

## Dr. Ted Hildebrandt, OT History, Lit., and Theology, Lecture 16

Copyright © 2020, Ted Hildebrandt

This is Dr. Ted Hildebrandt in his Old Testament History, Literature and Theology course, lecture number 16, on Balaam and the book of Numbers and the Covenant renewal and the land concepts in the book of Deuteronomy.

### A. Quiz Preview [0:00-2:28]

Class, let's get started. I am going to pass these attendance sheets around. For Thursday what are you guys working on? The book of Judges and Ruth. There is no *Our Father Abraham*; there is an article and some memory verses. Article, memory verses, Judges, and Ruth, know the stories and all that. So that will be coming for Thursday.

Today, we are going to finish the book of Numbers and get into the book of Deuteronomy, and then we will have one more class on Deuteronomy. I think that is where we are. Welcome to Old Testament class, and let's have a word of prayer, and then we will get into it.

*Father, we thank you for your goodness to us and especially in New England in the fall, it is just amazing the beauties that are outside. Father, you have given us eyes to see the multitude of colors of the leaves changing. You have given us noses to smell the great smells of the fall, and the falling needles, and ears to hear and friendships on this campus to share. We thank you for your many goodnesses as your grace is extended to us every day. We thank you for the way that you were gracious to the Israelites and disciplined them but yet brought them in your loyal love into your fold. We thank you that you are the great shepherd of Israel, and that you love your sheep and we also are your sheep, Father, the sheep of your pasture. We thank you for Christ, our great shepherd, the good shepherd and it is in his name we pray, amen.*

Let's jump in. We are going to fly through this because the other class is a little bit ahead of us. So we are going to kind of move through this a little more

quickly.

### **B. Lessons of Numbers [2:29-7:48]**

Last time we were talking about the book of Numbers and we were working with the freewill/predestination debate on whether God can change his mind and whether he did change his mind when he said that he was going to destroy Israel, Moses prays and then 8 verses later, he does not destroy them as he said there in the beginning. There are certain lessons from the book of Numbers that I want to clock through. This is what I see from the book of Numbers: that one person can make a difference. Moses prays and the nation is spared. So one person can make a difference. Moses makes a difference for the people.

Prayer changes things. Prayer matters. I don't view prayer as just something we do to obey what God has commanded us, so that we pray just to obey. But no, we pray because we have things on our hearts. We want God to interact with us in a certain way. Moses prayed and God's wrath backed off and God relented. *Naham*--he relented of what he was going to do. So that is important.

In the book of Numbers, you've got a contrast between Israel's faithlessness (Israel is always wanting to go back to Egypt, Israel is always complaining to God), and God who is faithful. So God is shown to be faithful and Israel is shown to be faithless. The faithlessness of Israel is contrasted with the faithfulness of God. That is another big theme in the book of Numbers here.

Forgiveness and yet consequences: We are in the book of Numbers and God says, "I have forgiven them, Moses, as you asked me to do." And yet there were still consequences. It is an interesting thing, forgiveness yet there can still be consequences that follow—40 years in the wilderness.

This is a response to one of the questions that we were wrestling with at the end: Is God dynamic or static? What I tried to suggest in the book of Numbers and elsewhere in the Old Testament is that God is dynamic, not static. He interacts with his people, he goes back and forth and he listens to Moses' prayer and

interacts with it. He is relationally interactive with Moses and with his people. God responds (I guess that is another way of saying it). He is not just the initiator who says, "I am going to do it this way, because I decided to do it this way, and this is the way I am going to do it." He responds to their interaction.

Complaint versus lament: We made a distinction between complaint and lament. Let me just make this distinction again. I am not sure that I was real clear on it the first time. Complaint and lament can use exactly the same words. You know, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" "How long, O Lord, will you forget me, forever?" They both can use very strong words, but complaint is a movement away from God that says basically, "God, how long will you forget me? I am out of here, I do not want you anymore." So complaint is a movement away from God with the expressing of those words. Lament is a wrestling with God, saying, "God, please...", "My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?" ("Do not forsake me!"). So a lament is a movement towards God, a complaint is a movement away from God, often using the same words. They are very strong words, but one is a movement away and the other is a movement towards.

These are some big themes that I see out of the book of Numbers and that is why I love the book of Numbers. I think it is a very theological book and it has a lot to teach us. Now here is one of my favorites out of the book of Numbers: This is a red heifer. Now you say, "Hildebrandt, that is not a heifer." It is supposed to be a picture of a red heifer. Sorry, this is the best I could do. It is a red cow, but this one is from Texas. Now you say, "Why do you get off on these red heifer things?" Israel, when they want to cleanse something, they start out with things that are not cleansed. How do they cleanse stuff? You cleanse with water and you cleanse with blood. For example, if the Jews are going to build the third temple (that will probably be World War III because there is a mosque on top of that platform or a shrine on top of the Dome of the Rock), but if the Jews build a temple, do they have to be able to purify the instruments that are there? They have

right now a seven-and-a-half-foot high gold menorah, I have seen it with my eyes. A seven and a half foot high good menorah is ready for the third temple. What happens? The Rabbis have approved it, but does that have to be purified by the blood of a red heifer? Do you know that in Israel, this is coming out of Numbers, chapter 19, now that they have a red heifer? They have a red heifer in Israel now; it is up in Galilee. Is that important for the Jewish people that they have a red heifer?

### **C. Balaam: Introduction** [7:49-13:22]

Now Balaam--I like this guy's name. It is kind of ominous. Why did the Moabites hire this Balaam? This is Numbers chapters 22-24 and these are some famous passages. You have probably heard of Balaam before. Why did the Moabites want to hire Balaam? What do Og and Sihon have to do with it? Og--imagine naming your kid that, the kid goes to school, "Hi, I'm Og." He was king of the Amorites and so was Sihon. Israel wipes these two kings out. What does that have to do with Balaam? The story does not connect up real well if you do not know some geography. Og and Sihon were Amorite kings, that Israel destroyed. What does that have to do with Balaam being called down from Mesopotamia?

Why did Balak (Balak was king of Moab) send all the way to Mesopotamia to get Balaam, a professional curser? Do you know what a curser is, a professional curser? A cursor: it kind of blinks on your screen and goes up and down. No, this is a guy who is actually paid to curse. He was a prophet who was paid to curse people. Why did they send all the way to Mesopotamia? Did the king not have his own professional cursers? Why did they send all the way to Mesopotamia? I want to look at that question. Were the Israelites the only ones who knew Jehovah? The Israelites were not the only ones who knew Jehovah as their God. We have seen Melchizedek already, and I want to suggest that Balaam knew Jehovah God. Balaam knows Jehovah God. He is a foreign prophet from Mesopotamia, and he knows Jehovah (Yahweh).

Having said that, this is the map. What is with this map? Here is the

country of Moab. This is a canyon; it is about 3,000 feet deep. It is almost as pronounced as the Grand Canyon. You walk up and it is straight down for about 3,000 feet. It is a 3,000-foot canyon that is a border. Between Wadi Arnon and Wadi Zered is the country of Moab. Who is down below Zered? Below Zered is Edom. Edom is whose descendants? Esau's descendants. What color is Esau? Red. What color are the rocks down in Edom? Red. There is a place called Petra here--the red rocks of Petra. There are Esau's descendants.

Moab is here. Moab is "from Abba." Whose descendants are Moab? Does anyone remember Lot? Remember Lot and his daughters in the cave? They produced Moab—"from father." By the way, you guys this week are reading about a Moabite woman. Her name is what? Ruth. That takes place right here. Ruth is a Moabitess. It's from Lot's descendants. This is Esau and this is Lot. Ammon is the other one of Lot's descendants. Moab and Ammon, are they related to Israel? Moab and Ammon (these are Lot's descendants) are related to Israel.

