

Talk 3 - Please get Practical (+ Q&A; with Simon)

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[0 : 00] Good morning, church family. So the Bible reading for this session is Deuteronomy chapter 12, and we're going to be reading from verses 1 to 18.

So that's Deuteronomy chapter 12, verses 1 to 18. These are the statutes and rules that you shall be careful to do in the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth.

You shall surely destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree.

You shall tear down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and burn their ashram with fire. You shall chop down the carved images of their gods and destroy their name out of that place.

You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way, but you shall seek the place that the Lord your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there.

[1 : 17] There you shall go and there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, your vow offerings, your freewill offerings and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock.

And there you shall eat before the Lord your God and you shall rejoice, you and your households, in all that you undertake, in which the Lord your God has blessed you.

You shall not do according to all that we are doing here today, everyone doing whatever is right in his own eyes. For you have not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance that the Lord your God is giving you.

But when you go over the Jordan and live in the land that the Lord your God is giving you to inherit, and when he gives you rest from all your enemies around so that you live in safety, then to the place that the Lord your God will choose to make his name dwell there, there you shall bring all that I command you, your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, and all your finest vow offerings that you vow to the Lord.

And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your sons and your daughters, your male servants and your female servants, and the Levite that is within your towns, since he has no portion or inheritance with you.

[2 : 38] Take care that you do not offer your burnt offerings at any place that you see, but at the place that the Lord will choose in one of your tribes. There you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I am commanding you.

However, you may slaughter and eat meat within any of your towns as much as you desire, according to the blessing of the Lord your God that he has given you. The unclean and the clean may eat of it, as of the gazelle and as of the deer.

Only you shall not eat the blood, you shall pour it out on the earth like water. You may not eat within your towns the tithes of your grain, or of your wine or of your oil, or the firstborn of your herd or of your flock, or any of your vow offerings that you vow, or your freewill offerings, or the contribution that you present.

But you shall eat them before the Lord your God, in the place that the Lord your God will choose, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, and the Levite who is within your towns.

And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, in all that you undertake. weisem & Grodus Thank you.

[4 : 27] We had four chapters in the first talk. We had seven in the second talk.

And we have 14 in this talk. But don't despair because we're not going to run through 14 chapters at all. We're going to just pick and choose.

I don't know if you've heard the story before of the police cadets who are doing an exam. And the question says, you're driving down the road, you, young policeman, policewoman, and you come across a huge accident where cars have all crashed into one another.

One of them has hit a fire hydrant. Water is pouring into the air. There's a large dog that has just bitten a small boy. A young man has just grabbed the handbag of a lady and is running off.

People have begun looting some of the shops that have been hit. And in the distance you see a fire has broken out on the third floor of a nearby building. What is your first course of action?

[5 : 36] And one of the police students wrote, carefully remove uniform and mingle with crowds. And there are those times where you think, let me out of here.

Don't despair as we come to our third session. It's going to be manageable. And what I've tried to do, if you're new and this is your first time, is we've tried to look through the book of Deuteronomy, which is 34 chapters, and we've tried to walk through it quite quickly.

Because as I was saying to somebody over morning tea, we either take a couple of little bits and you say, yeah, well, that's great. What's the big book about? Or we attempt to do what we're doing, which is to walk through it.

So if you're here for the first time, let me tell you that Deuteronomy is set out like a treaty between God and his people as they are about to go into the promised land.

And the first four chapters are basically Moses recapping the trip so far. The next chapters 5 to 11 are talking about the relationship that God has with his people, full of privilege and also responsibility.

[6 : 39] Not that the responsibility will create the security. God will create the security. But there needs to be a response. Now we're going to come to what is really the unpacking of the Ten Commandments.

And so if you are reading chapters 12 to 26, you would notice that the chapters correspond fairly closely with the Ten Commandments. Let me show you what I mean. Deuteronomy 12, which we just had read for us, has to do with worshipping God, commandment 1.

Deuteronomy 13 has to do with idolatry, commandment 2. Deuteronomy 14 has to do with who you are, commandment 3. Deuteronomy 15 to 16 has to do with feasts, or we might say Sabbath, commandment 4.

Deuteronomy 17, 18 has to do with authority figures, judges, priests, prophets, kings. We might call that the parental, commandment 5.

Deuteronomy 19 to 21 has to do with fighting and war. We might call that commandment 6. And Deuteronomy 22 to 24 has to do with marriage. We might call that commandment 7.

[7 : 51] And Deuteronomy 25, 26 is a range of thoughts on the subject of honesty and greed, etc. So some people say, no, no, this is too clever.

It's not really the unpacking of the commandments. But many people think it is, and I think it is. And so if somebody said, well, commandment number 1, worship God, what does that look like?

Deuteronomy 12 spells it out in very practical details for the people of Israel. Can I remind you that Israel, picture the million people.

That's a nation. They need laws to do with taxes and land rights and armies. But they're also a church.

And so they need rules to do with ceremony and sacrifice and forgiveness and thanksgiving to God. They're a nation and they're a church.

[8 : 49] And therefore, when we read Deuteronomy 12 to 26, although a lot of what is there is not relevant to us. Animals you can eat, animals you can't eat.

