Exod. 23:7–8; Lev. 19:15; Deut. 24:17–18; 27:19, 25) Honor of the elderly (Lev. 19:32) Return of an enemy or brother’s lost goods (Exod. 22:4; Deut. 22:1–3) Help of an enemy or brother in need (Exod. 23:5; Deut. 22:4)</p>

Excusal from war:

- a. For a new home owner (Deut. 20:5)
- b. For a new business owner (Deut. 20:6)
- c. For a newly married man (Deut. 20:7; 24:5)

Marriage to foreign widows of war (Deut. 20:10–14)**Preservation of means for food for future generations** (Deut. 20:6–7; 25:4)**Building safe homes** (Deut. 20:8)**Respect for other's means of sustenance** (Deut. 23:24–25; 24:6)

Prepared by both Jason S. DeRouchie and Kenneth J. Turner. Originally published in DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About*, 466–67. Used by permission. The examples are only illustrative. The five main categories are taken from Christopher J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 288–301, which he adapted from Anthony Phillips, *Ancient Israel's Criminal Law: A New Approach to the Decalogue* (New York: Schocken Books, 1970), 2, 13.

VI. The Foundation and Perpetuation of Covenant Relationship: All Grace

A. Two Dangers That Awaited Israel as They Entered the Land:

1. *Prosperity* can easily lead to self-reliance and forgetting YHWH as the ultimate provider.
 - Deut 6:10–12. And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build,¹¹ and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full,¹² then take care lest you forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.
 - Deut 8:10–18. And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.¹¹ Take care lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today,¹² lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them,¹³ and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied,¹⁴ then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery,¹⁵ who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock,¹⁶ who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end.¹⁷ Beware lest you say in your heart, “My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.”¹⁸ You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.
 - Deut 9:4. Do not say in your heart, after the LORD your God has thrust them out before you, “It is because of my righteousness that the LORD has brought me in to possess this land,” whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out before you.
 - Deut 29:19. one who, when he hears the words of this sworn covenant, blesses himself in his heart, saying, “I shall be safe, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.” This will lead to the sweeping away of moist and dry alike.
 - Deut 32:15. But Jeshurun grew fat, and kicked; you grew fat, stout, and sleek; then he forsook God who made him and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation.
2. *Paganism* can lure people away from following YHWH.
 - Deut 7:3–4, 16, 25. You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons,⁴ for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly....¹⁶ And you shall consume all the peoples that the LORD your God will give over to you. Your eye shall not pity them, neither shall you serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you....²⁵ The carved images of their gods you shall burn with fire. You shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them or take it for yourselves, lest you be ensnared by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God.
 - Deut 11:16. Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them.

- Deut 17:17. And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.
- Deut 20:17–18. But you shall devote them to complete destruction, the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, as the LORD your God has commanded, ¹⁸ that they may not teach you to do according to all their abominable practices that they have done for their gods, and so you sin against the LORD your God.

B. Motivation for Obedience: Gracious Blessings, Curses, and Restoration Blessings

1. Within all of God's covenant dealings, promises of favor or dread are a key means by which he motivates believers to grow in holiness (1 Pet 1:4; cf. Rom 4:18–21; 2 Cor 7:1; 1 John 3:3). Within the old covenant, God promised both blessings and curses dependent on Israel's obedience (Deut 11:13–17, 26–28; 30:15–20; cf. Lev 26; see Fig. 7.1 above). Blessings related to God's commitment to protect and provide for his people so long as they continued to live as his people—remaining loyal to him from the heart (Deut 28:1–14; 30:3–10). The curses warned of the removal of all provision and protection that would result from covenant rebellion (28:15–68; 29:19–21).
 - Deut 11:13–17. And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹⁴ he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil. ¹⁵ And he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you shall eat and be full. ¹⁶ Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them; ¹⁷ then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and he will shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain, and the land will yield no fruit, and you will perish quickly off the good land that the LORD is giving you.
 - Deut 11:26–28. See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: ²⁷ the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, ²⁸ and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way that I am commanding you today, to go after other gods that you have not known.
 - Deut 30:15–20. See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. ¹⁶ If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you today, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, ²⁰ loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.
 - Rom 4:18–21. In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.” ¹⁹ He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰ No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹ fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.
 - 2 Cor 7:1. Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.
 - 2 Pet 1:4. He has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.
 - 1 John 3:3. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

