

5. Jesus in Deuteronomy

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The name Deuteronomy means “second law.” It was the second giving of the Mosaic Law. The Book of Deuteronomy was the last one of the Pentateuch he wrote. Technically, the last portion of this Book was, most likely, written by Joshua his successor and it probably belongs to the Book of Joshua.

By the time Moses was delivering this message of God’s laws for the second time to the Israelis, it was 38 years after they got the same laws the first time at Mount Sinai. During that 38 years, as you know, all the first generation of 20 years and older died off and their graves spread throughout the wind-swept barren desert hills. They were the mute reminders to these people of the consequences of not loving and not obeying the Lord.

The listening audience of Moses was either not born or much younger when the laws were given the first time. In other words, the vast majority of them have not seen what the Lord did for the people of Israel in Egypt. It was very necessary for Moses to remind them who God was and how He delivered them out of Egypt and what kind of laws they should follow to obey the Lord.

This Book can be divided into three sections:

- Ch. 1-4: Looking back their previous generation’s failure at Kadesh Barnea but remembering God’s faithfulness
- Ch. 5-26: Looking up to the Lord for the blessings that come after obedience as well as a stern reminder for the consequence
- Ch.27-34: Looking ahead to obey the Lord and possess the land.

By the way, Jesus quoted out of Deuteronomy more than any other Books in the OT. Especially, when satan was tempting the Lord in the wilderness, all three answers of Jesus were from the Book of Deuteronomy:

Deuteronomy 8:3c man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 6:16 You shall not tempt the Lord your God

Deuteronomy 6:13 You shall fear the Lord your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name.

A. JESUS IN THE SHEMA

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

The orthodox Jewish confession of faith is called “the Shema” after the Hebrew word which means to “hear.” This phrase is still recited each morning and evening by devout Jews all over the world – “Shema Yisrael Yehovah Elohim Echad Yehovah.” The literal translation would be “Hear Israel, the Lord God one Lord.”

It is so important that Jewish boys in orthodox homes are required to memorize it as soon as they can speak.

Let’s dissect this one word at a time:

1) Yehovah: We know this as ‘Jehovah’ which means ‘the Lord.’ The strict orthodox Jews would not write down its full spelling for their respect for the name of the Lord,

they only spell it "YHWH" which we, the westerners, pronounce 'Yahweh'. Though we do not know the exact pronunciation, you generally would pronounce it 'Yehovah.'

2) Elohim: The definition of this word is 'God.' However, this is where it gets really exciting. The original manuscript didn't use the word 'El' which is the singular. 'Ela' would be 'dual.' You see, in Hebrew, they have a singular, a dual, and a plural which indicates three or more. Moses particularly used the word 'Elohim' which is a plural, not 'El' or 'Ela.' So God's name here indicates a plurality. Then the plot gets thicker.

3) Echad: This word is not just any 'one.' It is a special 'one.' It means 'a compound unity as one.' It was the same word used in Genesis 2:

Genesis 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Moses did NOT use the word 'yacheim' which denotes a singularity. If he used this word and said, "the Lord is 'yacheim,'" then it clearly means nothing more than a singular.

But he used the word 'echad' for a compound unity. So let me put forth the definition of this Hebrew phrase for our understanding:

"Yehovah Elohim Echad Yehovah – the Lord God that is three in plurality, is a compound unity one Lord." That is a biblical evidence of the Trinity doctrine you can hang your hat on. Isn't that absolutely cool or what?!?!?

Let's take a look at v5. God wants our complete love. This love is appropriate because He loved us completely and He loved us first, in spite of who we are. Even though He knew what kind of selfish, wretched, and unholy beings that we are, from the beginning, He still loves us. It is the only right thing for us to love Him back.

When we really love Him, our time, our submission, our will, and our finances will be released from us to Him as expressions of our love for Him.

Jesus called this the greatest commandment in Matthew 22:37-38. Then He gave us the second greatest commandment as well in the next verses.

Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus said to him, ""You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

B. JESUS, A PROPHET LIKE MOSES

Deuteronomy 18:15-19 "The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, 16 according to all you desired of the Lord your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.' 17 And the Lord said to me: 'What they have spoken is good. 18 I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. 19 And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.

This portion of Scripture is a Messianic prophecy by Moses through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This Prophet was not only an Israelite, but also a 'man of the people'.

Like Moses, this Prophet would be a Mediator, representing the people to God the Father and God the Father to the people.

I just love the way Moses said in v18 and 19. Then, you read what Jesus said in John 12:

John 12:49 For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.

Our Lord Jesus has three offices: Prophet, Priest, and King. When He ministered here on earth, He declared God's Word as Prophet, and by the inspiration of His Spirit has caused it to be written down for our learning. He intercedes for His people as the High Priest in heaven, and He also sits on the throne and reigns as King, working out His purposes in this world. One day He will return and reign on earth as the King of kings.

C. JESUS HUNG AS AN ACCURSED OF GOD

Deuteronomy 21:22-23 "If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, 23 his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God.

In the thinking of ancient Israel there was something worse than being put to death. Worse than that was to be put to death and to have your corpse left exposed to shame, humiliation, and scavenging animals and birds.

We are redeemed from the curse of the law by the work of Jesus on the cross for us. We no longer have to fear that God wants to curse us. He wants to bless us, not because of who we are, or what we have done, but because of what Jesus Christ has done on our behalf.

1 Peter 2:24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.

According to Deuteronomy 21:23, the offender's body should not be left on the pole overnight, and as we know from the Gospels, Jesus' body was taken down and placed in the tomb before nightfall.

Matthew 27:57 Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus.

D. JESUS, KINSMAN-REDEEMER

In 25:5-10, we find the Kinsman-Redeemer law. We are going to save this portion for the Book of Ruth since it gives such a beautiful example.

E. JESUS, OUR REFUGE

Deuteronomy 33:27 The eternal God is your refuge, And underneath are the everlasting arms; He will thrust out the enemy from before you, And will say, 'Destroy!'

In chapters 4 and 19, Moses taught the Israelis about the cities of refuge as the Lord directed him.

Deuteronomy 4:41 Then Moses set apart three cities on this side of the Jordan, toward the rising of the sun,

Deuteronomy 19:1 "When the Lord your God has cut off the nations whose land the Lord your God is giving you, and you dispossess them and dwell in their cities and in their houses,

There were three cities of refuge on each side of the Jordan. They were chosen for their easy access from any location because they were centrally located. Roads to these cities were clearly marked. The gates were always open. If someone accidentally killed another, he could flee to a city of refuge to be safe from the vengeance of a kinsman.

We, too, have a place of refuge in Jesus. Although satan is out to punish us with death for our sins, we have fled to Jesus and are safe there in Him. The Bible applies this picture of the city of refuge to the believer finding refuge in Jesus on more than one occasion:

Psalm 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.

Hebrews 6:18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

- Both Jesus and the cities of refuge are within easy reach of the needy person. They were of no use unless someone could get to the place of refuge.
- Both Jesus and the cities of refuge are open to all, not just the Israelite. No one needs to fear that they would be turned away from their place of refuge in their time of need.
- Both Jesus and the cities of refuge became a place where the one in need would live. You didn't come to a city of refuge in time of need just for sightseeing.
- Both Jesus and the cities of refuge are the only alternative for the one in need. Without this specific protection, they will be destroyed.
- Both Jesus and the cities of refuge provide protection only within their boundaries. To go outside meant death.
- With both Jesus and the cities of refuge, full freedom comes with the death of the High Priest.
- But there is a crucial distinction. The cities of refuge only helped the innocent; the guilty can come to Jesus and find refuge.