But it's still instructive. It's still informative. Because it tells us what God was doing with his people. And the principles are useful for us today.

So that's why Jesus can say that it's all written about him. Because in the end, it's all bringing us to him. Interesting that the popular religions today, think of your friends who would say they were Buddhists, have got, you'll notice, no authority over them.

So convenient, isn't it? Nobody tells me what to do. But God is an authority. And his authority is a loving, safekeeping authority.

Now, I thought that I would pick a few bits of the commandments from this section. And so you'll see on your outline that I've tried to pick commandment 1, 3, 6 and 7.

[9 : 55] And we'll just look at those quite quickly. Okay? Are you with me? Did any of that make sense? I'm going to pretend it did. Commandment 1, Deuteronomy 12.

You remember how the chapter begins? And I'll just remind you of the first couple of verses. Where Moses says, these are the statues and judgments in the land which the Lord your God's giving you. First thing, destroy the idols. Then verse 9, 5. Verse 5. Seek the place where the Lord your God chooses.

Those of you who remember the great John Chapman may remember him telling a story where somebody comes up to him in the break and brings him a cup of tea with three sugars and white milk.

And Chapo says, well, that's very kind of you. I actually drink black coffee, no sugar. And the simple point is that the person wanted to be helpful but didn't listen to what actually he was looking for.

[11 : 07] And it's typical John Chapman illustration. So simple. But there are so many people who think, I'll give God what I think he wants. But we need to listen very carefully to what he says he wants.

And it's here in Deuteronomy chapter 12. First thing is you enter the promised land, get rid of the idols. Destroy them, break them down, smash them, get rid of them. Because, verse 3, you're not to worship God like this, Yahweh like this.

This is a big issue for believers when they come from animist religions. And they have to somehow get rid of the infection and the infiltration and the contamination of their old faith.

God is not to be fitted in to something else. Everything is to be fitted into what he asks. And as I mentioned, the idols of Canaan were very attractive.

And so getting rid of them was a costly thing to do but infinitely worthwhile. And then, says the Lord, verse 5, seek the place the Lord chooses. Bring the appropriate sacrifices, verse 6, verse 7, because I want you to rejoice.

[12 : 19] How interesting. God says, worship where I say and worship how I say because I want you to be happy. Now, the place, of course, eventually would be Jerusalem.

But, obviously, Moses in Deuteronomy is not talking about a specific place like Jerusalem. He just says, when God says this is the place to worship him, that's the place to worship him.

Eventually, it will be Jerusalem. And you're to bring the sacrifices that God asks for. So, chapter 12, verse 8, don't do as you see fit. But go to his place with his sacrifices and the joy will follow.

Well, the worship of God, you see, is like chopping a log. If you chop with the grain, the axe moves much more carefully.

If you try to chop against the grain, it's much more difficult. And this section of worshipping God as he calls us to reminds us how Jesus in John 4 said that we should worship him in spirit and truth.

[13 : 26] It's not enough just to be sincere. It's possible to be sincere but wrong. I'm always disappointed with people in churches who say, I don't read my Bible but I do pray.

And I think I hate those relationships. When nobody ever listens, they just talk. And we must treat God as somebody who not only will listen to us but who speaks to us.

We must hear him and we must speak to him. And, of course, when we hear him, we'll speak to him more wisely, more carefully. And then, of course, the place where we meet God today is not a building.

We may hear the gospel in a building but the place we meet him is Jesus. That's why Jesus described himself as the temple where we will meet God. And the sacrifice that we need to relate to God is Jesus.

And the joy that comes from this is Jesus' joy. So this chapter 12 is a very wonderful call to take seriously the God of the first commandment.

[14 : 34] The devil, of course, comes along and offers us all sorts of alternatives. But you'll discover down those roads that he's fooled you. We're slow learners. We keep going down dopey roads.

But eventually, in the goodness of God, we come back and humbly agree that he's right. So that's commandment number one. Commandment number two. Sorry, commandment number three, which relates to Deuteronomy 14, seems to be the commandment about being God's special people.

Now, how do you identify as God's people in the world today? You could wear the cross around your neck. You could get a great tattoo indicating you're a believer. But in the end, the way that

you're going to show yourself to be the people of Jesus is going to have a lot more to do with what comes up from the heart.

Now, when we get to the end of this session, there's going to be a Q&A.; And I forgot to say how helpful it would be if you think of some good questions. Because there's nothing worse in a Q&A; when there's dead quiet.

And then finally, somebody says, Do you think there's life on Jupiter? And I say, I don't. And then we hang around for another five minutes waiting for somebody to say, Have you ever eaten a shark?

[15:55] And I say, no. Those Q&As; are terrible. Try to think of some good questions that emerge from Deuteronomy or from your Christian life. And that will make everything buzz along.

And if I don't know the answer, I'll just call on many of the great pastors who are in this room to help us out. But the Q&A; can be great if you make it great. So dive in with your questions. Let's go to Commandment 3, Deuteronomy 14.

We didn't read this chapter. It seems to be about being the people of God. And verses 1 to 2 are very interesting. And I will read them to you. And then I'll tell you a little more.

