

SESSION #5 (10 Nov 09)

I. INTRODUCTION & REVIEW:

Outline

1:6-4:40	1 st Exposition of the Torah = motivation to obey from past gracious actions of Yahweh (“remember” = biblical admonition = Communion → Cnty a historical religion with a inconstant revelation → reliance upon Scripture, not mysticism)
1:6-3:29	Historical analysis of Israel from Sinai to the Transjordanian victories
1:6-18	From Sinai to Kadesh
1:6-8	Command to depart Sinai

Theophany on Mt. Sinai (Exod 3:1-14)

Exod 3:2 burning bush. . .not consumed. . .

Visual, objective, historical revelation of the very nature of God Himself.

(1) Fire = Presence of God throughout the Bible (e.g., pillar of fire)

(2) UNburning bush → fire isn't dependent upon fuel!! YET the fire is WITH the bush = Presence of God with His people

Question #1: *isn't the bush = Israel?* That's one aspect of the :”visual aid” (3:7 “surely seen”). But the visual aid itself also caught Moses' eye due to the independency from a need for fuel (3:2).

Doctrine:

- (1) **aseity** = absolute independence of God from everything, even from the act of creating. Illustration: *photograph* reveals something about the original but never IS the original---Auca Indian massacre; paganism's continuity of being → dependency such as Paul denied in **Acts 17:25**;
- (2) **condescension** = God comes down to our level & engages in a personal relationship such as the Abrahamic Covenant

aseity + condescension = the *basis of biblical faith* vs. all paganism—ancient and modern

- denies that human language is incapable of expressing divine revelation
- denies that knowledge of God is impossible
- denies the absolute authority of man's finite intellect
- therefore denies the validity of human speculation, particularly from Immanuel Kant down to present-day post-modernism

Question #2: *isn't aseity altered by God's love for us?* Aseity means that God is metaphysically independent and self-contained. His condescension in entering into contracts obligates Him ethically but does not compromise His aseity..

Deut 1:6-8

1:8 I have set the land before you. . .go in and possess it. . .which I swore to your fathers.

God sovereignly gives real estate to Israel with specific contractual boundaries = reminded of the LAND promise of the Abrahamic Covenant

II. BLESSINGS OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT HAVE BEGUN TO APPEAR.

////// SLIDE #1 //////////

Abrahamic Covenant unconditional (traditional conservative interpretation) & confirmed by similarity to ANE “Royal Grant”.

Gen. 12:1-3; 15:5-21; 17:1-14; 22:15-18 steps in “setting it up”

→ irrevocable → future for both the PEOPLE of Abraham AND the nation → premillennial eschatology (vs “replacement theology” or “supersessionism” that hold that the Abrahamic Covenant is conditional.)

////// SLIDE #2 //////////

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1:6-3:29	Historical analysis of Israel from Sinai to the Transjordanian victories
1:6-18	From Sinai to Kadesh
1:6-8	Command to depart Sinai – the blessing of the LAND re-announced
1:9-18	Appointment of judges – the blessing of the PEOPLE pointed to

1:9 at that time = **Exod 18:13-27** PRIOR to the “move out” order in **1:5-6**

→ “that time” = post-Exodus history

At Mt. Sinai, Israel became a NATION, but before that it had become a PEOPLE.

1:10 stars of heaven = quote of Abrahamic Covenant in **Genesis 15:5** → fulfillment = assurance that God keeps His promises

1:11 blessed as He has promised you

1:12-15 bear burdens and your complaints (riv)

Leadership has to delegate responsibility

(1) qualifications given—

(2) **Ex 18:13-16** → pre-10 commandments’ statutes

(3) community selects the deputy judges

1:16 judges=shoterim;

brother. . .stranger. . .

////// SLIDE #3 //////////

Social Justice	
Law of Yahweh (Mosaic)	Code of Hammurapi
2 classes—Jews and resident aliens	3 classes—nobles, citizen, slaves
Based upon Abrahamic Covenant	Based upon social standing

Code of Hammurapi—1700 BC, 6' stele in the Louve in Paris discovered in 1906 (showing that writing was no problem in Moses' day, contrary to old higher criticism)
Law of Yahweh based upon inherited perpetual land grants—could not sell it permanently = basic social security by supplying ground to be subdued (made productive).

