

2009 Deuteronomy Series

A Study of the Character of God as He has Revealed Himself vs.
the Substitute Idols of our Neo-Pagan Culture

Ceremony of Contractual Renewal – Part 1

Fellowship Chapel

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SESSION #60 (25 Oct 11)

Deut 27:1-26

I. INTRODUCTION & REVIEW

1:1-5	Introduction to God's spokesman, the 1 st Prophet Moses
1:6-4:40	1 st Exposition of the Torah = <i>motivation</i> to obey from (1) <u>past gracious actions</u> of Yahweh and (2) sovereign <u>destiny</u> of the nation (<u>future gracious actions</u> of Yahweh)
4:41-49	Editorial comment on context of 2 nd Exposition of the Torah
5:1-26:19	2 nd Exposition of the Torah = <i>proper response</i> to Yahweh in heart and soul
27:1-29:1	3 rd Exposition of the Torah = <i>inauguration of the covenant</i> in the land

Chapters 27-28 that present the protocols that establish the actual implementation of the contractual agreement between Israel and God for the second generation after they enter the promised land.

Review of the structure of this book:

1:1-5 Description of the historic situation

Important biblical concepts:

- God's revelation is historic –show-and-tell that engages [reason] and [sentient experience] —NOT pagan irrational mysticism (no basis for ultimate reason) or abstract ideals independent of historical experience.
- God's *omniscience revealed in the coherence of His verbal revelation throughout the centuries* supplies me *assurance* that existence has great [reasons] behind it (**Rom. 8:28**); it is not a meaningless jumble (as both ancient pagans and their modern counterparts speaking with a pseudo-scientific vocabulary assert there is no ultimate rationality to existence).
- God's faithful integrity (*love, immutability, holiness*) and power (*omnipotence*) revealed in His record of compliance to His contractual promises supplies me with *confidence* that He is [able] to be my father (**Eph. 3:20**).

1:6-4:40 Motivation to love (=be loyal to) Yahweh

1:6-3:29 Past 40 years' *lessons* in contractual relationship with Yahweh

4:1-40 Israel's unique place in human history – the “disruptor” of the paganizing trend downward in Noahic civilization

4:41-49 Editorial note to explain the pre-conquest setting of Moses' explanation of the Torah to the –lay people.

Transition to next section:

27:1-2 when you cross over

29:1 these are the words. . .besides the contract which He made in Horeb. . .

Preparation for the nation to —sign in 40 years later, having heard the history of their parents' generation.

II. THE OFFICIAL CEREMONY OF CONTRACTUAL RENEWAL AT SHECHEM (27:1-26) Will be executed at Shechem in **Josh 8**

A. Site Preparation (27:1-8)

Elaborate construction for this ceremony of “signing on” → importance of liturgy (protocols) (analogous to baptism, communion, **Rom 12:1** for this age).

27:1 elders

Elders brought into the first line of leadership since Moses won't be at the ceremony.

27:2 whitewash. . .lime

Temporary set-up patterned after Egyptian “technology”—“erasable memory”

27:3 all the words

Apparently the entire law!!

27:4 Mt. Ebal

Overlooked site of 1st altar of Abraham (**Gen. 12:6-7**). Moses presumes they will conquer enough land to occupy this specific location.

27:5 stones. . .not use. . .iron

Cf. **Ex 20:25** no tool for any altar

27:6-7 offerings. . .rejoice. . .

Always blood atonement to approach God, but end result was to rejoice in the fellowship with God

27:8 all the words. . . .write plainly. . . .

Emphasis upon the Word of God and its understanding in the minds of all the people. . . .

Paganism, having no verbal revelation, relies upon [mysticism].

Paganism, having no transcendent God, elevates human authorities, an elite, that has access to the “secrets”—no concept of [universal] education.

B. Liturgy of Invoking Contract-Enforcement (27:9-26)

Very clear *contractual* relationship with formal renewal ceremony.

Reveals rationality to history that apparently led, after the Exile, to worldwide reforms.

- Rationality = predictable and understandable patterns in our existence.
- BUT the cause-effect was primarily [ethical], not a “neutral machine-like rationality”.

27:9 take heed (= “shut up and listen to this”)

Emphasis here on mental focus and concentration—furthest thing from mysticism!!

have become. . .

Imminent shift here with the invasion.

All the book of instruction on the eve of the invasion and seizure of the land has equipped them.

27:10

voice of Yahweh. . .which I command you. . .

Inspiration of Scripture that equates God's words with His prophets' words, a profoundly controversial claim in the world that separates epistemologies of unbelief and belief.

27:11-13 Mount Gerizim. . .Mount Ebal. . .

Cf. **11:26-30**.

Gerizim . . . All true sons of Jacob by his wives, Leah and Rachael

Ebal . . . Jacob's first son, sons-by-handmaids, his last son. The Mt. of cursings is where the limed-stone tablets will be erected.