First of all, Chapter 14, 1 and 2. Imagine this is the unpacking of Commandment 3. You're the children of the Lord your God. You shall not cut yourselves nor shave the front of your head for the dead.

For you're a holy people to the Lord your God. And the Lord has chosen you to a people for himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

[16:55] The rest of the chapter has to do with clean and unclean animals. And the last bit has to do with tithing. So what does this have to do with being a believer today?

Can you imagine studying this in your own small group or your youth group or trying to preach this to your congregation? And you think, well, what will I do with this? But let me ask you this. If you lived in the peoples of the land and you were not the people of Yahweh and one of your relatives died, tragically, why might you cut yourself?

Why might you shave your head in a strange and distraught way? Why might you do that? Any thoughts? I've got two possibilities.

To show your grief, your distress. Yes. Yeah. The other possibility? To?

Oh, to buy something. A bargaining. A bargaining. Yes, I hadn't thought about that. Yeah. Is this a way of appeasing the gods and getting some reprieve?

[18:11] I've got another possibility and it relates to 1 Kings 19. Manipulation is a good word for it.

It's the prophets of Baal trying to get the attention of Baal by slashing themselves. So can you imagine a pagan faced with death and they start cutting themselves, the family?

What are they doing? They could be grieving. This is so distressing. They could be saying, I'm doing this to make sure that I can buy favour or it could be that they're saying, oh God, gods, gods, gods up there or whoever you are, please take notice.

Step in and do something. Come on, help us out. And you can see how terrible and distressing that is and you can see why Moses says to the people of Israel, don't do that.

You're not going to do that. When it comes to death, you're not going to do that because in the end, the people of Israel have got some clues that death is not the end.

[19:22] There are little hints, aren't there, in the Old Testament, shadowy ideas that death is not the end. Can you think of any from the Old Testament? I'll give you an example.

Psalms 23, Another example from the Old Testament?

Enoch walking with God. Yeah, there's an unusual situation. Elijah disappearing. Yeah, David, when his son died, he said he will not come back to me but I'll go to be with him.

Paul? That's too clever an answer. I just wanted a simple answer from the ordinary people, from the plebs, not the clergy kids.

That's terrific. I'm thinking of things like Job. I know that my Redeemer lives, chapter 19.

[20:30] And even if this body perishes, yet in my flesh will I see God. What an amazing diamond to come up from the book of Job. Psalm 23, Enoch, Elijah, Psalm 16, treasures at your right hand.

There's a whole lot of little shadowy things. Daniel chapter 12, the dead will rise from the dust.

Pictures of the resurrection in the Old Testament. But if you were to ask the people of Israel, what's your clue for the future?

They can't quote Psalm 23. It hasn't happened yet. They can't quote Psalm 16. They can't possibly quote the book of Job. But Jesus would say to them exactly what Paul just said.

God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Do you remember when Jesus was being challenged by the Sadducees and they mocked him for the whole idea of a future? And they made up that story of the lady who died after having been married seven times and whose wife will she be?

And laugh, laugh, laugh, mock, mock, mock. You know, there's no future. And Jesus said, God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It's not he was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

[21 : 44] He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Because when you come into a covenant with God, how could that break? How could that break? And we know from the New Testament that death cannot break the covenant because of Christ taking death for us.

And so Deuteronomy 14 is previewing the importance of the people of God, even in the Old Testament, having a confidence in Yahweh in the face of death.

And no wonder Paul takes up the whole principle in 1 Thessalonians 4 where he says, we're to grieve, but not as those without hope. And so you'll know if you go to the funeral of a pagan, I mean, imagine the funeral that's coming up for Shane Warne.

It will be full of grief and it will be full of memories. But unless I'm mistaken, there'll be no hope.

There'll be no gospel. There'll be no future. There'll be no glory.

It will just be grief and memories. It'll just be looking backwards. And the mark of the Christian funeral is that we're able to look back and look forward.

[22 : 55] We're able to grieve and we're able to hope. And we don't have to just do one and not the other. And that's why the funeral of the believer is better than just 25 helium balloons going up into the air.

And what is said at a Christian funeral may be very feeble, but what's said on the other side of the river, welcome, is very precious. For the pagan, what's said on this side of the river may be very grand, the MCG, the SCG, filled with people, but what's said on the other side of the river, that's more significant, isn't it?

The terrible thought of coming to the other side of the river and for the Lord Jesus to say, I don't know you. Depart. It's a really big issue. And Deuteronomy 14 in these strange first two verses is raising this fantastic issue that the believers are to live in the world with a past and a future.

And the world is only marked so much by the past. I read a book recently called *Mortals*, written by two psychologists in the eastern suburbs of Sydney, and their argument is basically that you've got to just learn to live with the fact that you're mortal, so make the most of your life because there's nothing to come.

And the book then argues that all religions are basically games that people play to invent some kind of future. And I wrote to them and I said, look, I don't think you've done justice to the fact of the person of Christ who genuinely lived and genuinely died and if you look at the evidence, genuinely rose.

[24 : 33] And I don't see how you can dismiss the sensible faith of two billion people in the resurrection. So that's the context of the world we live in, isn't it?