Did God allow Israel to attack the Moabites and the Ammonites? No, he did not. The Israelites come around Edom here and they go up the King's Highway here and they cannot attack Moab and they cannot attack Ammon. Those are their brothers. They came up here, but who is here? The Amorites. The Amorites are from the west, so the Israelites cut in here and defeat Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites. They take over this territory right here. Where is Moses going to die? Moses is going to die right here on Mt. Nebo. Does anybody remember how he goes up on the mountain and God shows him the land of Israel from Mt. Nebo. He overlooks the land. By the way, Jericho is right here. So they are going to cross over and take Jericho. Moses will die right here. Israel settles then in this land of Sihon. Why is the king of Moab afraid of Israel? Because they just conquered Sihon and Og and the Moabites are afraid now that the Israelites are going to come south down this way. So the king of Moab wants Balaam to curse Israel. Balaam is going to come up here and he is going to curse Israel. He is going to come from Mesopotamia, he is going to come down to Moab, and

Moab is going to pay him to curse Israel. Israel will be settled right here. That is kind of the geography of this situation with Balaam.

**D. Balaam's character: Is he good or bad?** [13:23-20:54]

Now what is the most famous story with this guy Balaam? Is Balaam good or bad? Actually in the book of Numbers was Balaam good or bad? In the book of Numbers I want to suggest to you that he is pretty good. Actually he gives four oracles. Does Balaam prophesy from God four times saying exactly what God told him to prophesy? Yes, he is good but then some of you said, "No, he is bad." The answer is that Balaam is the Judas of the Old Testament. Now by the way, was Judas good or bad? Well, you might say, "Judas betrayed Jesus. Judas was bad." But wait a minute, before Judas turned bad, was Judas good? Was Judas one of the twelve apostles that Jesus sent out to do miracles in his name? In Matthew 10, Judas was sent out and proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ and does miracles in the name of Jesus. By the way, do you remember when Jesus said, "One of you is going to betray me"? They all looked around and did any of them suspect Judas? No, they did not. So what I am saying is that Judas was one of the twelve apostles and then he turns bad. Balaam is very similar to that. He is good and then he turns bad. We are going to see that change in him. He is portrayed as both a saint and as a sinner. In the Old Testament he is portrayed as largely pretty good.

Let me read you a couple statements that Balaam makes in Numbers, chapter 22. Numbers 22:8 says this, "'Spend the night here,' Balaam said to them, 'and I will bring you back the answer the Lord gives me.'" Down to verse 13, "The next morning Balaam got up and said to Balak's princes, 'Go back to your own country, for the Lord has refused to let me go with you.'" Is Balaam faithful to what God told him? Yes, he is. He will not go.

What happens? Balak, the king of Moab, sends more guys and they come out to him and ask him to come down again. And verse 18 says this, "But Balaam answered them, 'Even if Balak gave me his palace filled with silver and gold, I could not do anything great or small to go beyond the command of the Lord my

God.” Is Balaam a Yahweh worshipper? He sure is. He says, “I can’t do that even for gold or for silver.”

By the way, this sets up what will be the greatest tension in Balaam’s life. This is the greatest tension: money or do God’s word. Proclaim God’s word or go after the money that is going to be the tension that Balaam feels. He will be faithful to God’s word, he gives four oracles that we will go over.

Now you say, “Wait a minute, but I thought Balaam was a bad guy?” Yes, he is a bad guy. If you go over to Jude in the New Testament, verse 11. Balaam is listed with the great apostates of all-time. Balaam was viewed as the Benedict Arnold, Lee Harvey Oswald, or somebody like that. Judas is a classic example from the Bible. Balaam is listed with Judas and the bad people and the same thing occurs in the book of Revelation. Balaam is viewed as a traitor. That is the word I want, “traitor.” Balaam is viewed as a traitor, one who served God initially and then turned away. In the New Testament, he will be a major bad guy. Did Balaam know God? Yes, he did. We have got a clear statement here that Balaam says, “I will only say what Yahweh, my God tells me.” So he did know God, he was not Jewish, but he still knew God.

What about his name? I love his name. Balaam, it means “destroyer”. So this guy comes down, his name means “destroyer.” It sounds almost like a 3-D game on a computer or something. Now while I say his name is funny, do you realize that they have actually found this guy’s name carved on a stone from 800 BC. It’s from a place called Deir Alla, which is in Jordan. It is interesting, the events with Balaam happen in Jordan and they have a found a stone with Balaam’s name on it from 800 B.C. in Jordan. It was found in 1967 and it was translated first in 1976. Is this fairly recent? Now check this out: this is actually a quote from this marker, “The misfortunes of the book of Balaam, son of Beor.” By the way, is Balaam, the son of Beor, our Balaam? Yes, he is. If it just said “Balaam,” there could be more than one Balaam, but it says “Balaam, son of Beor” and that is our guy. “A divine seer,” was that exactly who he was? “A divine seer was he.

The gods came to him at night and he beheld a vision in accordance with El's utterance. They said to Balaam, son of Beor..." and it goes on. Is this pretty incredible that they actually have records and this is not just fairytales? In other words, this guy has got a talking donkey, this has gotten to be a legend that is made up, right? Was the guy real? The guy is actually carved in as real from 800 B.C., so this is pretty incredible. You do not often get this kind of confirmation and this is just spectacular. By the way, you had to wait until 1967 for it to even be found and to be translated in 1976.

Balaam's major struggle is whether he is going to go with God's word or whether he is going to go with money. This is going to be his tension. Will this be some of our tension at various points of our lives, whether we are going to go for money or serve the Lord? This is a big tension that a lot of us have felt.

#### **E. Balaam and the Donkey** [20:55-26:43]

Now the donkey narrative: this is a classic passage. Does anybody remember having the tension? God says, "Okay, Balaam you can go with them." Then Balaam goes with them, and then all of a sudden this angel comes with this "lightsaber" sword and is about to take off his head. You say, "Wait a minute God, I thought you said he could go and then you try to kill him? What is with that?" God gives you permission. It is like a parent who takes back his word or something. What is going on? I think what is going on is that God said, "Balaam, you can go," but what was the one condition? "You've got to say exactly what I tell you." Balaam probably figured in his head, "Maybe I can make some money out of this. God told me to say this, but maybe I can say this other thing so I can make some money. Maybe I can have my cake and eat it too." I think Balaam is playing with these ideas and God is going to stop him in his tracks to warn him again, "You better say exactly what I tell you." So I think the donkey narrative is in there to slow the story down to warn Balaam to do exactly what God says.

So what happens with the donkey? "Balaam got up in the morning and saddled his donkey," (this is from chapter 22, verse 21), "and went with the

princes of Moab. But God was very angry when he went, and the angel of the Lord stood in the road to oppose him. Balaam was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. When the donkey saw..."

Now there is a play on words here. Balaam is a prophet, what is a prophet called? A prophet is called a "seer." Who sees here? Does the seer see the angel or does the donkey see the angel? The seer should see the angel, but who sees the angel? The donkey sees what the seer cannot. Do you see the irony there? The seer cannot see, but the donkey does see. There is a play on the word "seer."