2. The covenant blessings and curses address both spiritual and physical wellbeing, but the focus is on the latter (e.g., national security and influence, personal health and fertility, etc.). Deuteronomy's longer list of curses and its explicit statements made clear that, while Israel would enjoy sporadic communal blessings, the general pattern for them would be sin and the experience of covenant curses culminating in exile, synthesized as punishment, destruction, and banishment.
 - Deut 4:25–28. When you father children and children's children, and have grown old in the land, if you act corruptly by making a carved image in the form of anything, and by doing what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, so as to provoke him to anger,²⁶ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess. You will not live long in it, but will be utterly destroyed.²⁷ And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you.²⁸ And there you will serve gods of wood and stone, the work of human hands, that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.
 - Deut 31:16–17. And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers. Then this people will rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them.¹⁷ Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide my face from them, and they will be devoured. And many evils and troubles will come upon them, so that they will say in that day, "Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?"
 - Deut 31:26–29. Take this Book of the Law and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against you.²⁷ For I know how rebellious and stubborn you are. Behold, even today while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD. How much more after my death!²⁸ Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears and call heaven and earth to witness against them.²⁹ For I know that after my death you will surely act corruptly and turn aside from the way that I have commanded you. And in the days to come evil will befall you, because you will do what is evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger through the work of your hands."
3. The prophets make clear that ultimately Israel's exile would be overcome by her representative Messiah's curse-bearing work (Isa 49:6; 53:5, 11; Gal 3:13–14; 2 Cor 5:21). In his day, as Moses himself anticipated (Deut 4:29–31; 30:3–10; 32:34–43; 33:26–29), the Eden-like, utopian picture of joy portrayed in the blessings would be realized in restoration, culminating in the new heavens and earth (Isa 51:3; 65:17; Ezek 36:35; Rev 21:1–4; 22:1–5). In that day, the curse would be no more (Deut 30:7; 32:43; Rev 22:3), and believers, who now enjoy every spiritual blessing in Christ (Eph 1:3; 2 Cor 6:16) would receive their full inheritance (Eph 1:14; 1 Pet 1:4).
 - Deut 4:29–31. But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.³⁰ When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the LORD your God and obey his voice.³¹ For the LORD your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them.
 - Deut 30:3–10. then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.⁴ If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there he will take you.⁵ And the LORD your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it. And he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers.⁶ And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.⁷ And the LORD your God will put all these curses on your foes and enemies who persecuted you.⁸ And you shall again obey the

voice of the LORD and keep all his commandments that I command you today. ⁹ The LORD your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your womb and in the fruit of your cattle and in the fruit of your ground. For the LORD will again take delight in prospering you, as he took delight in your fathers, ¹⁰ when you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes that are written in this Book of the Law, when you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

- Deut 32:34–43. “Is not this laid up in store with me, sealed up in my treasuries? ³⁵ Vengeance is mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly.” ³⁶ For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants, when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free. ³⁷ Then he will say, “Where are their gods, the rock in which they took refuge, ³⁸ who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise up and help you; let them be your protection! ³⁹ See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand. ⁴⁰ For I lift up my hand to heaven and swear, As I live forever, ⁴¹ if I sharpen my flashing sword and my hand takes hold on judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and will repay those who hate me. ⁴² I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh— with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the long-haired heads of the enemy. ⁴³ Rejoice with him, O heavens; bow down to him, all gods, for he avenges the blood of his children and takes vengeance on his adversaries. He repays those who hate him and cleanses his people’s land.”
- Deut 33:26–29. There is none like God, O Jeshurun, who rides through the heavens to your help, through the skies in his majesty. ²⁷ The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms. And he thrust out the enemy before you and said, “Destroy.” ²⁸ So Israel lived in safety, Jacob lived alone, in a land of grain and wine, whose heavens drop down dew. ²⁹ Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD, the shield of your help, and the sword of your triumph! Your enemies shall come fawning to you, and you shall tread upon their backs.
- Isa 49:6. It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.
- Isa 51:3. For the LORD comforts Zion; he comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.
- Isa 53:5, 11. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. . . . ¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.
- Isa 65:17. For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.
- Ezek 36:35. And they will say, “This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden, and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.”
- Gal 3:13–14. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.
- 2 Cor 5:21. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
- Eph 1:3, 14. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. . . . ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

- 2 Cor 6:16. What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”
- 1 Pet. 1:3–4. He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.
- Rev 21:1–4. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”
- Rev 22:1–5. Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

C. Foundations for Obedience: Past Gracious Preservation in spite of Israel’s Sins

1. Future grace motivated Israel’s obedience, but past grace grounded it. Israel far too quickly forgot all that God had done for them in the past.
2. They needed to remember:
 - a. Their unworthiness to receive God’s affection (Deut 7:7; 9:6–8, 22–24).
 - Deut 7:7. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples.
 - Deut 9:6–8, 22–24. Know, therefore, that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stubborn people. ⁷ Remember and do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day you came out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD. ⁸ Even at Horeb you provoked the LORD to wrath, and the LORD was so angry with you that he was ready to destroy you. . . . ²² At Taberah also, and at Massah and at Kibroth-hattaavah you provoked the LORD to wrath. ²³ And when the LORD sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, “Go up and take possession of the land that I have given you,” then you rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God and did not believe him or obey his voice. ²⁴ You have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you.
 - b. The seriousness with which God took their past sins (1:35).
 - Deut 1:34–35. And the LORD heard your words and was angered, and he swore, ³⁵ “Not one of these men of this evil generation shall see the good land that I swore to give to your fathers.”
 - c. YHWH’s vowed commitment to the patriarchs and their offspring (1:8; 9:5; cf. Gen 12:1–3; 15:18; 17:7; 22:16–18).
 - Deut 1:8. See, I have set the land before you. Go in and take possession of the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them and to their offspring after them.
 - Deut 9:5. Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations the LORD your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.
 - Gen 12:1–3. Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a

- blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”
- Gen 15:18. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.”
 - Gen 17:7. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.
 - Gen 22:16–18. By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, ¹⁸ and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.
- d. The freedom YHWH alone gave them from slavery (Deut 5:15; 6:22–23).
- Deut 5:15. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.
 - Deut 6:22–23. And the LORD showed signs and wonders, great and grievous, against Egypt and against Pharaoh and all his household, before our eyes. ²³ And he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in and give us the land that he swore to give to our fathers.
- e. The gracious provision that YHWH alone supplied for them through the wilderness (2:7; 8:3–4; 29:5–6).
- Deut 2:7. For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He knows your going through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you. You have lacked nothing.
 - Deut 8:3–4. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. ⁴ Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years.
 - Deut 29:5–6. I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn off your feet. ⁶ You have not eaten bread, and you have not drunk wine or strong drink, that you may know that I am the LORD your God.
- f. The fact that they alone among all the nations of the world were set apart to be YHWH’s treasured possession (7:6; 14:2; 26:18; cf. Exod 19:5–6).
- Deut 7:6. For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.
 - Deut 14:2. For you are a people holy to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.
 - Deut 26:18. And the LORD has declared today that you are a people for his treasured possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all his commandments.
 - Exod 19:5–6. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. ⁷ These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”

D. The Deadly Problem: Israel’s Hardness

1. The words Moses most commonly used to describe Israel were “stubborn” (Deut 9:6, 13; 10:16; 31:27), “unbelieving” (1:32; 9:23), and “rebellious” (1:26, 43; 9:7, 23–24; 31:27).
 - Deut 1:26, 32, 43. Yet you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God.... ³² Yet in spite of this word you did not believe the LORD your God.... ⁴³ So I

- spoke to you, and you would not listen; but you rebelled against the command of the LORD and presumptuously went up into the hill country.
- Deut 9:6–7, 13, 23–24. Know, therefore, that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stubborn people.⁷ Remember and do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day you came out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD....¹³ Furthermore, the LORD said to me, “I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stubborn people.”...²³ And when the LORD sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, “Go up and take possession of the land that I have given you,” then you rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God and did not believe him or obey his voice.²⁴ You have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you.
 - Deut 10:16. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.
 - Deut 31:27. For I know how rebellious and stubborn you are. Behold, even today while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD. How much more after my death!
2. The people remained spiritually disabled and hardened from God, because he did not overcome their resistance; therefore, they would not obey God’s law (29:4[3]; Isa 29:10; Rom 11:8, 10; cf. Rom 8:7–8; 1 Cor 2:14; Eph 4:18).
- Deut 29:2–4[1–3]. You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land,³ the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders.⁴ But to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.
 - Isa 29:10. For the LORD has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes (the prophets), and covered your heads (the seers).
 - Isa 44:18. They know not, nor do they discern, for he has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their hearts, so that they cannot understand.
 - Rom 8:7–8. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.⁸ Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
 - Rom 11:8, 10. As it is written, “God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day.” ...¹⁰ let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and bend their backs forever.”
 - 1 Cor 2:14. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.
 - Eph 4:18. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.
3. Moses declared that their rebellion would only continue after his death and into the promised land, so that YHWH would pour out upon them covenant curses culminating exile, which he defines in terms of punishment, destruction, and banishment (Deut 4:25–28; 29:18–28; 31:16–21, 27–29; cf. Dan 9:11).
- Deut 4:25–28. When you father children and children’s children, and have grown old in the land, if you act corruptly by making a carved image in the form of anything, and by doing what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, so as to provoke him to anger,²⁶ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess. You will not live long in it, but will be utterly destroyed.²⁷ And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you.²⁸ And there you will serve gods of wood and stone, the work of human hands, that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.
 - Deut 29:18–28. Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the LORD our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit,¹⁹ one who, when he hears the words of this sworn covenant, blesses himself in his heart, saying, ‘I shall be safe, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.’ This will lead to the sweeping away of moist and dry alike.²⁰ The LORD will not be willing to forgive him, but rather the

anger of the LORD and his jealousy will smoke against that man, and the curses written in this book will settle upon him, and the LORD will blot out his name from under heaven. ²¹ And the LORD will single him out from all the tribes of Israel for calamity, in accordance with all the curses of the covenant written in this Book of the Law. ²² And the next generation, your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land, will say, when they see the afflictions of that land and the sicknesses with which the LORD has made it sick—²³ the whole land burned out with brimstone and salt, nothing sown and nothing growing, where no plant can sprout, an overthrow like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger and wrath—²⁴ all the nations will say, “Why has the LORD done thus to this land? What caused the heat of this great anger?” ²⁵ Then people will say, “It is because they abandoned the covenant of the LORD, the God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt, ²⁶ and went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods whom they had not known and whom he had not allotted to them. ²⁷ Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, bringing upon it all the curses written in this book, ²⁸ and the LORD uprooted them from their land in anger and fury and great wrath, and cast them into another land, as they are this day.”

