

Session 4: Deuteronomy 5-8

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This is Dr. Cynthia Parker and her teaching on the book of Deuteronomy. This is session 4 on Deuteronomy 5-8.

Introduction

So today, we are going to start looking at Deuteronomy 5, 6 and 7. We will see how far we go. But we're just going to remember that as we've been looking at the book of Deuteronomy, we have so far seen lots of details related to geographical placement for where the people have been--the cities they have gone by, the people groups that they've gone around, the roads that they've traveled. We have had lots of explanations of historical narrative, so where they've been in the past to get them where they are now. And as we begin Deuteronomy 5, we enter into a whole new type of sermon. It is a different sermon of Moses.

Deuteronomy 5:1 and a Comparison to Deuteronomy 6

So, let's go ahead and start reading Deuteronomy 5. This is going to begin with an introduction that will be mimicked once more in chapter 6. So, we have in Deuteronomy 5 verse 1, "Then Moses summoned all of Israel and said to them, 'Shema Israel.'" So remember, we've heard this call to hear, to listen, Shema. We heard that in chapter 4, and so once more, we are getting that at the beginning of chapter 5, So, "Shema Israel, hear O Israel, the statutes and ordinances," we've heard this before, as well. "Which I am speaking today in your hearing that you may learn them and observe them carefully."

And then, we have this explanation of the Lord communicating with Moses at Horeb or Mount Sinai. Now chapter 6, flip with me to chapter six because chapter 6 begins in the same way, except 6 is going to give it motivations. So, where chapter 5 is just this call to hear, to listen, and to do. Chapter 6 adds to that with motivation for why you should be doing that. So, in chapter 6, verse 1 says, "Now this is the commandment, the statutes and judgments, which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it. So that you and your son, and your grandson might fear the Lord your God to keep all of his statutes and commandments which I command you all the days of your life that your days may be prolonged. O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly just as the Lord the God of your fathers has promised you in the land flowing with milk and honey."

Deuteronomy 5:2 – Historical Reminder

So, although the chapters begin the same way, chapter 6 is going to develop the motivation for why. So, let's go back to chapter 5.

Chapter 5, so we have this call to listen to the statutes and the judgments God has given. And we get this little historical narrative that is to remind the people of where these statutes and judgments are coming from. So, in verse 2, "The Lord our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. The Lord did not make his covenant with our fathers but with us, with those of us who live here today."

Now this is going to go back to what we also talked about in a previous lecture because, again, Moses is speaking to his immediate audience, that is standing with him on the shores of the Jordan River, the River Jordan.

He says that, "God gave these to us, to all of us standing here at Mount Horeb." So historically, no, it was the previous generation; it was their forefathers. But again, we're seeing how Deuteronomy conflates these generations where the story of the forefathers is their story. They belong in that story with their forefathers so that they can say it as their own story.

Deuteronomy 5 and a Comparison to Exodus 20

So verse 4, "for the Lord, spoke to you face-to-face at the mountain from the midst of the fire, while I was standing between the Lord and you at that time to declare to you the word of the Lord. For you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up to the mountain. He said, 'I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol or any likeness of which is in heaven above or on earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third, and fourth generation of those who hate me; but showing loving-kindness to thousands to those who love me and keep my commandments.'"

Now I'm going to pause here. This is actually a repetition of what we have seen in Exodus 20. So, if you were to flip back to Exodus 20 and compare the Ten Commandments as quoted in Exodus 20, you would find great similarity here in the book of Deuteronomy.

There are a couple of things I want to point out that are unique to how Deuteronomy is going to teach this part. While one is not necessarily unique, but it does belong to Deuteronomy's themes. We have already talked about in a previous lecture how there is a covenantal theme to the book of Deuteronomy,

so much so that we can even say the book is organized like a suzerain-vassal treaty.