27:14 Levites

A triangle formation: looking toward Mt G, Mt. E, with Levites in front (**Josh 8:33**).

say to each man of Israel. . .

This is a “loyalty oath” to Yahweh that is male-dictatory upon each one; this ceremony will explain Paul’s theology in the NT.

Each curse is against “hidden” sins—sneaky ones done out of public site → directed at the heart allegiance, not enforced by civil authority.

27:15 cursed

Trace this word back through the Bible: cursed in Satan and the environment (**Gen. 3**), Canaanites (**Gen. 9:25**), ante-Semitism (**Gen. 12:3**), **Rev. 22:3** no more. It’s equivalent to the expression “to hell with”.

Idol. . .sets it up in secret

Begins with essential truth about God—sin fabricates notions about God to relieve us of our ultimate responsibility toward Him (like contemporary notion that there is no “hell”).

all. . . amen. . .

Oath of heart allegiance with God’s judgment as the alternative.

27:16 treats with contempt [HEB: treats lightly (contrasting with treats heavily—i.e., with honor)]

Not enforceable by civil authority, but note **Deut 16:18-18:22** that dealt with the implications of the 5th commandment (positions of authority in the nation—priests, judges, kings).

27:17 moves landmark

Cf. **Deut 19:14** in section on implications of the 6th commandment (issue of safeguarding evidence for just judicial proceedings). Also obviously a violation of the 8th commandment (disinheriting a neighbor in a sneaky way is still theft).

27:18 misleads a blind person

Cf., **Lev 19:14**. Sneaky cruelty against one made in God’s image. Would apply to taking advantage of anyone’s weakness.

27:19 perverts justice due the stranger, orphan, widow. . .

Cf. **Deut 16:19** under the 5th commandment again—not honoring the authority figures.

27:20 father’s wife

Step-mother or concubine (like Reuben in **Gen. 35:22**). Violation of 5th and 7th commandment implications.

27:21 animal

Bestiality.

Dennis Prager, a conservative Jewish commentator in his article “Why Judaism Rejected Homosexuality”

“When Judaism demanded that all sexual activity be channeled into marriage, it changed the world. It is not overstated to say that the Torah’s prohibition of non-marital sex made the creation of Western civilization possible. Societies that did not place boundaries around sexuality were stymied in their development. The subsequent dominance of the Western world can largely be attributed to the sexual revolution initiated by Judaism, and later carried forward by Christianity.

The revolution consisted of forcing the sexual genie into the marital bottle. It ensured that sex no longer dominated society, heightened male-female love and sexuality and began the arduous task of elevating the status of women.

By contrast, through the ancient world, and up to the recent past in many parts of the world, sexuality infused virtually all of society. Human sexuality, especially male sexuality, is utterly wild. Men have had sex with women and with men; with little girls and young boys; with a single partner and in large groups; with total strangers and immediate family members; and with a variety of domesticated animals. There is little, animate or inanimate, that has not excited some men sexually.

The revolutionary nature of Judaism's prohibiting all forms of non-marital sex was nowhere more radical, more challenging to the prevailing assumptions of mankind, than with regard to homosexuality. Indeed, Judaism may be said to have invented the notion of homosexuality, for in the ancient world sexuality was not divided between heterosexuality and homosexuality. That division was the Bible's doing. Before the Bible, the world divided sexuality between penetrator (active partner) and penetrated (passive partner).

To appreciate the extent of the revolution wrought by Judaism's prohibiting homosexuality, and demanding that all sexual interaction be male-female, it is first necessary to appreciate just how universally accepted, valued and practiced homosexuality has been throughout the world. The one continuous exception was Jewish civilization—and a thousand years later, Christian civilization. 'None of the archaic civilizations prohibited homosexuality per se,' notes professor of sociology, Dr. David E. Greenberg.

Judaism alone declared homosexuality wrong. And it said so in the most powerful and unambiguous language it could: 'Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind; it is an abomination.' (Lev. 18:22) 'and if a man lie with mankind, as with womankind, both of them have committed an abomination.' (Lev. 20:13)"

27:22-23 lies with

27:24 attacks. . .secretly

Continued emphasis upon the "sneakiness" of these acts out of range of civil government enforcement.

27:25 takes a bribe. . .

Hired "hit man"—violation of the 6th commandment.

27:26 cursed. . . does not confirm all the words of this law.

Cf. 2 Kings 23:3, 24.

III. CONCLUSION

Gal 3:10-12 applies this Scripture to the matter of individual salvation.

OT saints had to trust Yahweh's promises (**Ps 143:2**).

Gal 3:13-14 Christ became a curse (citing **Deut. 21:23**)

To enter into a reconciled relationship with this God, there must be "outside help"!