"When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, she turned off the road into a field. Balaam beat her to get her back on the road. Then the angel of the Lord stood in a narrow path between two vineyards." By the way, vineyard walls are made out of what? Rocks, they make their walls out of rocks and that is a problem. There are two vineyard walls on both sides. "When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, she pressed close to the wall, crushing Balaam's foot against it. So he beat her again. Then the angel of the Lord moved on ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn, either to the right or to the left. When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, she lay down under Balaam, and he was angry and beat her with his staff."

Then what happens? The seer cannot see, but the donkey sees. What does the seer do? The seer speaks the word of God, right? The seer is a prophet; he speaks for God. Who speaks here? "Then the Lord opened the donkey's mouth, and she said to Balaam, 'What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?' Balaam answered the donkey, 'You have made a fool of me! If I had a sword in my hand..." Do you get the irony of this? Balaam says, "If I had a sword in my hand..." Who has a sword in their hand? The angel standing in front of him. Balaam says, "If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now." Do you get the irony? This angel with a sword is standing right there, and Balaam says, "If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now."

“The donkey said to Balaam, ‘Am I not your own donkey, which you have always ridden, to this day?’” The donkey starts reasoning with Balaam. “‘Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?’ ‘No’, he said. Then the Lord opened Balaam’s eyes...” (Now the seer can see.) “...and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with his sword drawn. So he bowed low and fell facedown.” What question does the angel of the Lord ask him now? This is beautiful. There is so much irony. “The angel of the Lord asked him, ‘Why have you beaten your donkey these three times?’” That is the same question that the donkey asked him. So the donkey says, “Why have you beaten me three times? I just saved your life.” Then angel says, “Hey, Balaam, why have you beaten your donkey these three times?”

By the way, does the angel care about the animals? Does God care about the animals? You need to look at the book of Deuteronomy sometimes it is really interesting with God’s care for animals. Here the donkey is getting beaten and the angel says “‘Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? I have come here to oppose you because your path is a reckless one before me. The donkey saw me and turned away these three times. If she had not turned away, I would certainly have killed you by now, but I would have spared her.’ Balaam said to the angel of the Lord, ‘I have sinned...’” And Balaam backs off and he says he will only do what God says. Balaam backs off when he sees this angel ready to lop off his head. So that is the story of the donkey. Can you see all of the irony in there?

Is this a great story to tell the kids? Kids like talking animals, so this is a great story for kids. It is a great story for us too because he is telling him to be faithful. So the donkey sees more than the seer. Then the donkey speaks better than the prophet. So the narrative is slowed down, warning Balaam do not go after money, go after the Lord.

#### **F. Balaam’s Four Oracles: First Oracle** [26:43-28:20]

Now Balaam is going to give four oracles here. What are oracles? Prophets give these little short poems or oracles where they speak the word of God. Balaam

is going to speak God's word. Balak, king of Moab, is going to get Balaam to try to come up and get in a place high enough to curse Israel. So Balak, king of Moab, is going to try to get Balaam to curse Israel and he is going to try it four times. So these are the four oracles. The first oracle starts in chapter 23, verse 7, and you get this statement: "Balak brought me from Aram, the king of Moab from the eastern mountains. 'Come,' he said, 'curse Jacob for me; come denounce Israel'" And then Balaam says, "How can I curse those whom God has not cursed?" Who curses? Does Balaam curse or is it God who has the power of the curse? Balaam says, "I can't curse those whom God hasn't cursed. Who can curse but Yahweh? Jehovah is the only one who can curse. I can't curse." So basically Balak King of Moab says, "I brought you all the way down here and you won't curse them for me." So the first oracle comes down, and Balaam will not curse. Instead of cursing Israel, he blesses them.

#### **G. Balaam's Four Oracles: Second oracle [28:20-36:21]**

Balak, king of Moab, moves Balaam around, put him in a different position and puts him on high "Mountain of Spies" and then Balaam comes down with this statement. He uttered this oracle, "'Arise, Balak, and listen; hear me, son of Zippor. God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?'" This is a very classic verse that God does not change, and actually, if you want another one that is kind of interesting, you go to I Samuel, chapter 15, verse 29. And it says. "'He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind.'" That is I Samuel 15.29. So you've got these two verses that say God does not change.

This raises a question, didn't we see God change when he said he was going to wipe out Israel and then Moses prays and God relents. So how do you work with this? How do you fit this that God does not change when we have seen God change? God relented from what he was going to do. How do you fit those together? What I want to suggest to you is that God is a promise keeper. If God

gives a promise, he will keep his promise. Who did God make promises to? Did God make promises to Abraham? To Isaac? To Jacob? Did we see the promise? We saw the promise of the land, the seed, and the blessing. It was given to Abraham and it was reiterated to Isaac and Jacob on down to the Israelites. This was the Abrahamic covenant that he made with Abraham. God keeps his promises. By the way, will that Abrahamic covenant be fulfilled a thousand years later? Will God keep his promise over a thousand years? Two thousand years? Yes. God keeps his promises, although it may take two thousand years sometimes, he keeps his promises. God's character is also another thing that does not change. God's character: his righteousness, his justice, his holiness, his compassion, his mercy, his grace and his wrath. God's character does not change.

Is every time you speak a promise to someone? Do you ever just goof around when you are talking with someone? You are just talking, but not making any promises. By the way, are there times when you make promises? When would be a big time in a person's life when they would make a big promise? At a wedding, when you promise "for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, 'til death do us part, etc." Those are big promises. People make big promises. Do people always keep their promises? That tends to be a problem. Does God keep his promises? So do we always promise or do we sometimes just play around and talk to people? Are we ever sarcastic? Do we ever say the exact opposite of what we mean? Yes, we do. Now is that evil to be sarcastic? No, it is not. Will God be sarcastic sometimes? Does anybody remember the prophet Elijah? Elijah is sarcastic. The prophets of Baal are bouncing around and Elijah says, "Hey, you guys, you better scream louder. Baal is on the pot, and he can't hear you. Yell louder, he can't hear you." Is Elijah mocking them out? Does Elijah believe in Baal? Elijah in I Kings 18, doesn't believe in Baal; he is mocking them out. So what I am saying is that do we have all different sorts of ways that we can communicate? Can sometimes we just express how we feel? Now is that a promise? So we can express our feelings, we can express our commitments and

promises, and we can express sarcasm and jokes. There are many ways that we can express ourselves.

What I am suggesting is that if we can express ourselves in different ways, can God also express himself in different ways? When God gives you a promise, he is going to keep his promise. But God can also communicate other ways and not everything he says is necessarily a promise. Sometimes he is just talking or doing something different. So God then is involved in creative possibilities. Sometimes there are possibilities, and sometimes God himself explores those possibilities. There are conditional statements with God. God says, “if you obey me, then this will happen and if you disobey me, then this will happen.” There are “if’s” with God. There are conditional statements with God. Therefore, the future is not all locked down.

Now certain things in the future are locked down. Jesus will be born in Bethlehem was locked down (Micah 5.2). But there are other things that are not locked down and depend on a person’s reaction or interaction with God. I want to get off of that free-will/predestination issue. By the way, is it okay to disagree in this class. The answer is, yes. Nobody knows how to solve this one. I have given you how I think about it, but you might think about it differently, which is totally fine. After I am all done thinking I have solved the problem, I realize how big of a fool I am. I have no idea what the mind of God is like. I work with Scripture as best as I can, and this book is all that I have got. Different people take different positions and I am not saying that I know any more than anybody else. I am just trying to wrestle with the various passages. It is okay to disagree on this one.

Are some of you guys from Presbyterian backgrounds? If I said, “reformed” would you know the word? That is actually how I grew up, in a Calvinistic reformed tradition. Is anybody Wesleyan? Does anybody do Salvation Army? Salvation Army and Wesleyan tradition are more of the free-will groups. Over my life, I have kind of migrated more from the reformed over to the free-will side. I am not saying that is right or wrong, that is just where I am, largely from

my study of Scripture, but I am not sure that I am right.