Hesed to Thousands

One of the things that touches on that or draws on that theme is right here in the Ten Commandments. This is one of those times when as an Old Testament professor when people say that the God of the Old Testament is so rough and hard and angry all the time, but the God of the New Testament is full of grace. This is one of the things I love to point to because we do have it in verse 9. "You shall not worship other gods or serve them. For the Lord, your God is a jealous God visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children on the third and fourth generations of those who hate me." And yes, that sounds a little bit gruff and a little bit hard. The term "hate" and the term "love" often can be covenantal terms. So, hate doesn't necessarily have to be this internal broiling of emotion as much as to those who break the covenant. So the retribution, the effects of breaking the covenant, go down through the third and fourth generation, except that doesn't have a period at the end of the sentence. It continues and says, "But this is God; he will show loving-kindness," which is the Hebrew term called hesed. Hesed, which is loving-kindness, is one of those words that doesn't translate very well into English. It is very rich and deep. It's a persistent love, a patient love, and inconvenient love. One that is always loyal to the covenant. God is always said to have hesed love. So, God is one with a long memory; who knows He has made these covenants with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and he will always stay faithful to that covenant.

And that hesed, that promise of that deep rich persevering kind of hesed love will go thousands. Not just three generations, two generations, or four but thousands, "for those who love me." And that doesn't even have to be the hesed love but those who love God; God is persistent to thousands to love that way in

return. So, I think it's just a really beautiful portrayal of the way that God has a really wonderful heart, a persistent heart for his people.

Shabbat Difference Comparing Deut. 5 and Exod. 20

So back to the Ten Commandments here. So, we have again this quote from Exodus 20; the only difference is when we get down to observing the Sabbath or Shabbat, Deuteronomy gives a different reason for why we should observe Shabbat. So this starts in verse 12. It has, "Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy as the Lord your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all of your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall not do any work, you or your son or daughter or male servant or female servant or your ox, or donkey, or any of your cattle or the sojourners who stay with you. So that your male servant and female servant may rest, as well as you." It's a very inclusive list. It's not just the head of the household who gets to rest; it's the head of the household, everyone else in the household. It is the cattle, everyone working, the subsistence. It's all of creation. It's everyone's rest.

"You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to observe the Sabbath day."

Now flip with me, to Exodus 20. Let's see what the Exodus version says.

These are not necessarily conflicting arguments as much as they're different; they just show differences in the writing of these law codes. So in Exodus 20, in verse 8, we also have the command, "Remember the Sabbath." In verse ten, we have a list of the people, again, all-inclusive list of people who get to observe the Sabbath. And in verse 11, it says, "for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth just sea and all that is in them and rested on the seventh day.

Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy." So in Exodus 20,

the reasoning behind observing the Sabbath is because of the creation narrative because God created, and at the end of creation, he sits enthroned over his creation, looking at everything as he has made and saying it is good. And it's that enthronement idea that God is king.

Deuteronomy 20, has a little bit more of a remember because you used to be slaves and we're remembering back to Egypt when everything was upside down, right? When you were oppressed, when it was the fiery furnace of oppression, God brought you out of that and into a good place. And because of that, we're going to sit and observe the Sabbath. It is also a way of remembering that God is the one who is enthroned over his kingdom, but it is also one that touches back on the exodus so that the people are mindful all the time of their history, the way that God has acted in history, the way God has loved them in the past, that is the reason for taking a break on the Sabbath and remembering God is the one who is in charge, who is done all of this for us.

The Ten Commandments and Israelite Law

So the rest of Deuteronomy 5 goes through an explanation of the Ten Commandments. Now we have noticed for very long time people have said that the Ten Commandments are basically an overview of all the Israelite laws. So ever since the Middle Ages, rabbis have noticed that the Ten Commandments act as large categories. We can take all the other 613 laws in the Hebrew Bible, and we can fit them within the Decalogue at some point or somehow. Some people have taken that idea and said that it is yet another way we can organize the book of Deuteronomy. So potentially, we talked about in previous lectures, how the format of Deuteronomy has almost a covenantal format, or we can organize it as a group of sermons that Moses has given, or we could organize it literally so that we're building our way up to the law code that starts in chapter 12.

We could also say that here in Deuteronomy chapter 5, we are beginning the law code with a restatement of the Decalogue where the 10 words or the Ten Commandments and everything that comes after fits into that. So, there are several people who have written about that. So, you can go research that. It's a really great way of thinking about the way that the book of Deuteronomy is organized. You will see as we progress that the first couple chapters as we make our way through chapters 12, and 13 and 14 all focused on worshipping God and God alone.

And then chapters, once we get to 19 and we go through 25, we're looking at how people should interact with one another in society. So, it's split pretty nicely, like the Ten Commandments are split. How should people interact and behave toward God? How should people interact with each other?