No wonder Deuteronomy 14 is a great challenge to the people of Yahweh to live differently in the world. Now the second bit in Deuteronomy 14 has to do with the food laws and I didn't get anybody to read these because they're so funny and we would find ourselves sort of laughing.

You know, you can eat the ox, the sheep, the goat, the deer, the gazelle, the roe deer, the wild goat, the mountain goat, the antelope. But you can't eat the swine.

I can't see how the rest of it all fits together. You shall not eat the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, the red kite, the falcon, the kite, raven, ostrich, short-eared owl, seagull, hawk.

What is going on? What is going on? You can imagine the unbeliever who sort of comes across this chapter says this is a fantastic chapter to whip the people of God with because why aren't they doing this?

[25 : 41] And which of you have gone to the supermarket this week and carefully avoided the red kite? Now what's going on in these verses? The answer is that these are not unhygienic animals.

We know that because there came a time where Jesus said you can eat whatever you want to. It's not a hygiene issue. It's not even a this is what the pagans in the promised land eat now so don't eat them.

This is sheer sovereignty of God. This is just the absolute decision-making power of God. This is in, this is out.

This is clean, this is unclean. Watch carefully. And so the people of God every time they went to the shops they would be remembering that there was a clean and an unclean.

And every time they sat at breakfast and every time they sat at their lunch table and every time they sat at their dinner table they would remember that there was a clean and an unclean. And God had made them clean.

[26 : 49] Why? Deuteronomy 7 because he loved them. That's all. And there's an unclean amongst whom they live to whom they have a mission. So all of this teaching on the animals to be eaten and the animals not to be eaten are to teach the people of God every day that God is a God who has his own people to reach the lost.

The food laws of course were abolished in the New Testament by Jesus because he paid the price of our failures but he also has brought in a cleanness which has got nothing to do with rule keeping and animals but has got to do with forgiveness and a new heart.

And so we're not the sort of people who are interested so much in external ritual as internal change. Well how do we show our distinctiveness?

We show it mostly by asking the Lord to fill and rule our heart so that when we walk into the day he might help us to think, say and do the things that would mark us as his people.

And a huge part of witness today is not cleverness it's just faithfulness. And as I said last night it's sometimes being asked a question and giving an honest answer.

[28 : 17] A small, short, honest answer. Do you remember Colson the right hand man of the President Nixon who was so tough they said he would sacrifice his grandmother if the decision required it.

And he was deeply impressed by a man called Tom Phillips who in the midst of the White House was just such a nice man. And eventually Colson went round to see him this tough, tough Colson and Tom Phillips opened up mere Christianity and read to him from C.S. Lewis and the whole subject of pride.

And Colson went back to his car and he sat at the wheel of his car and the evening was pouring with rain he said there was more water in the car than there was outside the car because he was so convicted you know tears rolling down his face.

And it came through the example of a guy just living like a believer and that's the sort of thing that you can do. And the way you live amongst your people just asking the Lord to help you to be distinctive is so important and you've no idea where it will lead.

The last words in chapter 14 have to do with tithing and basically it's just teaching the community that they're not just to be grasping people but giving people.

[29 : 40] And that's of course what the gospel does doesn't it? It changes you from being just a taker and there's nothing so satisfying as seeing the gospel change somebody's heart so that they become spontaneously generous.

I'm working in a little church in the eastern suburbs I've just been there for a year it's a building that holds 600 people there's about 40 who come and it's kind of shocked me to realise that probably 35 of them are not believers and the giving is kind of nothing.

People are literally getting out two coins and putting it in the offertory bag because their heart has not been changed but when the heart gets changed everything is opened and freed and generosity flows.

I just want to point out to you one unusual verse 1421 which has always intrigued me and I've now worked out what it is and so I'm going to tell you and this will be a groundbreaking moment for all of you it's a small joke 1421 you shall not eat anything what does he say at the end at the end of verse 21 you shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk you shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk and believe it or not commentators have agonised over what this was all about and I think it's a proverb I think it represents a saying which is something like this don't take what is meant to be good for you and turn it into something which kills you don't turn perhaps the law of God which is meant to bless you and make it something which will destroy you don't take the milk of a mother which is meant to feed a baby and cook that baby in the milk the baby kid

I think that's what it's about I think at the end of the chapter that Moses is saying don't mix up the categories of God and end up destroying yourself with what should help you so that's the second command we're looking at the third one chapter 20 which I've called commandment 6 and it's got to

do with going to war and it's just worth looking at especially in the light of what's happening in the north of the world at the moment because some people may say and think well this is the sort of thing that God does I preached on Deuteronomy 20 in my church and a couple left the church after the sermon forever because they were offended by the chapter and they said we don't believe God could do this in Deuteronomy 19 we're told there are to be safe cities where you can run to if you commit manslaughter before you get tried in chapter 21 there's instruction about what to do if you find a body in a field but in chapter 20 there is the will of God for the taking of the promised land and as I mentioned to you before this taking of the promised land is a one-off never to be repeated invasion it just doesn't come up again and again in the