Now to totally shift gears, I want to focus on Balaam's four oracles. These are really neat, I think. Balaam mentions this in the second oracle, down in verse 21. Balaam says this, "No misfortune is seen in Jacob, no misery observed in Israel. The Lord their God is with them; the shout of the King is among them." He parallels these two things: he parallels, "The Lord their God is with them;" with "the shout of the King is among them." Who is Israel's king? Jehovah, their God, is their king. So in this passage Balaam says, "I can't curse them. Their king is Jehovah. Moses is not their king. Jehovah, Yahweh, is their king." That is in the second oracle.

#### **H. Balaam's Four Oracles: Third Oracle** [36:22-38:44]

Balak then takes over oracle three. They migrate over to a different place. Let me read a little bit of the oracle, "...the Spirit of God came upon him." By the way, is there the Spirit of God in the Old Testament? Yes, the Spirit of God came upon Balaam and he uttered his oracle. Here is the oracle, "The oracle of Balaam son of Beor, the oracle of one whose eyes sees clearly, the oracle of one who hears the words of God, who sees a vision from the Almighty, who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are opened." So he falls on the ground with his eyes open and then he gives this prophesy. That is what is called an "ecstatic utterance." The prophet is going to give a prophesy from God so he falls down to the ground, his eyes are open, and he gives this message from God. It is kind of like (now this is pretty weird), being slain in the Spirit. In the old days they used to have this thing, slain in the spirit, and this is kind of like that. The guy goes down and he gives this prophecy from God.

Now notice what he says in chapter 24, verse 7 concerning the king, "Water will flow from their buckets; their seed will have abundant water. Their king will be greater than Agag..." Agag is a human king. Is he saying that Jehovah, their king, will be greater than a human king? That would be a dumb statement, right? Of course, God is greater than Agag. Is this referring to a human king? "Their king

will be greater than Agag; their kingdom will be exalted.” So here in this third oracle, you have got a human king being referred to, a king that will be greater than King Agag. So what you have in the two oracles of Balaam is one oracle that refers to God as their king, and you have another oracle where he is referring to a human king who will be greater than Agag. So you have got these two kings that Balaam is referring to.

### **I. Balaam’s Four Oracles: Fourth Oracle** [38:45-41:49]

Guess what he is going to talk about in oracle four? Yes, a king. In oracle four he comes up with a king, and check this out in chapter 24, verse 17, “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near.” Is Balaam saying that he is a prophet? “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel.” Who usually carries a scepter? A king. A scepter is a metonymy for king. It is a figure of speech for a king. He says, “...a scepter will rise out of Israel. He will crush the foreheads of Moab...”

But notice here the parallels here between “a star will come out of Jacob” and “a scepter will rise out of Israel.” A scepter and a star are being paralleled. In what other place in the Bible (I think it is the only other one, outside of Revelation) are a star and a king associated? Yes, at Jesus’ birth. You had what happen at Jesus’ birth? The wise men came; the magi came. By the way, where were the magi from? They were from Mesopotamia. Where was Balaam from? Mesopotamia. How did the wise men know to follow that star and go to Jerusalem and ask, “Where is he who has been born King of the Jews?” Is it possible, (now this is total conjecture on my part), that Balaam’s (who is from Mesopotamia) four oracles went back to Mesopotamia with him and the wise men were reading the oracle of Balaam? Was this guy still a famous prophet 600 years later [ca. 800 B C], so that these prophesies were known? The magi see a star and know to go to Jerusalem to seek the King of the Jews. So what I am wondering is if this passage was used by the magi to find out about the star that led them to a scepter in Israel and that this refers to Jesus. Would this tie together the divine king and the human

king? This is all conjecture. I hold it with an open hand, but it seems to make sense to me. This is a really cool Messianic prophesy of Jesus, a star and a scepter. I just wonder if it came from Balaam to get the magi at Christ's birth.

**J. Why is Balaam portrayed positively in Numbers?** [41:50-48:45]

Now what do we know about Balaam here? In the first two oracles, I was trying to deal with issue of change, and then we went back to the second, third, and fourth oracles this time looking at what they say about the king. By the way, the oracles are long, about 10 verses each and I did not read through all those oracles. Why is Balaam portrayed so positively in the narrative? Balaam seems to give forth even a Messianic prophesy in these great oracles.

I think what is going on is there is a contrast in texts. There is a contrast between Israel's unfaithfulness and Balaam's faithfulness. Balaam, a pagan poet or prophet, is more faithful to God than Israel is. So there is a contrast between Balaam and Israel. The pagan prophet is more faithful to God at this point.

Can you look at different people in different ways? Is a person totally bad? Personally, I know the guy who has the most life sentences against him in Indiana. He holds the record in the state of Indiana with about 11 life sentences. I will call him by his first name, Dave. He is a friend of mine. Is Dave a totally bad man? Did Dave do some really, really bad stuff? Yes, he did. But is he totally bad? No, he is not. I know multiple murderers, and many of these guys are my friends. Yes, they did some things that were really bad, but there is some good there. Can you see some good in a bad person?

On the other hand, can you see some bad in a good person? What about your parents, brothers, and sisters? Do you know all the bad stuff about your brothers and sisters? What I am saying is you can choose how you look at a person.

The Balaam story is told with a positive light on Balaam initially, but then the story changes. By the way, when you get married, is your wife good or bad? Is your husband good or bad? What you are going to find out is that your husband or

your wife has some very positive things and some very negative things. If you focus on only the positive things (like in my case), you will think your wife is the most wonderful person in the world. What are the bad sides? She does not have any bad sides. I say that because this is recorded on tape, I have been married to her for 36 years and know that she has problems. Do I also have my own problems? She can look at my problems and that can be all that she chooses to see. If you keep looking at problems all the time, what happens to your marriage? It goes down the tube. She is probably the best thing that has ever happened to me in my life outside of Jesus Christ. What I am trying to say is that do you see the perspective you take? Think about your roommate, can you think negatively or positively? You can destroy the relationship if you only see one side of things.

Here is what Balaam did: in Numbers 25 it says, “While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, who invited them to sacrifices to their gods.” So not only is it sexual immorality, but it is also immorality in the context of pagan worship. That is what they did in ancient days: part of the worship was immorality. “The people ate and bowed down before these gods. So Israel joined in worshipping the Baal of Peor. The Lord’s anger burned against them.” Now all of a sudden, Israel is going to be cursed. Why is Israel cursed? Because they sinned.

Here is how it went down most likely. How did Israel get cursed? Balaam refused to curse Israel himself. He refused because God told him to say exactly what he told him. However, did Balaam know that the only way to get Israel cursed was to get them to sin? So it is believed that Balaam told the Moabites to put their women out there to seduce the men into the worship of these other gods. Israel would sin and God would judge them. Balaam set that up. Is that really evil? Yes, and Balaam set that up. You see a bit of that in chapter 25 and you see Balaam’s death in chapter 31. This is 6 chapters later, it says they killed all these people and they also “killed Balaam son of Beor with the sword.” So Israel catches Balaam and they kill him. Down in verse 16 it says, “They were the ones

who followed Balaam's advice and were the means of turning the Israelites away from the Lord in what happened at Peor, so that a plague struck the Lord's people." So Balaam gave the advice for these Moabite women to go out and seduce. Balaam was the guy behind that. Balaam is a Judas kind of figure. Is he going to go after money or the word of God? He proclaims the word of God, but then he goes after this money thing and offers his advice to get Israel cursed. God does curse them because they sinned. Why is Balaam portrayed so positively? Because of the contrast between Israel's unfaithfulness and his faithfulness. That is the book of Numbers.

