

2009 Deuteronomy Series

A Study of the Character of God as He has Revealed Himself vs.
the Substitute Idols of our Neo-Pagan Culture
Israel's Present Moment of Decision and the Future Consequences

Fellowship Chapel

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SESSION #66 (6 Dec 11)

Deut 29:10-29

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
29:2-30:20	4 th Exposition of the Torah = prophetic fore view of <i>covenant performance</i>
29:2-29:29	Israel's past, present and (near) future

Chap 29:

Closing exposition features more emphasis upon the future working out of Israel's history. Imperative that we understand the implications of Deuteronomy's view of history—totally collides with pagan unbelief and secular attempts to make sense of history

- Ultimate Personality over all history vs. Impersonal Fate/Chance
- Ultimate responsibility vs. Ultimate victimhood
- Ultimate meaning vs. Ultimate meaninglessness
- Ultimate ethical goal vs. Ultimate metaphysical dissolution
- Establishes the rationale for the rest of the Old Testament
- 900-year theocratic experience → public demonstration that later would spread across the globe giving mankind heightened confidence that it was possible to think about the basic questions of life

II. ISRAEL'S PAST, PRESENT, AND (NEAR) FUTURE (29:2-29)

Moses appeals to the heart and mind to live as though this view of history is true. Not based upon feeling or mob pressures.

A. Israel's Past (29:1-9)

29:1 covenant = contract

God's relationship with man is contractual as all *real* relationships are, beginning with marriage. Any unbounded relationship is very superficial and casual, e.g., "living together" couples, USA with a judicial oligarchy that constantly alters the meaning of the Constitutional text.

Principle: Personal relationships entail trust, and trust requires trustworthiness plus recognition of that trustworthiness; a contract spells out measurable details that expose character (whether trustable or not) so that it can be perceived.

29:2 you have seen

Eyewitness to history = basis for trusting any person.

29:9 therefore keep the words of this contract

The “words” are Moses’ 3rd exposition.

that you may prosper

God is “living” so He controls history, not man.

The call is to prosper financially and physically in the Presence of God—contrary to

Socialism with its class-warfare doctrine of envy.

Such prosperity expands the capability for dominion (**Gen. 1:26-28**).

B. Israel’s Present (29:10-19)

Choices involve consequences--in this view of history there is an ethic of personal [responsibility]. *Freedom of choice entails responsibility for the consequences*: this is why freedom is under attack everywhere.

- Western secularism blames outcomes on one’s genes, one’s parents, one’s family’s
- Islam opposes freedom of choice by Sharia that capitally punishes anyone choosing to leave Islam.
- Marxism/Socialism destroys freedom by comprehensive government controls.

29:10 all

Every individual will be responsible to enter into this “2nd” contract with Yahweh. **elders... shoterim**

This is the 4th stage of Israel’s polity involving Yahweh, Torah, Moses, Shoterim (appointed national leaders from the tribal elders), sarim, elders.

29:11 little ones. . .wives. . .stranger (shows that “resident aliens” submitted to the revelation of the theocracy). . .[slaves]

29:12 that you may enter into covenant. . .which Yahweh your God makes. . .

Contract renewal [initiated] and designed by God.

29:13 that He may establish you as a people. . .as He has sworn to your fathers. . .

Progressive fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant.

29:14-15 not with you alone. . .who is not here with us. . .

Continuity from generation to generation → a forward look to

history. Gary North:

“God was also setting before them *a theory of history that was both linear and progressive*. They could extend the covenant over centuries. . . . Israel’s future would not be cyclical. They would not inevitably lose whatever God had

given them. . . . God was giving them a crucial tool of dominion: *long-term future orientation*. He was giving them the psychological basis of an upper-class mentality: *faith in the future*. It is this mentality that provides men with a way out of poverty. . . . Neither linear time nor the concept of compound growth was common in any other ancient

society. The concept of cyclical time was all-pervasive in the ancient world. What God was telling Israel was that *continuity through time is provided by the covenant itself*.”