Deuteronomy 6

Now we're going to go ahead and move to Deuteronomy chapter 6. We already mentioned that Deuteronomy 6 starts in a way that is very similar to chapter 5. So, it also goes back to "these are the commandments, these are the statutes," and we're getting the idea that Moses, in this sermon, is trying to explain to the people what this means for them, as they are getting ready to go into this land.

So, I have already read verses one and two. So we have the motivational speech, the motivation behind observing these statutes and commandments; it is so they can go into this promised land and live a fulfilled life.

Deuteronomy 6:4 – Shema

I would like to focus on verse 4. So, it says, "Hear O Israel." So once again, Shema Israel. The Lord Is our God the Lord is one." Well, that's one way to translate it. Here's the Hebrew, and the interesting thing about the way that this

Hebrew is written, is we don't have any vowels, or not vowels, we don't have any verbs in this sentence. So, we need to figure out how to translate this, which makes this particular sentence a wonderful sentence. It is really deep and rich with meaning.

So Shema is "listen." Israel is "Israel." We have Yahweh, "Adonai." Eloheinu is "our God," Yahweh again, and Ehad is "one." So, where do we put the verb?

We could say, "Shema Israel." This is pretty "Listen Israel." It's these four words that end up being really interesting for us. We could put in "is" right after Yahweh here. So we can say, "Yahweh is our God. Yahweh is one." We could say, "Yahweh, Our God is one God." If we look through all these different translations of the Bible, we could come up with 8, 9, 10 different ways of trying to interpret this verse. This verse is the Shema as people call it now, the Shema from Deuteronomy 6:4. "Shema, Israel Yahweh Eloheinu, Yahweh ehad." This is at the core of Jewish worship. It was at the core of Israelite worship. It is at the core of Jewish worship all the way up to today. It is a very powerful and sacred sentence.

This sentence has a firm declaration that the Lord, the God of Israel is one God. He is the only one. He is the only one that the Israelites should be worshipping. There are no others around him. And so no matter where we put that "is," it contains and very tight in four words is the monotheistic idea that God is one. He's the only one, and Israel belongs to him. So that is Deuteronomy 6:4.

Deuteronomy 6:1-15

Now let's continue to look at Deuteronomy 6 1 through 15, this group of sentences or verses, because this will come in towards the end of the lecture. So, this is the first whole part of Deuteronomy 6.

Deuteronomy 6:5 The Greatest Commandment – Love God

So, after the Shema, we have a reflection on how important it is for the people to remember. So verse 5, "You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, and with all of your might." Now that's a verse might also sound very familiar to you, especially if you have been reading the New Testament quite a bit. This verse shows up quite a lot as rabbis, Pharisees, and Sadducees have conversations with Jesus about what is the greatest commandment. Ah, the greatest commandment, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might."

However, if you're accustomed to the New Testament version, there's the added and your neighbor as yourself. But that's not actually here in Deuteronomy 6. So where does that last little bit come from? That actually comes from Leviticus 19. So, in Leviticus 19, if we look at these words in Hebrew, the "and you shall love" that begins Deuteronomy 6:5. It's an interesting combination of Hebrew words that is only repeated two other times. Both of those times are in Leviticus. In Leviticus 19, there's a whole list of all these things the people should do because God is their God, and one of them is "you shall love your neighbor as yourself." And it begins the same way this verse does. "And you shall love your neighbor," why? Because God is your God.

By the time of the New Testament, people have noticed this similarity and language and go: "What is the greatest commandment?" Well, it's this one in Deuteronomy, you shall love the Lord your God with everything that you have, but because we're loving the Lord with everything we have, that means we should also be loving our neighbor as ourselves.

Deuteronomy 6:6 On Teaching in the Family Context and Marking Liminal Places

So Deuteronomy has that "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might." And in verse six, "These words which I am commanding you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons. You shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk, by the way, when you lie down, when you rise up." So, these are merisms when you take the extreme opposite, and it means, and everything in between. So, it's not just when you're standing or walking. It's when you stand, when you walk, when you lie down, when you're eating, when you're breathing, when you're in the house, and when you're out in public you're talking and teaching your children. So, Deuteronomy puts a huge emphasis on the role of the individual, of the parents to be in their own homes teaching their children the laws, the statutes, and commandments that God has given them.