### **K. Introduction to Deuteronomy as a Covenant Renewal** [48:46-50:36]

Now we are going to jump over and catch the book of Deuteronomy. This book of Deuteronomy is going to be a very interesting book. The book of Deuteronomy ends the Pentateuch or the Torah (the 5 books of Moses). Deuteronomy is a covenant renewal. What is a covenant renewal? God comes to Abraham and makes a covenant with him and says, "Abraham, you believed in me, I will give you the land, I will give you the seed. Your seed will multiply as the stars in heaven and you will be a blessing to all the nations of the earth." Is that covenant of Abraham reiterated to Isaac and Jacob? It is called "covenant renewal," when it passes down from one generation to the next. In Deuteronomy, we have got a generational passing between Moses and what? Moses is going to be up Mt. Nebo here overlooking Jericho because Moses cannot enter the Promised Land. Instead God is going to show him all the land. He cannot cross the Jordan River and he is going to die on Mt. Nebo. God is going to bury him and take care of him. Moses has got to give up the power and give it to Joshua. The book of Deuteronomy is this passing of the "baton" from Moses to Joshua. Now Moses is going to say, "Joshua, here is what is coming in the future. This is what the land is going to be like for you. I cannot go over there, but Joshua, you are going to take the next generation across." This is going to be a covenant renewal. By the way, you get that same type of thing with Elijah and Elisha. You get two

prophets, the mentor and the mentee.

**L. Deuteronomy major themes: Promise to possession, testing to resting**

[50:37-55:16]

Now facing change: I want to look first at the book of Deuteronomy and it has almost an existential way about its bigger meaning. So far in the Pentateuch, we have seen God's promise. God promises and promises. He promises to Abraham, he promises to Isaac, he promises to Jacob, and he promises to Moses. But do Abraham, Isaac and Jacob possess? Abraham possessed one piece of property out of the whole Promised Land. What was that? The cave of Machpelah, where he buried his wife Sarah. The only place that he ever owned in Israel was the place where he buried his wife. To this day, you can go to Hebron and go to the cave of Machpelah. I do not recommend it. The last time I was there, two women were shot dead a half-hour before we arrived. It is not a real good place to go especially when you do not know what you are doing. But Hebron has the cave of Machpelah. It is a very famous place although it is very dangerous today.

Testing versus resting. The Israelites were in the wilderness and it was a time of testing. No water, no food, no leadership, they said, no meat to eat. So God tested them in the wilderness for 40 years. Now when they go into the promised land, is their testing going to be over? The testing will be over and God says they will experience rest. Deuteronomy looks at this land and says, "You've been tested in the wilderness for 40 years. You guys are going in and you are going to find rest. That will be wonderful for you guys. You are not just going to get the promises, but you are going to possess what has been promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Transient versus permanence: you guys are college students, transient or permanent? Actually, I look at some of you, and probably "permanent." Wouldn't that almost sound like purgatory to be trapped in college for the rest of your life? Wouldn't that be like *Groundhog's Day*? Actually, if you want to get trapped in

college for the rest of your life, you know what you do? Become a professor and that's what I did. The honest truth is these are some of the best days of your life. I know that sounds really weird, but these college days are some of the best days of your life. You will look back on it and you'll miss these days. Transient versus permanent. Have you guys ever traveled, traveled and traveled?

This summer, my son just got back from Afghanistan? We drove out to see his brother. We drove the car 33 hours out to Denver, Colorado. After we got done in Denver, we went up to Yellowstone and through Idaho and all this. We couldn't even get a potato in Idaho, how sick is that? We drove back through South Dakota, through Minnesota, Wisconsin to say hello to Uncle David. Now he's been traveling in Afghanistan and been getting shot at almost every day. He comes back to America and we go on this trip across country. At a certain point did he want to be transient or did he just want to be home? Instead of sleeping in a foxhole, did he just want to sleep in his own bed? Is that a big deal? That was a big deal. So where we hit Wisconsin and he said, "Dad, I'm just tired of traveling. I just want to go home. Let's go home." So we drove for 26 hours straight. I don't recommend that. What I'm saying is have you ever had to travel, travel, and travel and you just long for a place where you can settle and be permanent where things aren't always in transition? So Israel is in the wilderness. They're what? They are wandering in the wilderness. Transient, transient, transient. Moses said that the transience is going to be over and you guys are going to settle. You are going to have your own property. You are going to have your own house, you are going to be able to settle in the land, settle down and be permanent there and even raise your family.

### **M. Space and Place** [55:17- 59:23]

Now there's a guy named Walter Brueggemann and he has written a book called *The Land* and I've stolen these concepts out of him, but I think they are really important. Brueggemann talks about space. Now what is space? Space is like chaos. A phrase that I love is what I call the W.U.D. Theory. You know what

W.U.D. is? The World Upside Down. Have any of you ever experienced that, where everything is upside down, everything is crazy? What should be right is wrong, and what should be wrong is right, the world's upside down. The world upside down, that's space. Chaos, transient-ness, space, that's where you don't belong and you travel through space. You travel through space, but you don't belong there. This is space. The wilderness is space. It's a place of hardship. There's no food, there's no water, there's not enough sustenance. It's space, it's chaos.

You move from space into place. Place, if I had to pick one or two words, one would be "home." Do some of you guys have a sense of home? Home, belonging... Home is a place where I can be myself. Everybody knows me as I am, weird as all get-out. By the way, are they all weird too? We are all weird together. We know that everybody's weird, but we're family and we're at home. We belong there. Have you ever been in environments where you felt you didn't belong? That's space, but at home, you can relax, you can be yourself for who you are. They know who you are. You don't have to say who you are, they know who you are. They know you and you know them. It's okay, you're all weird, and you're kind of in this thing together. So that place, that sense of home...

My son-in-law who married my daughter, (that's why he's my son-in-law) he's got a birthday coming up in January. The guy is going to be 41, I can't believe it. Anyways, he's quite a bit older than my daughter is, but he is a really neat guy. He came from Taiwan over to America and his family has been all broken up and his family is all in California. They are really far away and the family has been broken: father, mother and things like that. He longs for what? He realizes now, he's mid-life and he has got more friends than you can believe. You guys have got Facebook, he has got more friends than you can believe, more than Facebook. He has tons of friends, but he has this sense that these are all friends. Do friends come and go? Friends come and go, and he is realizing "I want family." But he says "My family is in California and they're all broken up." So he

has kind of been adopted into our family, so he's part of our family now. Our family is very, very cohesive I hope he feels like he is a member of our family. Is he a member? "Oh, he married in, yes he did." So he is part of our family so when we do stuff. Our kids can hardly wait to get together. My two sons are shooting elk right now. They are shooting Bambi. With the way they shoot... well actually I shouldn't say that, my sons are both expert marksmen. Anyway, they haven't been able to get anything yet. But what I'm saying is this sense of home, this sense of belonging. Can you rest at home? You can rest, you can relax, and you can be yourself. So that's the difference between space and place.

This is the wilderness. This is the Promised Land. When they go into the Promised Land, they enter place, this sense of where they belong. Now they can find a home here. They aren't wandering anymore. Wandering is gone, now they can set up a permanent place.