- Deut 31:16–21. And the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers. Then this people will rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them. ¹⁷ Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide my face from them, and they will be devoured. And many evils and troubles will come upon them, so that they will say in that day, ‘Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?’ ¹⁸ And I will surely hide my face in that day because of all the evil that they have done, because they have turned to other gods. ¹⁹ Now therefore write this song and teach it to the people of Israel. Put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the people of Israel. ²⁰ For when I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to give to their fathers, and they have eaten and are full and grown fat, they will turn to other gods and serve them, and despise me and break my covenant. ²¹ And when many evils and troubles have come upon them, this song shall confront them as a witness (for it will live unforgotten in the mouths of their offspring). For I know what they are inclined to do even today, before I have brought them into the land that I swore to give.”
 - Deut 31:27–29. For I know how rebellious and stubborn you are. Behold, even today while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD. How much more after my death! ²⁸ Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears and call heaven and earth to witness against them. ²⁹ For I know that after my death you will surely act corruptly and turn aside from the way that I have commanded you. And in the days to come evil will befall you, because you will do what is evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger through the work of your hands.”
 - Dan 9:11. All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him.
4. Deuteronomy’s salvation-historical perspective clarifies how Paul could assert that “the law is not of faith” (Gal 3:12) and “is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient” (1 Tim 1:9). The law was a temporary reality added after the Abrahamic covenant “to increase the trespass” (Rom 5:20) and “because of transgressions, until the offspring [i.e., Jesus Messiah] should come to whom the promise had been made” (Gal 3:19). It was a provisional “guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith” (3:24). “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes” (Rom 10:4). YHWH’s divine purposes, culminating in Christ, required that the old covenant

would bear a ministry of death and condemnation so that the new covenant might bear a ministry of life and righteousness (Rom 9:22–24; 2 Cor 3:7, 9).

- Rom 5:20. Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.
 - Rom 9:22–24. What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,²³ in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—²⁴ even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?
 - Rom 10:4. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.
 - 2 Cor 3:7–9. Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end,⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory?⁹ For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory.
 - Gal 3:12, 19, 24. But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” ...¹⁹ Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary....²⁴ So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.
 - 1 Tim 1:9. The law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers.
5. Gary Millar rightly notes that the “strange paradox” of Deuteronomy is that Moses rightly calls for obedient choices in response to God grace yet stands convinced that Israel will fail to deliver the faithful response for which God calls (“Deuteronomy,” *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 163): “Moses believes that the standards he preaches are ultimately beyond the reach of Israel; therefore he regards them as only interim measures.” He further records (164–65) that Deuteronomy provides the theological framework for properly grasping Christ’s work, for it:
- a. Develops most fully the theology of blessing and curse, which stands at the heart of Jesus’ sin-bearing work;
 - b. Exposes the hopelessness of humanity trapped in sin, even when chosen by God;
 - c. First tells of the prospect of a radical divine intervention that changes people at the core of their being.
6. If the Jews, even with their special privileges (Rom 9:4–5), gained only a knowledge of sin from the law, what hope did the Gentiles have who never received such privileges (3:19)? The Jewish failure to keep the law proved to the world that “by works of the law no human being will be justified in [God’s] sight” (3:20). As such, the only hope for Jew and Gentile alike is “the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe” (3:21–24).
- Rom 3:19–24. Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.²⁰ For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction:²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

- Rom 9:4–5. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. ⁵ To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.
7. While ethnic Israel predominantly rejected YHWH, through the Christ the message of salvation reaches the Gentiles (Rom 15:10; cf. Deut 32:43), thus condemning those who are only Jews outwardly and not inwardly (Rom 2:26–29). And as Moses anticipated (Deut 32:21), the salvation of the Gentiles will ultimately make the elect of Israel jealous, moving them to turn to God in faith and repentance (Rom 10:19; 11:11–12, 25–26).
- Deut 32:21, 43 (NIV). They made me jealous by what is no god and angered me with their worthless idols. I will make them envious by those who are not a people; I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding. . . . ⁴³ Rejoice, you nations, with his people, for he will avenge the blood of his servants; he will take vengeance on his enemies and make atonement for his land and people.
 - Rom 2:26–29. So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? ²⁷ Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. ²⁸ For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. ²⁹ But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.
 - Rom 10:19. But I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, “I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry.”
 - Rom 11:11–12, 25–26. So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather, through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. ¹² Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean! . . . ²⁵ Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob.”
 - Rom 15:10. And again it is said, “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.”

E. **YHWH’s Solution: Bring Salvation and Transformation on the other Side of Curse**

1. God’s choice of Israel and initial working on their behalf had everything to do with his promises to the patriarchs and with his unmerited love for his people and had nothing to do with any greatness *of* Israel (Deut 7:7–8) or any greatness *in* Israel (9:5–6), for they were stubborn, and not righteous (9:6, 13; 31:27). If Israel was to enjoy lasting covenant relationship, it would be only due to the blood-bought mercy of God.
 - Deut 7:7–8. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸ but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.
 - Deut 9:5–6, 13. Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations the LORD your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. ⁶ Know, therefore, that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stubborn people. . . . ¹³ Furthermore, the LORD said to me, “I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stubborn people.”