[33 : 04] Bible it's just a one-off and we need to remember when we think about God taking the promised land remember there are a lot of people in the promised land we need to remember first that God owned the promised land as I said to you last night he waited four centuries for the people to turn to him but they didn't he communicated to the whole of the land because you remember Rahab the prostitute said we've all heard about Yahweh we've heard about the exodus we've heard about the crossing of the Red Sea this is a God of justice it's time for justice there's a time for justice but he's also merciful because he says you're to go to the towns around and still offer them mercy but of course God is a God who keeps his promises and he's promised in the end that he will bring his judgment can't escape that he's a judge he's a good judge and he obviously is providing for his people a promised land as he said he would and this is also a preview of the glory to come so Deuteronomy 20 is the most amazing procedure for an invasion look at chapter 20 verse 1

Moses says don't be afraid God is with you can you imagine world war one chaplains going up to the troops or world war two chaplains or Afghani chaplains going up and saying to the troops let's remember that God is with us you wouldn't dare to do that what you could do is say let's pray that God would be with us but this is God's war and so the priest is to say God is with you then he says in verses 2 to 4 you're going to be victorious so don't let your heart faint don't be afraid don't tremble don't be terrified the Lord your God is with you to fight for you against your enemies to save you he's going to win this war it's a winning war third he says go home if you've got a new house and you'd like to work on the house go home if you've got a new vineyard and you'd like to pick some grapes go home if you've got a new fiance go home if you feel frightened kind of gives you plenty of escape doesn't it in other words

God is not dependent on the numbers for the battle if he's left with ten people he'll do it with ten if he's got ten thousand he'll do it with ten thousand and then verse ten of chapter twenty offer peace to the cities nearby but there'll be no peace for the cities in the midst of the promised land and this battle that is to take place is a really serious sobering battle but it's not as serious as the battle that's described in revelation which is a massive global battle a judgment of very great proportions remember that the Bible is descriptive of invasion not prescriptive does that make sense the Bible describes this invasion it does not prescribe an invasion the Quran prescribes an invasion the Bible does not and at the very end of

Deuteronomy 20 we're told that they are to look after the fruit trees of the land don't attack the fruit trees of the land what a funny thing to say why does Moses say don't attack the fruit trees of the land well because you're going to be living there and therefore if you need wood don't cut down the fruit trees cut down the other trees but don't cut down the fruit trees because you're going to be living there and the fruit trees of the Bible are such a beautiful theme in the Bible you've got fruit trees in Genesis and then you've got fruit trees in the promised land and then at the end of the Bible chapter is if you were to preach it I think it would be very important to explain to people that this was a one-off that it was a piece of justice following a great deal of mercy and that in the end the Lord Jesus has won a much bigger victory which we can take part in and escape justice and receive mercy and then the last command

I was thinking of looking at is command number seven which is chapters 21 to 24 and I'll just say very quickly that when you read these chapters that have to do with taking of slaves or taking captive people who've been conquered in battle it all looks terrible to us but actually it was revolutionary in the warfare if you were a pagan and you conquered another country you did whatever you wanted with those people and I mean whatever you wanted but God says no when you find people who are the victims of war you're to look after them you're not to abuse them you're to care for them you're to dress them you're to treat them with dignity they're not your property a wife is not to be just grabbed or humiliated and if you do take her for a wife and there is a divorce to

follow she's not your property you've got to look after her it's quite revolutionary
[38 : 33] I think that's probably enough I think that's probably enough there are the little tastes of the commandments being unpacked in Deuteronomy looking at the practical details of living for him okay it's 12 o'clock on the dot what time was I meant to finish okay okay I'll pray a short prayer and then I'll just see if you've got any questions that you would like to ask about any of this or whether anybody lives on Jupiter okay let's pray heavenly father we thank you for the very wise and wonderful words that you gave to your people about living for you in the promised land we thank you that you give to us not just instructions but you give to us transformation through the

Lord Jesus and we pray that you would work in our hearts that we might be inwardly not just new people but in your goodness faithful and even fruitful we ask it in Jesus name amen okay any quick thoughts okay so the first one there's eight questions here so we'll maybe not how much time do we have all right somebody keep a time for me then okay so I've got names but I won't mention the names so if you can just go back to chapter five verse two to start with and while you're doing that I'll read one question here but I'm going to break the rule so the first question is have you ever eaten a shark now

I was going to leave these anonymous but Elise Smith can you stand up please stand up so Simon can see you so he will deal with you be it ever so severely and we will encourage him to think more justice than mercy at this point okay so all right first question I'm going to read it out so people can get a gist of it and give you 30 seconds to think in the analogy with children being secured in a trip being salvation without obedience still resulting in eternal life isn't this contradictory with where it says that if you disobey the cursing will fall on the Israelites from the Old Testament alternatively in the Bible where it warns about falling away just interested to hear your opinion on the bounds of scripture with this topic that is a great question

I'm so glad you raised it in Deuteronomy you've got the promise of blessing and you've got the warning of cursing and in the book of Hebrews you've got some tremendous promises and some very serious warnings I think my question is how do we consider these promises and warnings within the covenant people of God we can't say that the blessings will make you in a higher position with God than Jesus has given you already and we can't say that the cursing will put you in a lower position or remove you from the people of God and we desperately need promises and warnings they both come from a loving God my point is simply that we have to see both of these as coming to the family on which your position doesn't hang but the way God deals with you in assurance or discipline could follow so it's a very loaded question and