#### **N. The Impact of the where question** [59:24-62:37]

This raises some things. Is the "where" you dwell important? Does the "where" question affect your life? Do you act the same way in an Old Testament class as you do in a basketball game? Does "where" affect how you act? Do you act the same at a basketball game as you do when you go shopping at the mall? Maybe so. Where you are shapes how you act.

Does the "where" question shape you? Does where you grew up affect you? I remember I had a student whose name was Zachary. He was a really great kid. Before we were flying to Israel, we were flying out of the Chicago area. We were down in Indiana and came up to Chicago. We were flying out of O'hare to go to Israel to study in Israel for three weeks. We went up to northern Chicago to pick Zach up. We were picking Zach up and he was an inner city kid. He said, "I've got to stop off at a sidewalk before we leave." So he had some flowers and went over to the sidewalk. We found the sidewalk and he put the flowers on the sidewalk and I don't know if you know what that means. I didn't know what it meant. It meant that there was a 3-year-old girl who was riding a tricycle and gangbangers got on

both sides and this 3-year-old girl was shot dead. They put flowers on the sidewalk as a memorial. So it was like, “Whoa... this is heavy. We are going to Israel, and we dropped the flowers off. Zach got on the plane and he flew over to Israel.

When he flew to Israel, he took the first test over there because you have to test on Bible geography, and he flunked everything. He was getting 30’s and 40’s. I bring this student over there and he’s going to flunk out

So, finally, I pull him aside and I say, “Zach, what’s going on? We have got to get this grade thing under control here otherwise, you are going to be blowing this whole thing off.” So then he told me the story of that girl that was shot. He said it brought back all sorts of memories for him. When Zach was a little kid, he was in a house and his brother was a drug dealer. He said that these guys broke into the house and he had to watch as his brother got shot to death. So here is a little kid watching his older brother getting shot to death. He said when that little girl went down, all of a sudden his older brother came back. He questioned, “Could you focus on Bible geography when all that stuff comes back?” It totally just blew him away. Did the “where” of Zach’s life affect him?

Now you can deny that and say that you never want to remember that again. What I want to suggest to you is that’s not the way to do it. Can you forget stuff like that? You can’t forget that. You have got to integrate those memories into your life, you can’t just dismiss it and try to forget it. So the “where” question is a very important concept.

#### **O. The Land: not deserved** [62:38-64:09]

Now let’s work with the land. I want to hit various verses here and we’ll go through this quickly. By the way, this land is called the what? The Promised Land. The land of Israel is called the Promised Land, obviously because God promised it to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc. In Deuteronomy chapter 9, verse 4, it says, “After the Lord your God has driven them out before you, do not say to yourself, ‘The Lord has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness.’” God is saying and Moses is telling them, “When you go into the

land, don't think it's because you are hot stuff and God is giving you the land because you are so good. No, no, no. God is not giving you the land because you're so righteous. Don't you ever think that." (Verse 4 continued) "No, it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is going to drive them out before you." Why is God going to drive out the nations? Because of their wickedness. Is it on account of your righteousness? No, it is not because of how good you are, it is because how bad they are. By the way, when you guys read the book of Joshua, did God drive the Canaanites out of there? Was it brutal sometimes? God says it was because of their wickedness. That culture is being judged now because of their wickedness. It is not because of your righteousness that you're getting the land, it is because of their wickedness. It is not based on your merit and it is not based on your effort.

**P. Land as Gift** [64:10-65:29]

If you go over to chapter 6, verse 10 and following it says, "When the Lord your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give you--a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build." Did you see the turn there? You are going to get large cities, but you did not build those cities. (Continued into verse 11), "...houses filled with all kind of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant--then when you eat and are satisfied, be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery." What is going to be their promise? It's a good land. God is going to give them cities they didn't build, olive groves they didn't plant, wells they didn't dig. God is going to give them all this good stuff as a gift.

When they eat and are satisfied, God says, "Be careful in being satisfied that you don't forget that you came from where? You were slaves in Egypt and I redeemed you out of Egypt." Are the people supposed to remember their slavery, their bondage? They are supposed to integrate that, understand it, and never forget their roots.

### **Q. Land as promised** [65:30-67:08]

It was the land that he swore to give to their forefathers. It is the Promised Land. God promised that land to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Now God is fulfilling his promise. They are actually receiving the promise that God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is the great rip-off in life. The promise was given over and over and over again to the fathers. Did the fathers get any of the land? No, Abraham bought the tomb to bury his wife. Who gets the possession? Who actually gets the land? The descendants. How many of your parents are giving you something that they never had? Have some of you felt that? Your parents gave you stuff that they themselves never had. I went to college, my father and mother barely finished high school. I went to college and they didn't pay for my college. I had to pay for it myself, but they supported me and gave me food and a place to stay while I was going to college. But what I'm saying is that a lot of times do the parents sacrifice on behalf of their children to give them what they never had? So you get this thing here where the promise comes to the fathers, but the descendants get possession of the promise.

Now, by the way, when the descendants get it, do the descendants appreciate it as much as the parents who give it? No, the parents value it, but the children take it for granted. They forget where they came from.

### **R. Land as participating in a tradition** [67:09-68:18]

Participating in a tradition: there is an inter-generational thing between parents and children here that's being passed down. It's called tradition. Now if I say, "tradition," what comes to your mind? *The Fiddler on the Roof*. I've said this before, and I'll say it again. When you graduate from Gordon College, everybody here that is going to graduate from Gordon College, you must watch *The Fiddler on the Roof*. If you do not, Dr. Wilson will be there with one of these air gun things. When you go across to get your diploma, he's going to pop you one. So you better watch *The Fiddler on the Roof* before you graduate. He knows who's watched and who hasn't. I'm just kidding, but I do recommend the movie, it's one

of those phenomenally good movies. Traditions from the parents to the children and the tradition is passed down through generations and generations. By the way, in our culture is tradition usually a negative thing? We want to break out of tradition. Here you see this being passed down from generation to generation. The land is a gift that's passed down

### **S. The Land as gift** [68:19-70:30]

Now, the land is a gift. We have said that about ten times now. The land is a gift, God's giving the land. They don't deserve it. God is giving them the land as a gift. This gift shows God's choice in loving them. Let me just read chapter 7, verse 7, "The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you..." Does God choose to love somebody? Can you choose to love somebody? Is love a choice? "No, it's just chemistry. I get around this person and..." No, no, no. Is love a choice? Here we get this, "The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery..." God chose you and that's what is significant and special. It's a good land; it is a land flowing with milk and honey. We have said that phrase, "milk and honey." It's a real famous phrase. "Milk" is probably what kind of milk? Goat's milk. The honey is possibly honey, but it's also possibly date jam mashed up. It's a land that's filled. It's filled with cities, it's filled with wells, and it's filled with gardens. They didn't build the cities, they didn't dig the wells, and they didn't plant the gardens. God's going to give them this filled land. The land is going to be a satisfying land. What's the problem going to be? When they eat and are satisfied, what's their problem? They're going to forget the Lord, their God and that's going to be a big problem. So the land is a satisfying land and Moses is looking over there.

Can you see Moses up on Mt. Nebo drooling and just saying, "O how I wish I could just go into the land. I've been out in the desert for 40 years. This

stinks. And here all these people are the ones who are going to go eat these grapes, olives, and pizza.”