He goes on, "You shall bind them as signs on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Then it shall come about when the Lord your God brings you into the land, which you swore to your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give to you great and splendid cities, which you did not build and houses full of good things, which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns that you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees but you did not plant and you eat and are satisfied, then watch yourself that you do not forget the Lord who brought you from the land of Egypt out of the house of slavery." And I'm going to pause there.

So, we have a huge emphasis in these verses and chapter 6, verses 1-15, It will be repeated again in chapter 11. The emphasis is on remembering. And there are instructions for how they can remember. So, there's a technique involved. So the people are told to mark liminal places. So liminal places are those places that are in between. So, think perhaps of a doorway. So is the doorway included in the hallway or is the doorway inside the room?

It kind of belongs to both, and it kind of belongs to neither. The doorway is considered a liminal place. It's this transitional spot from one place to another place. It tends to mark edges.

So in Deuteronomy 6 where this word "remember" is so essential. Deuteronomy says the way you can do that is by marking liminal places. Okay, so let's take a look at what those places are. So, as we read them, we already talked about how these laws should be on your heart, embedded within.

"You shall bind them as a sign on your hand." Your hand is the liminal space between you and your action towards other people. The hand is this agent of interaction between you and others. And so, bind this law on your hand to remind you as you interact with others it is under the code of instructions that God has given you.

"Put them on the frontals or the forefront of your head." Some translate that "between the eyes." It's a little bit obscure as to the best way to translate this, but "between the eyes" this would be like your perceptions of the world around you. So, we have God's word or these words; they are written on your heart, your innermost being, on your hand is you interact with others, and between your eyes, as a way to guard your perception of the outside world.

"You shall also write them on the doorposts of your house." From your own private space, as you enter the city and are in public space "and on your city gates." So, as your city goes from between your organized neighborhood, to the world around it.

So the way to remember is to actually mark from your innermost being to the most public place the fact that all that you as an individual and everyone that you live with is living according to God's law. That is a way for you to remember.

So, if I were to ask you, how would you characterize verses 1-15? What would you say? What would you write down? If we said these verses, we just looked at including the Shema, including the idea to remember, what are the key ideas of Deuteronomy 6:1-15?

You may have a few different ideas. I'm sure nothing is actually wrong, but I would say a lot of it has to do with not forgetting who God is, this one God. And not forgetting or remembering is at the core of what the people are supposed to do.

Deuteronomy 6:14-15

So, let's move on. I'm going to read starting in verse 14. "You shall not follow other gods, any other gods of the people who surround you. For the Lord your God is in the midst of you. He is a jealous God; otherwise, the anger of the Lord your God will be kindled against you and he will wipe you off the face of the earth. You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested him at to Massa." Massa actually means "testing." This is a story you would have to go back and read in Exodus 17. I would encourage you to actually do that. Go back and read because as Moses in the sermon is addressing the people, he is addressing an event in their past that they know of. It was a time when they were thirsty, they needed water, and they complained. And God ends up providing water for them. But it's a time of them saying, I don't think God really has our best interests at heart. This is the event that Moses is referring to.

"You should diligently keep the commands of the Lord your God and his testimonies and his statutes, which he has commanded. You should do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord, that it may be well with you, that you may go in and possess a good land which the Lord swore to give to your fathers by

driving out all the enemies before you as the Lord has spoken. When your son asks you, in the time to come saying, 'What do the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments mean, which the Lord our God commanded you?' Then you shall say to your son, 'We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord brought us from Egypt with a mighty hand. Moreover, the Lord showed great and distressing signs and wonders before our eyes against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all of his household; he brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land which he had sworn to our fathers.'

You should already start to hear there's a repeated thing here, right? The statutes and commandments are for the sake of the people to be able to go in and live. Well, why should they be motivated to follow these commands? Because God has already redeemed them because he took them out of an oppressive situation and has given them this land.

Deuteronomy 6:14-15 Who God Is and What He Has Done

In verse 24, it says, "So the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, and for our survival, as it is today. It will be righteousness for us, as we are careful to observe all of this commandment for the Lord our God just as he commanded us."