I completely agree the person who says I'm going to be disobedient let's say in the area of greed I'm going to pursue greed forever well the apostle Paul would say you've just taken a road that leads you away from the kingdom but I wouldn't want to fall into the trap of saying you've now just lost your salvation because you went on a detour I think I would want to say to the person you've gone on a detour if you keep that up it looks like you're not a believer but somehow in the providence of God he may bring you back so we're always walking a careful twosome promises and warnings and I don't want to give the impression to the people of God that their security hangs on their performance I want them to know it hangs on the performance of Jesus but I do want them to know that how God will treat them as a father has got a lot to do with the fact of whether they want to walk with him or walk against him and

[43 : 56] I think we would say that to our children wouldn't we I mean if we want to say to our children we love you whatever happens sometimes our love will look like this sometimes our love will look like this I think that's what I'm trying to grapple with come back if that's not clear I did want to say a lot more on eating shark but I'll just leave that for another time okay so I got the questions out of order there again but now go back to chapter 5 verse 2 or verse 3 sorry because the question is around that verse and the question reads like this if I heard Simon correctly this morning reading from Deuteronomy 5 3 he said the Lord did not make this covenant just with our fathers but with us even us all of us here alive today and then commented that this clearly indicated the covenant was very long-standing so then it goes on to say my Bible in fact all the Bibles I have in phone don't have the word just the insertion of just completely changes the meaning was the covenant made with the fathers if so why do so many Bibles leave out just I don't have the Hebrew text in front of me but I think the word just is the meaning of the verse even if it's not the language of the verse so are we meant to assume that the Lord didn't make the covenant with the fathers I don't see that we can do that I think we have to say that at Mount

Sinai he was making a covenant with his people it was like a marriage ceremony but Moses is simply making the point I think in 5:3 that this covenant is not only with them but with us in other words we mustn't imagine that what took place in the past has been lost it's for us we must take it seriously and in the next section that we'll look at he actually asks them to enter into the covenant which I don't think means become believers or become the people of God I think it means he wants them to ink it in or he wants them to sign their names in so it's a it's a again it's it's a great question and it's a delicate balance I think the point of the verse is that it's the past people and the present people and of course as you know the covenant unfolds like an opening door so you've got a covenant with creation and then you've got a covenant that takes place pretty well with Adam and Eve and then you've got a covenant with Abraham and then you've got a covenant with Moses and the people at Sinai and then you've got a covenant with David for a kingdom and then you've got in Jeremiah a new covenant which will reach the heart and then you come to Jesus sitting around the table at the last supper and he says this is the new covenant in my blood it's that's the security of the covenant so it's an unfolding covenant so sorry are you saying then that the difference in this verse is a differentiation of the audience so it wasn't it wasn't Abraham

Isaac and Jacob listening to it it was the people there around them it was one covenant differentiated is that what you I think I'm saying that the people who Moses was speaking to were God's people being told that this unfolding covenant which had come to their fathers at Mount Sinai was very much for them but I'd be glad to if somebody wants to come back at it please do because I have lots to learn and if somebody thinks that it wasn't to the forefathers but it is only to Moses people I'd be interested to hear your thoughts on that but I'm myself persuaded Yes Thank you Thank you No, no, the Abraham covenant was that he would bless the earth.

And then the Sinai covenant was that he would be the distinctive people of the earth. And then, of course, the David covenant was that there would be a kingdom. And then Jeremiah that it would be inward.

And then Jesus that it would be sealed in blood. So I think that's how it unfolds. It's a developing, wonderful covenant. Okay, I hope that didn't confuse.

[48:47] And I'll be glad to hear more if you've got thoughts. Okay, next question then is, how do you see the world addressed to you, Simon? How do you see the world and the church still attempting to manipulate God today?

And that's referenced in Deuteronomy 14, 1 and 2. Well, as we know, the world is polarizing. So there is a great movement away from God. And there is a very religious world. And they're both intensifying. It isn't one without the other.

And I presume in the Western world, with this sort of rise of sophisticated atheism, that God is treated as non-existent or irrelevant until everything goes wrong.

And so the Western world thinks of itself as being on the QE2 and can manage everything.

Whereas the Bible says we're on the Titanic and we need quick help.

[49:56] And the church follows quite quickly and is not always very good at tackling the opposition of the world. And so I would say the world which is scoffing at God is dangerously causing the church in the present to be apologetic, defensive, reactionary, and at worst, changing the mission to make sure that nobody scoffs at us.

And whenever God has done a great work in the church, it's to raise up people who just speak the truth with confidence and look at the position of the world as desperate.

I think I've told you that I worked for a guy in the UK called Dick Lucas who's about to turn 97. And he's one of those people the Lord raises up every now and again who's just incredibly convicted.

And it was no wonder people were glad to be with him because he was so sure of his faith. And I think a lot of it came from being on his knees with God and seeing carefully what was important.

And when I went to work with him, I left Bondi Beach in Sydney and I went over as a 28-year-old dope and went into his office, which was above his house, which was in the middle of London, very near the Bank of England, surrounded by all the business houses, Lloyds of London.