#### **T. Place God is going to put his name** [70:31-71:54]

Chapter 12 is a really important chapter. Actually chapter 12, you could talk about for hours. God says to Israel, while Moses is up here on Mt. Nebo. Moses tells them that God is going to pick a place in Israel and that God is going to put his name in that place. So chapter 12, verse 5 is a classic on this topic. But the whole of chapter 12 says this, “But you are to seek the place the Lord your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his name there for his dwelling...” Where would God put his name in Israel and dwell there forever? What place would that be? Originally it went to Shiloh. The tabernacle went up to Shiloh, but is that where it stayed? No, David is going to bring it up to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is now going to be the city of David and the city of our God. God will put his name in Jerusalem and the temple will be built in Jerusalem. God will put his name there. What you have in Deuteronomy 12.5 is the centralization of Israel’s worship foreshadowing what’s going to happen here with Jerusalem in David’s time. Jerusalem until this day is considered a holy city and the Lord’s presence is there.

#### **U. Major problem: Forgetting** [71:55- 74:55]

Now major problems: a major problem for Israel that Moses warns them about is that basically forgetting where they came from. Where did Israel come from? They were slaves in Egypt and Moses warns them, he says, “Don’t forget where you come from.”

Do some of you have memories of where you came from that you would love to forget? I told you that my son got back from Afghanistan. When he was in Afghanistan, he was shot at every day, he saw friends take hits, some of his friends were blown up. Rez, one of his friends that he trained was blown a hundred feet in the air and fell down and broke almost every bone in his body. He lived, the problem is, my son says when he goes and talks to him, he says, “Rez, Rez” and

Rez is not there, you know what I'm saying? When he got shot up like that a 100 feet into the air, something happened to his head and it's not Rez anymore. If you fell 100 feet, that's 10 stories, is that a long way to fall? Rez is not Rez anymore, he's been busted up really bad. He's still alive though.

What I'm saying is that my son got back and he was telling all these stories, and we were saying, "You've got to write all these things down." I've actually got the first one that he wrote now. He turned it into an English assignment over at North Shore. His comment to me was, "Dad, I've seen stuff that no human being should ever see. I want to forget it. I don't want to remember it ever again, I just want to try to forget it."

The question is: is it good to forget some stuff? I think it may be. What's the problem with forgetting? When you try to forget, is it still in you? What happens is that it's integrated in. But can you forget stuff like that? You can't forget that. Will it pop up at certain times then if you don't integrate it? What I'm saying is that is it really good to talk about these things and integrate these things in rather than rejecting and just forgetting everything. Integrate them into who you are. Is this part of who he is now? That's part of his history now and he has to own that as much as it's terrible. I don't know how you do all that, but I know that it doesn't do you any good to suppress it and to forget it. You've got to integrate it. All of us have certain parts of our past that we wish we could forget. What I am saying is be careful about forgetting. Remembering and integrating is probably the way to go, it will lead to a more mature person. If you forget, then you get this real weird stuff happening. Let's get off that.

### **V. Remembering** [74:56-78:23]

Remembering: God tells them they are to remember the what? The house of bondage. They were slaves in Egypt. Remember that you were slaves. That's a bad memory for them, but God says, "Remember you were slaves because I delivered you out of that slavery." Remember, you came out of Egypt. You crossed the Red Sea. Remember, God's deliverance with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.

Do you remember reading that a number of times? God said, “I brought you out with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.” God is the deliverer and God is the place that they should put their faith and trust. God is the one who redeemed them out of Egypt and their slavery and bondage. God tells them to remember.

By the way, does anybody know the Hebrew term? Is anybody named Zachary in here? Zachary or *zakar* means “to remember.” I have a son Zachary and he was named that and he has been true to his name.

Remembering then, is a basis for praise. Do you guys remember things where you met God and God did wonderful things in your life? That memory then causes you to come back and praise God. So memory is a basis for praising God. They were to remember that they were brought out of Egypt, the mighty hand, the Red Sea split, God provided manna from heaven, God brought them to Mt. Sinai. At Mt. Sinai, God in a certain sense, married Israel. At Mt. Sinai, God gave Israel his covenant and God married them so to speak. Then God took them on a 40-year wilderness wandering, which was kind of like a honeymoon. Now God is taking them into the land. God is bringing his bride home to the land that he promised to them and he wants them to remember. Remembrance is a basis of praise.

By the way, when you get into the book of Psalms, are there all sorts of memories of Israel’s history? Psalms 78, the whole thing is all remembrance of what you guys just have been reading. “For his steadfast love endures forever,” Psalm 136. Again, it goes through Israel’s history, coupled with “God’s steadfast love endures forever.” The basis of praise, the whole book of Psalms is based on this.

So reflective questions: where do you dwell? And what do you remember? Does your memory become a basis for praise? How do you experience the presence of God in the “where” in which you live? Do you experience the presence of God at Gordon College? When you’re in Lane? When you’re in various places? Just before I came to class, I was walking down some steps in

Frost Hall and as I was walking down the steps, a man named Bruce came up. And as Bruce came up the steps, question: did that cause God to come into my mind to think about Bruce in relationship to God? Yes, Bruce has got cancer. Question: do I need to be praying for him? I need to be praying for him. So I see Bruce and it calls me to the throne of God and to say, “God, be merciful.” Okay? So experiencing the presence of God in the “where” of which you live.

**W. Moses as author of Deuteronomy and JEDP source theory [78:24-81:45]**

Now, let’s look at Moses in the writing of Deuteronomy. We are going to connect up these two things we’ve talked about the land in existential terms, in terms of meaning. This is going to be more academic now. Moses in Deuteronomy, who wrote the book of Deuteronomy? We saw Deuteronomy is covenant renewal. Moses is passing the baton on to Joshua. The covenant is being renewed, Joshua is being reminded of the things that he is responsible for and the covenant. Does anybody remember this: the old J.E.D.P. theory? Deuteronomy is big in this J.E.D.P. theory. The J.E.D.P. theory says Moses did not write the Pentateuch, but instead you had a “J” writer who liked the name Jehovah so he wrote with Jehovah or Yahweh and so they called it the “J Document.” He wrote about 850 BC, which was about 150 years after the time of David. So this is long after Moses is gone, 500 years after Moses. After the “J” writer... You had the “E” writer and he wrote the part of the Pentateuch... (This is how critics see that the Bible was put together). The “E” writer wrote in the name Elohim. He liked the name, Elohim. He favored that name, so he usually calls God by the name, Elohim. He writes about 750 BC. Now what happens is that “J” and “E” get put together into a “JE Document” and these two documents are source documents.

Then, Deuteronomy stands by itself. Deuteronomy dates from about 620 or 612 BC and this is remembrance of Josiah. King Josiah “finds” the book of the law in the temple, but everybody knows he didn’t “find” the book of the law. Josiah had the book of the law written with Moses’ name on it. So this is what they call a “Pious Fraud.” In other words, Josiah wanted to do good reformation

he wanted to reform and make the people go back to God and so what he did was put out a fraud in Moses' name. So he says, "We are going to write this document. We're going to sign it like it was Moses' document. We're going to find this book of the law." Josiah's going to do the reformation in his time and bring people back to the Lord. So that's where the book of Deuteronomy came from. They call that a "Pious Fraud." Can you see what that means? Josiah wrote this book of Deuteronomy.

Now, by the way, does the Bible say that? The Bible says who's writing the book of Deuteronomy? Moses. So Moses is there writing and talking. By the way, is there any external evidence that supports any of this JEDP? Is there any archeological evidence of any of these sources? Not a shred, as a matter of fact, some of the archeological evidence like "P" the priestly writer, 450 BC, we found that in Numbers 6, we've got a priestly document from 600-700 BC, 300 years before this. So we've actually got archeological evidence that contradicts this theory. So this is basically how critics coming out of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, coming into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, said that this is how the Pentateuch actually got built up and that it was not really Moses who wrote the Pentateuch, but it was these "Pious Frauds" that have written in Moses' name.