Okay, so once more, if I were to say, how would you characterize Deuteronomy 6:14 to 25? It's a little bit different than the previous verses. Both have to do with remembering, but this second part focuses a lot on who God is and what he has done so that these statutes and commandments can lead them into a fulfilled life in the land. Okay, hang on to both of these ideas about what the concept of 6:1-15 is as well as the concept of 6:14-25. We're going to come back to this in just a little bit towards the end of the lecture.

Deuteronomy 7 Diverse Inhabitants of the Land and Diverse Terrain

We're going to move into chapter 7 now and chapter 7; I'm not going to read through it in as great of a detail. There are aspects of chapter 7 that are very similar to chapter 12. So we'll talk about some of those aspects once we get to chapter 12. But I do want to point out a couple of things. One of the tricky things about Deuteronomy 7 is the way that it begins.

So in verse 1, it says, "When the Lord your God brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it and clears away many nations before you." And then we get a list. "The Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Jebusites, seven nations greater and stronger than you." Let's see about this for a second. These people groups are actually named. So, when they go into the land, it's more than just generic Canaanites. There are known people groups that are there, and Deuteronomy quotes seven, seven different nations.

Now I wanted to talk about this, not in terms of God telling them to go in and clear out the land, we'll talk about that when we get to chapter 12, but I want to touch on the fact that Deuteronomy recognizes the people who are there. So, do you remember in previous lectures when we talked about the land that the people are going into? It's a very diverse land. We looked on the map and how it was colored that really dark brown to show the mountainous terrain. We set that in comparison to the riverine communities in Egypt and Mesopotamia. We said, Egypt and Mesopotamia, they have very hardy lands that can support huge empires and help people communicate, but the land that is mountainous, if you live just over the edge, I'm a little bit more suspicious of you.

Let me show you a couple of pictures of the diversity of the land that is the land of people who are getting ready to inherit. So we have a coastal plain. This would be where the Philistines ended up living on this coastal plain. You

can see the blueness of the Mediterranean over to the west and the flatness of the land on the coastal plain. It doesn't take much for you to go up into the hills. This picture may be a little bit washed out on this particular video, but this shows deep valleys. It's farmers' terrain you can see all the green. There's enough water to grow crops in this kind of a land. But the hillside is so steep the farmers have to go through and terrace the land so they can build steps into the hillside so they can actually grow produce on the hills.

Okay. So, you can imagine that the people living in this kind of terrain, even with all of this water, will have a whole different kind of lifestyle than anyone who is living down on the coastal plain. The texture of the land is so different.

So as we move over to the east, now we still have mountains, but we have a lot less water. And so because of the less water, see how brown and barren these hills are. It is much harder to have agriculture in these hills. Just on the eastern side, we have less rain, less water. So the farming technique has to be different. You can still farm, but it's not so much on, we're not terracing the hills as much as we're finding water in valleys, and we're planting down in the valleys. We're going to start to see a lot more shepherding. So sheep and goats can live out on those hills.

But that's not all because we also have the wilderness. So this is actually the Judean Wilderness. This is outside the city of Bethlehem. If you were to continue to go east out of Bethlehem, this is even more barren than the last picture I showed you. So, whereas in the last picture, it was somewhat barren, but you can still sort of do some farming. Out here, there is no farming possible because of the soil and because there's not enough rain. This out here is all

shepherding terrain. This is vastly different from the coastal plain. But that's not all.

We could go all the way down to their south. This is where we're going to start picking up camels, and it's even more barren and dry. There's even less rain down here. So, think of this land of Israel as a very diverse place. The variety of ecosystems that are there, it changes on a regular basis. Modern-day, if you go and visit the land of Israel, you basically just need to travel about 45 minutes and everything you see outside the windows or everything your hiking through completely changes.

In this kind of land, it is very difficult to unify people because people who live in land like this have a different access to the outside world. They have different clothing, and different building materials. They function in a whole different way. They're making a lifestyle they're supporting their families in a different way than people who are out on the coast or the farmers who are up in the hills. And so, the people who are similar tend to group together, and it is really hard to unify them across such a diverse terrain because they have such different kinds of lifestyles.

We can actually see how this land, the Israelites are getting ready to go into, this land already has broken people apart because in Deuteronomy chapter 7, it lists the types of people who are there. There are already seven different people groups, who are already there, who have not unified, who are not like Edom who are not like Moab or Ammon. They have not formed any kind of centralized government because the landscape is pulling them apart.