[51:28] Everybody was running around on the street. I was looking down on the second level and they were all running around with their pinstripe suits and they had their bowler hats and their umbrellas. And I said to my new boss, who I'd just met for one minute, I said, do you feel a bit irrelevant?

And he said, lemmings. Lemmings. The little animals that just run over a cliff.

And he looked on the world around him as in desperate need. And he looked on his ministry as being desperately important. And that is a great perspective.

And that's what we need to recover again. The next question is also on chapter 14, verse 1. Do you think that Deuteronomy chapter 14, verse 1 might also suggest the concept of soul sleep is wrong? You shall not cut yourselves nor shave the front of your head for the dead. I'm not really sure what to say.

[52 : 43] It looks to me like this is a drastic action against your body. Would somebody like to unpack the question?

Yeah. I'll ask the question. Well, I'm thinking if the deaths that they've all put together is so bad by it. Obviously, the struggle is going to be different. At this point, you don't have the same attitude.

Okay. Okay. So, John is raising the question whether this reaction is for people who are committed to a soul sleep idea.

Well, not just that, but the struggle is included. Okay. Okay. So, behind this, this could be people who believe in soul sleep and respond with cutting and shaving of head?

Yes. They're depressed. Okay. They die. They don't think they're all in their tablets. They're jacking them away. Yeah.

[54 : 06] Okay. They don't think they're all in their tablets. My difficulty with the question, John, is it looks as though you're saying these people have a hope called soul sleep.

But it looks as though this reaction is hopeless. Yeah. So, I don't think we know exactly, but it looks as though this is a reaction of despair.

And I think in the face of that, the people of God are called to something different. But there's a PhD waiting to be done on this verse.

In your retirement. Thank you.

Okay. Okay. Now we're going to go to chapter 12, verse 16. In that chapter, it deals with the instructions for worship and framework around that.

[55 : 11] And the verse says, only you shall not eat the blood. So, it's in the context of what they can eat and what they can't eat. But don't eat the blood. You may not eat the blood, but you shall pour it out on the earth like water.

Question. Is there any significance or symbolism in pouring the animal's blood out on the ground? The blood, as you know, is the symbol for the life.

And therefore, I think the Lord taught them not to despise the life. And in some of the more earthy verses of Leviticus, there's a fair discussion of sort of bodily fluids that have got a lot to do with life as well.

And they are all to be treated very sort of reverently and respectfully, not sort of flippantly or carelessly. And so, pouring the blood onto the ground, I think, was a way of saying, the life is gone from this animal.

But we are able to take the flesh for food. But we're not going to play with or muck around with the actual life which only God can give.

[56 : 22] Something like that. I think that was the gist of it. Okay. Next question. Why such an extensive list of things to keep in the law if it is designed to highlight sin and our inability to keep the law?

Surely even a single command would highlight this. Does the extent of the law actually diminish its ability to point out our sin, i.e. more excuse because it's so hard to keep up?

Do you want to read that again? No, no. I think that's helpful. I think when it comes to the animals and birds and fish that could be eaten and couldn't be eaten, that was all pretty manageable. You just had to go down your shopping list and make sure you didn't take this, but you did take this.

But the moral law is much more penetrating. So when you're dealing with the actual commandments, as Jesus said, if you think through the anger law to its end point, you will be convicted.

And that's why, of course, the New Testament tells us the moral law is meant to lead us to Christ. It doesn't, of course, pick us up and take us to Christ. It's helpless. But it tells us that we need a saviour.

[57 : 34] So the law in the Bible acts like an x-ray machine which doesn't solve anything except tell us we have a problem. And into that problem comes the surgeon who is Christ, who fixes.

So I think the law that is in, say, Deuteronomy 14 is a manageable list, not too difficult. Pick and choose. But the moral law was meant to be much more convicting and in God's goodness converting.

Okay, so I think there must be one person out there getting a little bit tired of questions. The other question is, are there sharks on Jupiter? Jupiter? And you may well.

I just have to work this out because somebody hasn't sent me a message before because their name doesn't come up on my screen. But I will work it out. No, just press call.

Somebody just fell off their chest. They've had time to put it on silent. No, while I... Yeah, all right.

[58 : 45] Oh, no. Okay. All right, we'll stop this. It's your what? No. No, I'm pretty sure it wouldn't be her. Okay, where are we up to then? Right, back to here then.

Okay. Okay. So this is chapter 14, commandment 2. Don't give credence to pagan practices. How does this impact upon pagan introduced practices such as formal communion, hot cross buns, sun god celebration, stuff like that? Don't we, in reference to communion, don't we malpractice this as a directive was to reflect every time we eat or have communion, every time we gather to eat and drink, so each meal.

So let's... Did that make it... I didn't read that very well. No, no, that's good. That's a very thoughtful question. I hope this isn't getting too heavy, everybody. These are great questions. I think the question that's just been asked is a little bit like Christmas and Santa.

I don't know what your views are, but it seems to me that the believer has the opportunity of getting the best of both worlds in the best sense, and that we can have the hot cross bun, but we're looking for an opportunity to say the top of this bun is more significant than you realise.