- Deut 31:27. For I know how rebellious and stubborn you are. Behold, even today while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD. How much more after my death!
2. While Moses' Israel was spiritually disabled (Deut 29:4[3]), the prophet envisioned that curse would not be the final word. God's mercy would lead Israel in the latter days to turn to him and to listen to him (4:29–31; cf. Exod 34:6–7). He would perform heart surgery on them for the sake of their lives, resulting in their truly loving him with all their heart and soul (30:6) and heeding all that he was teaching in Deuteronomy (30:8). Moses' "heart circumcision" (30:6) seems to anticipate Jeremiah's "heart inscription" (Jer 31:33) and Ezekiel's "heart transplant," which would be accompanied by God's indwelling Spirit (Ezek 11:19–20; 36:26–27). All this would come because of God's *mercy* (Deut 4:31).
- Exod 34:6–7. The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. ⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."
 - Deut 4:29–31. But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul. ³⁰ When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the LORD your God and obey his voice. ³¹ For the LORD your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them.
 - Deut 29:4[3]. But to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.
 - Deut 30:6, 8. And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.... ⁸ And you shall again obey the voice of the LORD and keep all his commandments that I command you today.
 - Jer 31:33. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
 - Ezek 11:19–20. And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰ that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.
 - Ezek 36:26–27. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.
3. Paul considered the work of God's Spirit in Christians through Christ to be the fulfillment of Moses' heart circumcision (Rom 2:28–29; 2 Cor 3:3; Gal 3:13–14). The apostle also stressed that the restoration day anticipated in Deuteronomy found its fulfillment in the redemptive work of Jesus, whose death provided not only the answer to humanity's curse through Adam (Rom 5:19; 1 Cor 15:21–22) but also stood as the climax of Israel's covenantal judgment and restoration anticipated in Deuteronomy (Gal 3:13–14 with Deut 21:23 and chs. 29–30).
- Rom 2:28–29. For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. ²⁹ But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.
 - Rom 5:19. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.
 - 1 Cor 15:21–22. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

- 2 Cor 3:3. And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.
- Gal 3:13–14. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.
- Deut 21:23. His body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.

VII. The Purpose of Covenant Relationship: God-exalting influence on the nations

A. Missions Exists Because Worship Doesn't. Deuteronomy portrays YHWH as the only God (Deut 4:35, 39; 6:4), holy (26:15; 32:51), sovereign over all things (10:14), the creator of mankind (4:32) and Israel (32:6), and the overseer of nations (32:8), who is rightly jealous for his people's affection (4:24; 5:9; 29:20; 32:16, 21) and must act to maintain right order (righteousness) in the world, wherein he is recognized as supreme (4:8; 16:20; 32:4). Part of God's revealed purpose for setting Israel apart for himself in the midst of the world was that through their obedience and surrender they might proclaim his worth to the nations and stand as an agent of God-honoring impact on a global scale.

- Deut 4:8, 24, 32, 35, 39. And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today? ... ²⁴ For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.... ³² For ask now of the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether such a great thing as this has ever happened or was ever heard of.... ³⁵ To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD is God; there is no other besides him.... ³⁹ know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.
- Deut 5:9. You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me,
- Deut 6:4. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.
- Deut 16:20 (DeRouchie). Righteousness, righteousness you shall pursue, that you may live and inherit the land that the LORD your God is giving you.
- Deut 26:15. Look down from your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless your people Israel and the ground that you have given us, as you swore to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.
- Deut 29:20. The LORD will not be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of the LORD and his jealousy will smoke against that man, and the curses written in this book will settle upon him, and the LORD will blot out his name from under heaven.
- Deut 32:4, 6, 8, 16, 21, 51. The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.... ⁶ Do you thus repay the LORD, you foolish and senseless people? Is not he your father, who created you, who made you and established you? ... ⁸ When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God.... ¹⁶ They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods; with abominations they provoked him to anger.... ²¹ They have made me jealous with what is no god; they have provoked me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are no people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.... ⁵¹ because you broke faith with me in the midst of the people of Israel at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, and because you did not treat me as holy in the midst of the people of Israel.

B. Israel’s “Come and See” Call to International Impact. With echoes of Exod 19:5–6, Deut 4:5–8 proclaims that, if Israel would follow God’s word closely, living wisely, their lifestyle would attract the attention of the nations (4:6b), who would stand amazed at God’s nearness to Israel (4:7) and at the uprightness of his revelation (4:8). Israel’s heeding of God’s commands would result in the display of God’s greatness in the sight of the world (26:18–19; 28:1, 9–10; cf. Matt 5:16).