This is going to act as a warning for us because as the Israelites move in, they've been wandering through the wilderness. The Israelites are made up of 12 tribes, and yet they have to go into this land, a land that is this diverse. And yet

they have to remember that they are one people group, with one God--Shema Israel. That is going to be a huge challenge for the people as they go in.

So, when we start looking again, when we get closer to chapter 12, we're going to have to engage these ideas with how can the Israelites go into such a diverse land, one that naturally pulls people apart and isolates them in their various ecosystems. How can they stay unified as one people group loyal to one God? Deuteronomy has ideas that we will have to get there in chapter 12.

Deuteronomy 7 – God as Warrior

So here, in chapter 7, we see that there is similarities with chapter 12. We're going to get there. We saw that there are multiple people groups, and yet Deuteronomy 7, even in this chapter, is going to remind the people, do not fear because God is your warrior, right? We already saw that is an earlier theme in Deuteronomy chapter 1. God is the one who goes before, before his people. In fact, we get in verse 18, "You shall not be afraid of them, all the people who are in the land. You shall remember that the Lord your God, what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh in all of Egypt." So again, we're remembering, and we're remembering an order to give us boldness to go into this land and to know that God is the one who is going before us.

Deuteronomy 8 – Remembering and Forgetting

So let's move to chapter 8. And before we move to chapter 8, we've been talking quite a bit about this concept of remembering and how important that is. So, let's just take a moment and look at some of the Hebrew and actually think about what this word meant to the original audience, to the biblical audience. It might be a little bit different than how we think of it. So, the word "remember" is *zakar* in Hebrew. And *zakar* means "to become aware of something in the present," right? So, it is pulling from the back of your mind into the forefront of

your mind, to remember is keeping it present, being aware of something in the present.

So, the opposite "to forget" is not just forgetting where you put your keys or forgetting directions to your favorite store. It's not that kind of forgetting. It's actually an abandonment of knowledge. So, where zakar is pulling something to the forefront and keeping it actively present in your memory, in your consciousness, forgetting is actually abandoning that knowledge.

We talked about in a previous lecture how in Deuteronomy, people are never told to remember the laws. You don't need to remember the details of all the laws, but you do need to remember who your God is, the actions and the deeds of God. You need to remember your history. And we learned from Deuteronomy 6 the reason we're doing that is so that we can live our future actions based on who God is and so we can go into the land and live filled human lives in the land.

Memory and Emotion

Now memory is also connected to emotion. So when we have memories of events when we are actively pulling things to the forefront of our minds. When the Israelites were remembering all God had done for them in Egypt, it comes with a sense of emotion. Gratitude towards God, or emotion of what it felt like when they were being oppressed by the Egyptians. So, memory can evoke emotion. So, when memory and emotion make this connection, part of that is so that you can connect, you have the ability to ascribe that feeling to a stranger in similar circumstances. So this idea of remembering and recalling the emotion is tied to Israel's ethical behavior. They are often told, "Remember that you were once slaves in Egypt." And because of the memory of the fact that they were slaves in Egypt, remember what that felt like. Remember what the emotion

was; remember the emotion you felt when God pulled you out. Therefore you shall act in such a way with similar people who are oppressed. So, we're going to keep that in mind as we go through some of the laws.

Deuteronomy 8 and Prosperity

So prosperity in chapter 8 at, we're going to learn that prosperity when people go into the land; the prosperity they experienced in the land can lead to self-dependence or self-reliance where they can start to think they're the ones that got that prosperity, instead of recognizing and remembering it was God who gave it to them. Deuteronomy 8 is also going to do a lot for us to compare and contrast their wilderness experience with the fruitfulness of the land they are getting ready to go into.

So we're going to start to read Deuteronomy 8, verse 1. "All the commandments that I'm commanding you today you shall be careful to do that you may live and multiply and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your forefathers. You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that he might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. He humbled you and let you be hungry. He fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that precedes out of the mouth of the Lord. Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did the foot swell these forty years. Thus, you are to know in your heart that the Lord your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son."