29:18 not be among you. . .whose heart turns away [Heb: participle → one’s character] to go and serve the gods of these nations

The “serve other gods” expression means to live [outside of the theocracy] which was organized under the Word of God, i.e., policies for every detail of life were [under the

direct authority of Yahweh]_. He was physically present in His “sacred space”—the tabernacle to which Israelites had access via revealed protocols.

Josh 26:14_[Pre-Abrahamic Semites in Mesopotamia]

1 Sam 26:19 _[David forced to live in Philistia]_

Jer. 16:13 _[Israel forced to live in exile]_

Every society and people group has a religious commitment, a worldview, which determines the answers to the three basic questions.

Question	Theocratic Answer	Pagan Answer
Metaphysical	Creator/creature distinction	Continuity of Being
Epistemological	God’s revelation necessary	Man’s speculation necessary but vulnerable to demonic deceptions
Ethical	God’s holiness	Subjective like/dislike

29:16-17 saw their idols. . . wood and stone and silver and gold

2nd generation was directly familiar with idolatry.

- Mention of materials is common in the Bible in order to contrast their man-produced, dependency with the unseen, self-sufficient Creator.
- Today the “gods” are similarly produced by man’s speculations: Nature as “mother” through the idea of cosmic evolution; Man as evolution’s Self-consciousness.
- Rulers in the Bible are called “gods” and “principalities” thus blurring the distinction between the religious concept of deity with the political reality of emperor worship (cf. Exod. 7:1; Ps 82:1-8)

Jeremiah’s/God’s debate with the Jews that had fled to Egypt 900 years later during the exile period.

Jer. 44:7-19

44:7-9 why. . . burning incense to other gods. . .forgotten. . .

In Egypt they continue their pagan idolatry.

44:12 they shall be consumed

Yahweh will discipline His people even if they live outside the land.

44:15-16 wives. . .we will not listen. . .

Possibly the ancient, ubiquitous “Mother-Child” cult (see Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*; Hislop was probably the last of the euhemerist historians who were influential from 1700-1800. They interpreted ancient mythology as distorted stories of ancient men.

44:17-18 our kings. . .cities of Judah. . .stopped. . .lacked everything

Subjective interpretation of Israel’s history. It was Josiah’s reforms back to the Word of God that was the “cause” of the exilic disaster.

44:19 wives. . .without our husband’s permission?

Principle: Here is an example of a pagan theme that was common throughout the world in ancient times, the Mother-Child cult, an example of a common idea demonically motivated, Cf.

1 Cor. 10:18-22).

29:18 root bearing bitterness

Source of idolatry: failure to give thanks. “Root” points to the principle that it only takes a few people to set off a movement (cf. **Heb. 12:15**).

29:19 blesses himself in his heart. . . I shall have peace even though I follow the dictates of my heart

Continues to focus on the inner [cause] of idolatry: an attempt to re-engineer reality to escape the consequences of choices.

C. Israel's Future (29:20-29)

29:20 curse that is written in this book

Can't escape into a fantasy world that is immune to divinely designed consequences.

blot out his name. . .

removal from history and participation in the Mosaic contract

29:21 separate him from the tribes

loss of inheritance and temporal blessing

29:22-25 Yahweh overthrew in His anger and wrath. . .Why has Yahweh done this?

Pagans knew of Yahweh (cf. **Jeremiah 39**) and ask why did Israel's God let this happen?

forsaken the contract

Relationship behavior monitored by a contract ALWAYS.

gods they did not know

No historic revelation, no record of accomplishment, no contract

gods that He had not given them

Cf. **4:19; 32:8** reference to post Babel dispersion throughout the globe.

29:26-28 as it is this day.

Deut so accurate that liberal higher critics have insisted it must have been written after the fact. Hence the classic Wellhausen view: JEDP

29:29 secret things

God's omniscience!! Limits to human knowledge and to seek beyond those limits is to invite demonic influence (cf. **Gen 3:5**).