- Exod 19:5–6. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.
- Deut 4:5–8. See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. ⁶ Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” ⁷ For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? ⁸ And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?
- Deut 26:18–19. And the LORD has declared today that you are a people for his treasured possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all his commandments, ¹⁹ and that he will set you in praise and in fame and in honor high above all nations that he has made, and that you shall be a people holy to the LORD your God, as he promised.
- Deut 28:1, 9–10. And if you faithfully obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.... ⁹ The LORD will establish you as a people holy to himself, as he has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in his ways. ¹⁰ And all the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you.
- Matt 5:16. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

C. Israel’s Failed Calling and God’s Fulfillment

1. Instead of heeding God’s voice, Moses knew that Israel would reject the Lord resulting in his cursing them. But YHWH would then act on behalf of his “servants” (Deut 32:36). In light of the jealousy that Israel’s disloyalty had caused God, he would now cause them to be jealous toward the nations (32:21; cf. Rom 10:19–11:26), would avenge his enemies (Deut 32:35, 41, 43; cf. Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30), would atone for the polluting effects of sin (Deut 32:43), and would have compassion on his servants (32:36), resulting in world-wide joy and the inclusion of Gentiles in the people of God (32:43 [KJV, NASB, NIV, CSB]; cf. Rom 15:10).
 - Deut 32:21, 35–36, 41, 43.⁴ They have made me jealous with what is no god; they have provoked me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are no people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation....³⁵ “Vengeance is mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly.” ...³⁶ For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants, when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free....⁴¹ if I sharpen my flashing sword and my hand takes hold on judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and will repay those who hate me....⁴³ Rejoice, you nations, with his people, for he will avenge the blood of his servants; he will take vengeance on his enemies and make atonement for his land and people.
 - Rom 12:19. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”

⁴ Deut 32:43 is taken from the NIV.

- Rom 15:10. And again it is said, “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.”
 - Heb 10:30. For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.”
2. While the church’s mission now includes a “go and tell component” not present in the old covenant (Matt 28:18–20; Acts 1:8), God’s old covenant “come and see” charge for Israel to heed his voice finds fulfillment in the church’s role of proclaiming God’s excellencies in the world (1 Pet 2:9) and of showing the world that we are Christ’s disciples (John 13:35).
- a. John 13:35. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”
 - b. 1 Pet 2:9. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

VIII. The Lord of Covenant Relationship: Yahweh God

A. YHWH’s Universal Supremacy

1. The central truth in Israel’s worldview: YHWH alone is God (Deut 4:35; 6:4; 33:26)—a rock (32:4, 15, 18, 30–31), a great (5:24, 7:21, 10:17; 11:2; 32:3) and consuming presence (4:24; 9:3; 33:2) that stands unique in his perfections, fully distinct from his creation (7:21; 10:17) yet fully present and active in it (4:7; 6:15; 7:21; cf. 1:45; 31:17).
- Deut 1:45. And you returned and wept before the LORD, but the LORD did not listen to your voice or give ear to you.
 - Deut 4:7, 24, 35. For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? ... ²⁴ For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.... ³⁵ To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD is God; there is no other besides him.
 - Deut 5:24. And you said, “Behold, the LORD our God has shown us his glory and greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire. This day we have seen God speak with man, and man still live.”
 - Deut 6:4, 15. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.... ¹⁵ For the LORD your God in your midst is a jealous God—lest the anger of the LORD your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth.
 - Deut 7:21. You shall not be in dread of them, for the LORD your God is in your midst, a great and awesome God.
 - Deut 9:3. Know therefore today that he who goes over before you as a consuming fire is the LORD your God. He will destroy them and subdue them before you. So you shall drive them out and make them perish quickly, as the LORD has promised you.
 - Deut 10:17. For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe.
 - Deut 11:2. And consider today (since I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen it), consider the discipline of the LORD your God, his greatness, his mighty hand and his outstretched arm.
 - Deut 31:17. Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide my face from them, and they will be devoured. And many evils and troubles will come upon them, so that they will say in that day, “Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?”
 - Deut 32:3–4, 15, 18, 30–31. For I will proclaim the name of the LORD; ascribe greatness to our God! ⁴ The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.... ¹⁵ But Jeshurun grew fat, and kicked; you grew fat, stout, and sleek; then he forsook God who made him and scoffed at the Rock of his salvation.... ¹⁸ You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth.... ³⁰ How could one have chased a thousand, and two have put ten thousand