- However, the grant was to the male who carried the name on the grant → vulnerable groups = widows and orphans
- Prophetic concern with 3 groups: widows, orphans, and resident aliens = lacked the security of real estate title

////// **SLIDE #4** ////

1:17 not show partiality [“recognize faces”]. . .

hear the small as well as the great [“as the small as the great you should hear”]

Biblical influence on law = equality under the law (ethical/judicial equality)

(distinguished from some artificial “equality” of talent, economic accomplishment, etc.).

concern for those of weaker social influence and prestige;

you shall not be afraid in any man's presence [“you should not accord special respect for the face of a man

for the judgment is God's

PRINCIPLES:

1. A crime is defined by the Lawgiver, not by the victim or the perpetrator or the court (cf **Ps 51:4**).
2. The source of all law is Elohim (this Exodus 18 incident PRECEDES the lawgiving of Exodus 20).
3. Elohim's attributes of righteousness and justice are the only sufficient basis for law (*closing address of Justice Robert Jackson at Nuremberg: “These men should be tried on this basis, on a higher law, a higher law that rises above the provincial and the transient.” Cited in The Warren-Flew Debate, National Christian Press, 1977, p 17.*)
(Martin Luther King, “*Letter From Birmingham Jail*” 1963: “One may well ask, ‘How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?’ The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I agree with St. Augustine that ‘an unjust law is no law at all.’ . . . I hope you are able to see the distinction I am trying to point out. In no sense do I advocate evading the law, as would the rapid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy.”)
4. These “laws and statutes” are resident deep within the human conscience (**Rom. 1:32; 2:14**). **SLIDE #5**////J. Budziszewski, What We Can't Not Know, cites this as “natural law”

“However rude it may be these days to say so, there are some moral truths that we all readily know—truths which a normal human being is unable not to know. They are a universal possession, an emblem of a rational mind, an heirloom of the family of man. That doesn't mean that we know them with unflinching perfect clarity, or that we have reasoned out their remotest implications: we don't, and we haven't.” p 19.

5. Jewish tradition of the “Noahide Commandments” that include 7 moral absolutes:

SLIDE #6////

Must be provision for the administration of justice (DI #4)

Must be no idolatry

Must be no blasphemy

Must be no sexual immorality

Must be no bloodshed

Must be no theft

Must be no eating of flesh torn from living animals

J. Budziszewski, What We Can't Not Know, p 225f.

6. The basis for impartiality is the revelation in our conscience, in human society's recollection of the Noahic Covenant, and in the Bible.
7. The counterfeit bases proposed by unbelief are subjective opinion or positive legal regulation by whatever power rules.

1:17 cont'd

The case that is too hard. . .bring to me. . .

Court appeal process: NOT by the plaintiffs or accused but by the deputy judges!
Deputy judges were told to be humble and not over-extend themselves by arrogantly assuming they could judge every case on its merits.

1:18 all the words which you should do at that time

Cf. **1:9** "at that time" = general period of post-Exodus history.

III. CONCLUSIONS

- Moses is motivating the 2nd generation to obtain the blessings of obedience by providing a basis for faith. Biblical faith requires the Word of God (meaning the historic revelation of God) as its object.
- **Deut 1:9-18** add to the motivation by recalling that Israel has already massively grown in population that validates the Abrahamic Covenantal promise of a great people (as "the stars of heaven" – **1:10**).
- **Deut 1:9-18** bears testimony to the only valid basis for social justice = revelation of God's character in conscience and humanity's collective memory of the Noahic Covenant.

Abrahamic Covenant	Royal Grant
Gen. 12:1-3 the divine call	Unconditional blessing by a superior to an inferior merely on the basis of the benefactor's good will and loyalty of the beneficiary
Gen. 15:5-21 the divine signing with an oath	
Gen. 17:1-14 the sign of the beneficiary	
Gen. 22:15-18 the divine confirmation	

1:6-4:40 1st Exposition of the Torah: motivation to obey from past gracious actions of Yahweh (biblical faith as sourced in historic revelation requires accurate historical memory)	
1:6-3:29 Narration of Israel's history from Sinai to the Transjordanian victories	
1:6-18	From Sinai to Kadesh
1:6-8	Command to depart Mt. Sinai recalling the LAND promise to Abraham
1:9-18	Appointment of deputy judges because of the PEOPLE promise to Abraham

Social Justice	
Law of Yahweh (Mosaic) (ca. 1500-1400 BC)	Code of Hammurapi (ca. 1700 BC)
2 classes—Jews and resident aliens	3 classes—nobles, citizen, slaves
Based upon Abrahamic Covenant	Based upon social standing

"You should not recognize faces in *mishpat*;
as the small one as the large one you shall hear;
do not accord special respect to the face of a man;
because the *mishpat* is of *Elohim*"
Deut. 1:17a-d

• "However rude it may be these days to say so, there are some moral truths that we all readily know—truths which a normal human being is unable not to know. They are a universal possession, an emblem of a rational mind, an heirloom of the family of man. That doesn't mean that we know them with unfailing perfect clarity, or that we have reasoned out their remotest implications: we don't, and we haven't." J. Budziszewski, What We Can't Not Know p 19.

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- J. Budziszewski, What We Can't Not Know, p 225f.