So there's a remember the wilderness but remember God's presence among you in the wilderness. There's a recognition that it was hard, and yet God

was there. And so, when you remember the wilderness, remember that you depend on God more than the natural elements around you. God is the one like a father who will provide for his people.

Deuteronomy 8:6 Images of the Good Eden-like Land in Contrast to the Wilderness

So in verse 6 now, we're going to start to pick up images about the land, in contrast to the wilderness where it was harsh, wear their clothing should have worn out and shoes should have worn out, but they didn't in contrast. "Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in his ways and to fear Him, for the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land." There's that good land idea again, a land that has the Eden-type potential.

"A land of brooks of water, of fountains, and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines, fig trees, and pomegranates, a land of olive oil, and honey, a land where you will eat food without scarcity, in which you will not lack anything, a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper."

I'm going to pause for a moment here. Deuteronomy will continue and talk about beware because when you go into such abundance, your heart will want to turn away from God. Be careful because whether you are in a land of abundance or in a land like the wilderness, you must remember you depend on God.

Deuteronomy 8 and the Agricultural Calendar

Now some of the list, it's not just a utopian list of products that Deuteronomy is listing; Deuteronomy is listing how the land actually functions.

So, I want to show you this calendar. This calendar is right here. This is my way of symbolizing the agricultural year. So, remember, these people are living

off the land; their livelihood depends on being intimately connected to where they live. They think of the land according to the way the land functions and works. So, when they're organizing time, they organize time according to the types of activities they're doing on the land.

You'll notice there are two different circles. There's an internal circle and an outer circle, and the crescent, that is the gap between the two circles, is actually when you have the chance of rain. So it's the only time in that land when you might have rain. People will talk about in the land of Israel or in the biblical land, there were only two seasons. In North America, we think of four. But they thought of two seasons the rainy season and you have the dry season.

Now we have letters that go all the way around the perimeter of this, or the circumference of the circle, and the letters start in the far, the top over onto the left, we have a J and then JFMA. So those are that they stand for the letters of the English months of the year—January, February, March, April, May. So, we would organize the calendar according to January. January 1st, we flip the calendar over, and we begin a new year.

That was not natural according to the way that the land functions, and so the people of Israel did not organize their year according to January, which came much later for us. They did it according to when the rains begin. So over in September, October we have the early rains. This means that we've just come out of the dry season, and we're going to get these nice light, wonderful small drops of misting rain. In September/October, the benefit of that rain is it falls gently on the ground, it soaks into the soil, and it allows for the farmer to go out and plow and break up the hard soil that has been baked firm through the dry season. So, the farmer is able to plow in November, and in December, they go out and sow the seed in their field. And then by December, we're going to start to get the big, massive heavy rain clouds that come through. So, this is when we

get through December, January, and February, you get the most rain on the land. Then the rain is going to taper off, and you get fewer and fewer rainstorms. You get more of the misting storms again. And by March, we now have the latter rains. This is the last little push of water in the agricultural year that will allow the farmer's crops to produce.

So, if we notice we have the plowing and the sowing that happens in December by March, we can start to harvest. As we start to harvest, the very first product that is ready to be harvested is barley which comes up in March. Through April and May, we start to get our wheat harvest. And now, by the end of the wheat harvest, we no longer have any more rain. So, by May into early June, the rains have totally stopped with the entry of the dry season.

So, we have the heat of the summer sun. By the time we get to August, we have the grapes that are harvested; we have figs and pomegranates. All of this great, wonderful summer fruit. And in October, right around the time when the early rains might start again, we have green olives and black olives that are harvested. So, the olive harvest is the last product taken in out of the ground before the farmer has to start the whole calendar all over again.

So, this time right here, the early rains, this is going to mark Rosh Hashanah, the head of the year, the beginning of the year. This is what I want us to look at, though. We're going to keep coming back to this agricultural calendar because it plays out once we get to the festivals that are celebrated by the Israelites. But this is what I want us to think of is if this is how the land functions, this is the natural way that the farming territory in Israel functions. These are the natural products that come out of that ground. We can hear the familiarity that Deuteronomy has with this land in the description of the land.