- to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had given them up? ³¹ For their rock is not as our Rock; our enemies are by themselves.
- Deut 33:2, 26. He said, “The LORD came from Sinai and dawned from Seir upon us; he shone forth from Mount Paran; he came from the ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire at his right hand.... ²⁶ There is none like God, O Jeshurun, who rides through the heavens to your help, through the skies in his majesty.
2. YHWH’s character (32:3–4): perfectly merciful (4:31; 13:17; 30:3), loving (5:10; 7:8, 13; 10:15, 18; 23:5), loyal (5:10; 7:9, 12), faithful (7:9; 32:4), holy (26:15; 32:51), eternal (33:27), impartial (10:17–18), and just (32:4).
- Deut 4:31. For the LORD your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them.
 - Deut 5:10. [YHWH shows] steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.
 - Deut 7:7–9, 12–13. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸ but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. ⁹ Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.... ¹² And because you listen to these rules and keep and do them, the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the steadfast love that he swore to your fathers. ¹³ He will love you, bless you, and multiply you. He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your wine and your oil, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock, in the land that he swore to your fathers to give you.
 - Deut 10:15, 17–18. Yet the LORD set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day.... ¹⁷ For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. ¹⁸ He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing.
 - Deut 13:17. None of the devoted things shall stick to your hand, that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of his anger and show you mercy and have compassion on you and multiply you, as he swore to your fathers.
 - Deut 23:5. But the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam; instead the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loved you.
 - Deut 26:15. Look down from your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless your people Israel and the ground that you have given us, as you swore to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.
 - Deut 30:3. Then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.
 - Deut 32:3–4, 51. For I will proclaim the name of the LORD; ascribe greatness to our God! ⁴ The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.... ⁵¹ [You could not enter the land] because you broke faith with me in the midst of the people of Israel at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, and because you did not treat me as holy in the midst of the people of Israel.
 - Deut 33:27. The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms. And he thrust out the enemy before you and said, “Destroy.”
3. YHWH’s power (3:24; 32:39): the creator of humanity (4:32), the overseer of nations (32:8), the universal judge (9:4; 18:12; 32:41, 43), and the sole controller of all things in heaven and on earth (4:39; 10:14; cf. Heb 1:3).
- Deut 3:24. O Lord GOD, you have only begun to show your servant your greatness and your mighty hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as yours?

- Deut 4:32, 39. For ask now of the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether such a great thing as this has ever happened or was ever heard of....³⁹ Know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.
- Deut 9:4. Do not say in your heart, after the LORD your God has thrust them out before you, “It is because of my righteousness that the LORD has brought me in to possess this land,” whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out before you.
- Deut 10:14. Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it.
- Deut 18:12. For whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD. And because of these abominations the LORD your God is driving them out before you.
- Deut 32:8, 39, 41, 43. When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God....³⁹ See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand....⁴¹ If I sharpen my flashing sword and my hand takes hold on judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and will repay those who hate me....⁴³ Rejoice with him, O heavens; bow down to him, all gods, for he avenges the blood of his children and takes vengeance on his adversaries. He repays those who hate him and cleanses his people’s land.
- Heb 1:3. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

B. YHWH’s Special Care for Israel

1. Yahweh alone is Israel’s “father” (Deut 32:6), their redeemer (4:20; 4:34; etc.), covenant maker (29:1), warrior (1:30; 3:22), protector (33:26–29), guide (1:33; 8:2; 32:12), instructor (1:3; 4:2; 6:1–2), prayer answerer (4:7; 9:19; 10:10), provider (2:7; 8:16–18), disciplinarian (8:3, 5; 11:2), tester (13:3), judge (1:17; 5:9; 7:10), restorer (4:30–31; 30:1–10; 32:34), and savior (4:31; 33:29).
 - Deut 1:3, 17, 30, 33. In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses spoke to the people of Israel according to all that the LORD had given him in commandment to them....¹⁷ You shall not be partial in judgment. You shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not be intimidated by anyone, for the judgment is God’s. And the case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it....³⁰ The LORD your God who goes before you will himself fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt before your eyes....³³ [He is the one] who went before you in the way to seek you out a place to pitch your tents, in fire by night and in the cloud by day, to show you by what way you should go.
 - Deut 2:7. For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He knows your going through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you. You have lacked nothing.
 - Deut 3:22. You shall not fear them, for it is the LORD your God who fights for you.
 - Deut 4:2, 7, 20, 30–31, 34. You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you....⁷ For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? ...²⁰ But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be a people of his own inheritance, as you are this day....³⁰ When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the LORD your God and obey his voice.³¹ For the LORD your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them....³⁴ Or has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, and by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great deeds of terror, all of which the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

- Deut 5:9. You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me.
- Deut 6:1–2. Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, ² that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son’s son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long.
- Deut 7:10. And [he] repays to their face those who hate him, by destroying them. He will not be slack with one who hates him. He will repay him to his face.
- Deut 8:2–3, 5, 16–18. And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. ³ And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. . . . ⁵ Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you. . . . ¹⁶ who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end. ¹⁷ Beware lest you say in your heart, “My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.” ¹⁸ You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.
- Deut 9:19. For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure that the LORD bore against you, so that he was ready to destroy you. But the LORD listened to me that time also.
- Deut 10:10. I myself stayed on the mountain, as at the first time, forty days and forty nights, and the LORD listened to me that time also. The LORD was unwilling to destroy you.
- Deut 11:2. And consider today (since I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen it), consider the discipline of the LORD your God, his greatness, his mighty hand and his outstretched arm.
- Deut 13:3. you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.
- Deut 29:1[28:63]. These are the words of the covenant that the LORD commanded Moses to make with the people of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant that he had made with them at Horeb.
- Deut 30:1–10. And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, ² and return to the LORD your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul, ³ then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. ⁴ If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there he will take you. ⁵ And the LORD your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it. And he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. ⁶ And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. ⁷ And the LORD your God will put all these curses on your foes and enemies who persecuted you. ⁸ And you shall again obey the voice of the LORD and keep all his commandments that I command you today. ⁹ The LORD your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your womb and in the fruit of your cattle and in the fruit of your ground. For the LORD will again take delight in prospering you, as he took delight in your fathers, ¹⁰ when you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes that are written in this Book of the Law, when you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