#### **X. Deuteronomy and Hittite Treaties** [81:46-92:12]

Now, should we be able to tell the difference between a document that was written in 620 BC and Moses who was back about what—1200 or 1400 BC. There is about 600 or 800 years between. Do document types change over 600 or 800 years? Does the format you use change over 800 years? Well check this out, they say Josiah finds the book of the law, and this is what 2 Chronicles 34.33 says, Josiah found the book of the law, Deuteronomy. That's what the Bible says, but critics say "No, Josiah wrote it."

Now, Hittite treaties... Let's talk about treaties. We've got Hittite treaties. When do the Hittite treaties date from? 1200 BC. Is that very close to the time of Moses? If you take a late date, that's from the very time of Moses. So the Hittite

treaties, and treaties that come from this period, are from right at the time of Moses.

This treaty form has a **preamble**. What's a preamble? The preamble says, "I am Lugal Zigazi. I am king of Aram and I am the great king. I rule from sea to sea and I am the big man." So the preamble tells who the king is and his domain. The preamble tells the name of the king who is going to do this document.

The next section in these treaties is the historical prologue. The **historical prologue** tells the benevolences of the king. It says, "I am the great king and I helped your father when he needed water that one time and I helped him. A lion attacked him and I killed the lion. He ran out of food and I gave food to his children. So I am the good king." So the historical prologue tells of the benevolences of the king; the good, wonderful, kind things that the king does. By the way, when the king starts telling you how kind and good he is, what's coming next? Is this a setup? This is a setup.

So what you get next are the **stipulations**. The king says, "Hey, because I've been really kind and good to you, you need to follow my law. What's my first law? You must pay what? Taxes. By the way, let me hear you all say that, you must pay what? Taxes. And by the way, are you guys going to be paying taxes for the rest of your life because we got a 15 trillion dollar debt on your back. I will be dead. I'm serious, when I look at you guys and my kids, I just look and my shoulders sag down. It's good you guys don't know how badly you're messed over. This is really bad. Let me get out of here. Stipulations: the king wants what? Stipulations. "Pay me money, obey my laws, and hear my law." You know, you've got to pay traffic tolls when you go on the thruway, you've got to pay taxes, you've got to be obedient, you've got to be loyal to me, you have to do all these things. The king has his stipulations.

Now, when you have a law covenant, do you have to have **witnesses**? What's a covenant people make today? Marriage. In a marriage, do you have to have witnesses to the marriage? Yes. So there are witnesses. This is a really cool

one. In the Bible there will be witnesses like when you have a marriage. Actually, I performed a marriage when my son got married. Therefore, I had to sign off as one of the witnesses as a minister. Who is God going to call as his witness? God calls heaven and earth to witness. It's really a cool thing, because there's nobody who can witness God, so he calls heaven and earth to witness against him, the mountains and that kind of thing.

At the end of the covenant, there are **blessings and curses**. Blessings if you obey, and curses if you disobey. Now we want to make a shift here, these are the Hittite treaties. 1200 BC, right around the time of Moses. Check this out: Assyrian treaties date from what? 700 BC. Is that very close to the time of Josiah? The Assyrians were brutal. They ruled by fear. For example, you entered one of their cities, they had a pyramid of skulls at the entrance. What's the non-verbal message that was trying to communicate? If you disobey them where does your head end up? Now, by the way, is that pretty convincing argumentation? Yes.

I've been in the British Museum. If you ever get to London, you want to go to the British Museum. You walk into the British Museum, and the first thing right there (it's incredible), you have the Rosetta Stone. Not on a computer Rosetta Stone, they actually have the real Rosetta Stone. If you walk in further and you see the Assyrian empire. You see some of the things of the Assyrian Empire and you see a stake sticking up like that and you see a human being put on the stake, flailing and you see the stake driven right through them. Question: is that cool? What's the message that is trying to communicate? "If you mess with us, you end up what? We have a little stake out, right? Now you're on the stake." How do you know that? When Jonah is told, God says "Jonah I want you to go to Assyria to Nineveh, go to Nineveh, Jonah." Jonah says what? "I don't think so." What's the message God tells him? "Tell the people of Nineveh to repent." Jonah says "Yeah, right, I don't want my head in the pile God. I'm out of here, I'm going to go find some fish and take a ride."

The Assyrian treaty, here's how the treaty goes. The two treaties have

different forms. The Assyrian treaty comes from the time of Josiah, at 700, Josiah was 620 BC. So that's the time of Josiah, this is the time of Moses. The two forms are different forms, the both have a preamble. The historical prologue, the Hittite treaty has a historical prologue, telling of all the king's benevolences. The Assyrian treaty does not have a historical prologue. Why doesn't the Assyrian treaty have a historical prologue? Because they don't tell of the benevolences they did, because they terrorized people. So there's no historical prologue in the Assyrian treaty. Then you go down. Stipulations, both the treaties have stipulations--laws that you're supposed to do for the king. Witnesses, both treaties have witnesses. Then check this out: blessings. The Hittite treaty has blessings, but the Assyrian treaty has no blessings. By the way, does that make sense? The Assyrians are what? They're brutal. They say, "Hey, you obey me, I'm not going to bless you. You deserve to obey me, you just must obey me. I'm not going to bless you." But they have what? Instead, they have curses. Both of them have curses.

Now I ask you this: if you're going to tell whether a treaty was written in 1200 BC or at 700 BC, what are the two places you're going to look to distinguish these documents? If it has a historical prologue, it's early or late? Early. If it's missing a historical prologue it's late. If it has blessings, it's early. If it has no blessings, it's late.

The book of Deuteronomy: check this out--does Deuteronomy have a preamble? Yes, it does. In chapter one, God identifies himself as the great king. God is, the great king. Historical prologue, chapter one to chapter three, God tells of all the benevolent things that he's done for his people. Does God list many of those things, bringing them out of Egypt, providing manna from heaven for them, providing quail to eat and things like that? So there is a historical prologue. Are there stipulations in the book of Deuteronomy? There are general stipulations, the Ten Commandments, love the Lord your God. There are also specific stipulations, and that fits the Hittite treaty to a "T." By the way, there's a guy up at Gordon

Conwell Seminary, his name is Meredith Kline, he's the guy that compared these two treaty forms and showed that they're totally different, that they're different at these two places at least. They both have witnesses, Deuteronomy has witnesses. Question: Does Deuteronomy have both blessings and curses? Yes, it does, it has blessings and it has a historical prologue. Therefore Deuteronomy, was it written in 700 or 1200 BC? 1200 BC. Can you see the argument? These two document forms are different in the historical prologue and the blessings. Deuteronomy has a historical prologue and the blessing, therefore it fits perfectly with the 1200 BC document which is from the time of Moses and not from the time of Josiah. Is this a strong argument? This is a strong argument.

Now question, will critics be able to tear this apart? Yes, because the critics are going to take everything apart, but this is a really pretty strong argument for Deuteronomy being from the time of Moses.

Now general stipulations and with this we'll quit. Next time I'll teach you the Ten Commandments, and you won't even have to sweat it, you'll know the Ten Commandments. All of you will know the Ten Commandments just like that. So next time we'll be up for the Ten Commandments. Read Judges and Ruth for next time. Thanks.

This is Dr. Ted Hildebrandt in his Old Testament History, Literature and Theology course, lecture number 16, on Balaam and the book of Numbers and the Covenant renewal and the land concepts in the book of Deuteronomy.

Transcribed by Joel Perkins  
Rough edited by Ted Hildebrandt 2