Deuteronomy 8:7 Description of the Good Land

So, let's go back to Deuteronomy chapter 8. I'm going to start in verse 7, and this is a description of the good land. "It is a land of brooks of water of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranate, a land of olive oil and honey,

Do you notice anything about the listing of that product? Those products? They're in order according to the agricultural calendar. So, it's not just a random list saying you're going into a land, and it's going to be filled with the bounty of everything that you could ever want it. You're going into a land; these are the products of the land. This is the order in which they will come out of the ground. That is the good land. This very real place is the good land that God is giving to you. And it has the potential to be good, just like Eden was good for people.

Deuteronomy 8:18: Prosperity may lead to Self-Reliance

So when we get to chapter 8, we're looking at the idea that prosperity can lead to self-dependence, and so they must remember their history because if they go into this bountiful land, their hearts might turn away from God.

We saw the comparison between the wilderness images and the land images. By the time we get to verse 18, we have again this idea, "you shall remember the Lord your God for it is he who is giving you the power to make wealth that he may confirm his covenant, which he swore to your fathers as it is this day."

If you forget, so Deuteronomy 8, it is God who is allowing you to go in. This is all the work of God, so be careful that you do not forget.

Deuteronomy and Jesus Temptation in the Wilderness (Matthew 4)

So just to close out this lecture. There are a couple of things I want us to think about as we even maybe think of New Testament. So, do you remember

when Jesus, right before he begins his public ministry Jesus is walking, he finds John the Baptist near the Jordan? He is baptized by John the Baptist, and then he goes into the wilderness for 40 days. There's a lot that the Bible doesn't tell us about being in the wilderness those 40 days. What did Jesus do? What did he think about? We know that he fasted, but what else was going on? We have no idea what the biblical writers don't tell us. However, I love, especially as a Deuteronomy scholar I love to say I think Jesus was dwelling on the book of Deuteronomy. This is a core book for a lot of Israelite and Jewish theology. Who is God? Are we remembering who he is? Are we choosing to act in accordance to that? Because when Jesus is tempted, the first things that come out of his mouth all come from the book of Deuteronomy.

So turn with me; I'm going to read the version that's in Matthew. Let's turn to Matthew 4. So, it says, "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit in the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after he had fasted 40 days and 40 nights, he then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God.'" Let's pause for just a second because, in Deuteronomy, we have already noticed that there is a son of God. In Deuteronomy chapter 1, the Israelites are called the son of God, and all throughout the whole Hebrew Bible; the Israelites are considered the firstborn, the son of God. Jesus is now taking on that identity. And so there's a question here of identity where the accuser comes to Jesus and says, "If you are actually the Son of God, command these stones to become bread." But he answered, 'It is written, man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'

We have heard this before. This comes out of Deuteronomy 8 it's Deuteronomy 8:3. Now, when we are talking about New Testament text, anytime the New Testament text refers back to Old Testament texts it never is just referring to the one sentence that is quoted. It refers to the whole entire context.

So, when Jesus' identity is being questioned here in the first temptation in Matthew's gospel, Jesus responds with Deuteronomy 8:3, but he would be referring to the entirety of that section.

What was Deuteronomy 8? Can you remember the wilderness versus the land images? Do you remember that God provided that even when things look bleak and barren, God is the one who provided? So, Jesus here is going, just as God provided in the wilderness; God is the one who provides for me now.

"Then the devil took him to the holy city, had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you.'" Which happens to come from Psalm 91. So, he is quoting Bible as well. "And on their hands, they will bear you up so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.' And Jesus said to him, 'On the other hand, it is written. You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" That's a quote from Deuteronomy 6, from the second section of Deuteronomy 6. So go back and say: what is that whole entire section of Deuteronomy 6 about: God's power, who he is, following God regardless.

"Again, the devil took him to the very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, 'All these things, I will give to you, if you will fall down and worship me.' And Jesus said to him, 'Go, Satan, for it is written, you shall worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'" Deuteronomy 6:13. So take the whole first part of Deuteronomy 6. What was that all about? Remember, remember, and follow God's commandments.

So, I love to say maybe Jesus, when he was in the wilderness, was dwelling over Deuteronomy and Deuteronomy was his fortification for facing the temptations that he faced when he was in the wilderness.

So, for the next lecture, we're going to go on, and we're going to look at Deuteronomy chapters 9 through 11.

This is Dr. Cynthia Parker and her teaching on the book of Deuteronomy. This is session 4 on Deuteronomy, chapters 5 through 8.