- Deut 32:6, 12, 26, 34. Do you thus repay the LORD, you foolish and senseless people? Is not he your father, who created you, who made you and established you? ... ¹² the LORD alone guided him, no foreign god was with him.... ³⁴ Is not this laid up in store with me, sealed up in my treasuries? ... ²⁶ There is none like God, O Jeshurun, who rides through the heavens to your help, through the skies in his majesty.
 - Deut 33:27–29. The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms. And he thrust out the enemy before you and said, “Destroy.” ²⁸ So Israel lived in safety, Jacob lived alone, in a land of grain and wine, whose heavens drop down dew. ²⁹ Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD, the shield of your help, and the sword of your triumph! Your enemies shall come fawning to you, and you shall tread upon their backs.
2. As God, he is jealous for his people’s love (4:24; 5:9; 32:16, 21) and deserves their whole-hearted, life-encompassing, community-impacting, exclusive commitment (6:4–5).
- Deut 4:24. For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.
 - Deut 5:9. You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me.
 - Deut 6:4–5. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.
 - Deut 32:16, 21. They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods; with abominations they provoked him to anger.... ²¹ They have made me jealous with what is no god; they have provoked me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are no people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.
3. As God, he is by nature both good and just (32:4), and he must hate and punish sin (7:4; 8:19–20; 9:8, 19–20, 22; 29:20; 31:17), detesting all influences that subvert his rule and all satisfactions that do not ultimately result in humility, gratitude, and praise (7:25–26; 12:31; 32:16).
- Deut 7:4, 25–26. for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly.... ²⁵ The carved images of their gods you shall burn with fire. You shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them or take it for yourselves, lest you be ensnared by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God. ²⁶ And you shall not bring an abominable thing into your house and become devoted to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest and abhor it, for it is devoted to destruction.
 - Deut 8:19–20. And if you forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish. ²⁰ Like the nations that the LORD makes to perish before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God.
 - Deut 9:8, 19–20, 22. Even at Horeb you provoked the LORD to wrath, and the LORD was so angry with you that he was ready to destroy you.... ¹⁹ For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure that the LORD bore against you, so that he was ready to destroy you. But the LORD listened to me that time also. ²⁰ And the LORD was so angry with Aaron that he was ready to destroy him. And I prayed for Aaron also at the same time.... ²² At Taberah also, and at Massah and at Kibroth-hattaavah you provoked the LORD to wrath.
 - Deut 12:31. You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way, for every abominable thing that the LORD hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.
 - Deut 29:20. The LORD will not be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of the LORD and his jealousy will smoke against that man, and the curses written in this book will settle upon him, and the LORD will blot out his name from under heaven.
 - Deut 31:17. Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide my face from them, and they will be devoured. And many evils and troubles will

come upon them, so that they will say in that day, ‘Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?’

- Deut 32:4, 16. The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he....¹⁶ They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods; with abominations they provoked him to anger.
4. God’s people must tenaciously battle against all forms of idolatry (5:7; 6:14), for the preeminent one from whom, through whom, and to whom all things exist demands respect (Rom 11:36; Col 1:16).
- Deut 5:7. You shall have no other gods before me.
 - Deut 6:14. You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you.
 - Rom 11:36. For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.
 - Col 1:16. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

IX. Guided Reading for Deuteronomy:

A. Points of Focus:

1. Key chapters: 4, 5–11, 28–32
2. Key persons: Yahweh, Moses, Israel
3. Key places: Plains of Moab

B. Questions:

1. What three terms does Moses most often use to describe Israel?
2. In Deut 4:5–8, what is it about Israel that distinguishes her from the nations and that will draw the nations’ attention? See also 26:16–19; 28:9–10.
3. Deut 4:25–31 anticipates three distinct eras in the history of Israel’s relationship with Yahweh. What are they?
4. According to Deut 7, why did Yahweh set his love on Israel and choose her from all the nations of the earth? Why does Deut 9 say Yahweh is going to give Israel the promised land?
5. According to Deut 8, what must Israel be careful not to let happen when they arrive in the promised land?
6. In Deut 17, what qualifications were given for any king that would rule over Israel? What responsibilities did he have before God and the people?
7. In one sentence or less, clarify what Deut 28 says will bring about the blessings and curses of the covenant, respectively? According to Deut 30:15–18, what two options are being presented to Israel?
8. What two “P” words synthesize the nature of all blessing?
9. Substantiate from Deuteronomy why Moses would have agreed with Paul that the old covenant bore a ministry of condemnation (2 Cor 3:9).