[60 : 06] I mean, are we not able to despoil the Egyptians and have the treasures? But the important thing is that we don't mentally settle for the temporary, but that we're experiencing and enjoying the temporary and even using it to help people appreciate the eternal.

I was about to get into the Santa question, but I realised that this is a reformed church, and I thought that might be too scary. But I think I'll just tell you that from our point of view, we would say to our children, Santa is not real, but there will be some presence at the end of your bed, and Jesus is more wonderful than Santa.

So that was kind of, we grabbed what we could and we offered what we couldn't. Santa's not real? Santa's not real?

Santa's not real? Santa's not real?

[61 : 41] Santa's not real? Santa's not real? Santa's not real? Santa's not real, Santa and ma'amma's real? Santa's not real?

when we read the Bible, is we're looking at the text, we're then asking ourselves, where does this fit in the context? Ah, it's about a battle, invading a promised land. But this is a one-off.

And therefore we might ask the question, how has Jesus changed everything? Well, a much bigger victory, a much bigger battle, a much bigger success.

What's the message for today? Be thankful for what God did for his people, keeping his promises, be especially thankful for what the Lord Jesus has done for us and take refuge in him.

So we're looking carefully, reading our Bible with our brains to make sure that we have either seen something which is just for a particular period and learned from it or whether we've seen something which is forever and tried to be obedient to it.

[62 : 49] But there needs to be some sense as we read our Bible. Next question. You emphasized Israel's response of obedience to the law as following Israel's salvation, i.e. God's grace came first.

And the question is, how do you square that with the conditional nature of the law which Paul contrasts with the gospel in Galatians 3? Doesn't Deuteronomy emphasize that for Israel, life and blessing were conditional on their obedience?

I want to say again, and we'll see this in the session after lunch, that when Moses says, if you disobey, the curses of God will come down on you and you'll be sent out of the land and you'll be in exile, all of that took place.

My question is, when God is speaking to his people, who he knows are his forever people, we know that he's also going to cause them to be repentant and to be restored and to receive mercy.

And so all the time, we're dealing with this covenant faithfulness of God, not wanting to give the impression that behavior is a tightrope that you must walk, which is really precarious, but teaching that the people of God are very much secure on the rock.

[64 : 18] But of course, if we drift, we may go a long way. We may go into a great deal of harm. And the Bible won't play the game of saying, doesn't matter what you do, because it's always dealing with promises and warnings at the same time.

So you cannot get assurance built into a bumper sticker, because God won't say to a person, do what you like. He'll say, you're my people and I'm going to give you eternal life.

But if you turn away and walk a long way away, does that begin to show that you were never a person with life? Because we need the promises and we need the warnings.

And if we remove the promises, we'll be desperate. If we remove the warnings, we'll be stupid. And so he very carefully shepherds us with the two of them. I don't know if I've explained that very well. I think it was R.C. Sproul who said, if you have eternal life, you never lose eternal life. If you lose eternal life, you never had eternal life.

[65 : 31] And that's the careful, systematic theology of assurance, I think. Yeah. I probably confused you there, but I didn't mean to.

There's a number of other questions that have come in, but I think we'll make this the last one at 1227. So this question is, you spoke about showing our lives as being followers of Christ in simple honesty and witness.

As teachers of children and youth, how do you recommend we develop that in our children and youth? Great question. And without a doubt, you want your youth and children to keep hearing how wonderful Jesus is.

It's a big mistake in the ministry with youth and children, whether you're parents or teachers or youth leaders or Sunday school teachers, to keep moralising your children to the point where they just feel as though the whole thing is impossible.

We want people at the end of a talk to go away saying, Jesus is wonderful. We want people at the end of a youth night to go home saying, Jesus is wonderful. We want people at the end of a Sunday school class to go home saying, Jesus is wonderful.

[66 : 47] You know, if you're teaching on Jonah and the whale, you don't want to say to a little kid at a class or as you're tucking them into bed, Jonah ran away and a whale ate him.

If you ever run away, I will pray for a whale to eat you. Now sleep well and I'll see you in the morning. You don't want to do that.

You want to say something like this, how wonderful is God? He cared about those people nobody cared about. He even changed his servant who didn't care either and he made sure that they were all hearing the good news and we have somebody like that called Jesus and he cares about us and he's made it possible for us to be safe.

That's what you want to say. David and Goliath. David was very brave. He got a rock and killed a giant.

When you get to school tomorrow and you see that bully, find a sling, get a rock, be a brave boy.

[68 : 01] Now sleep well and I'll see you in the morning. No. No. How great is God raises up somebody so the enemy is defeated and all God's people are safe.

How blessed are we? God raises up somebody, Jesus, who wins a victory and we belong to him.

That's what we need to be doing. That's how we need to be helping children, youth and adults to be thankful and thankfulness will be a huge part of staying close.

Okay? I'm very tempted to do one more. Are David's sandals vintage Israelite the magic kind that I've never worn out?

Thank you for that. So I'm going to hand it back to Andrew but can I just say one comment on all these questions?

When we come to camps and things like this, our minds just fill with questions. We spend a bit of time studying the scripture and there's just questions arise and those are good things but here's the problem for us.

[69 : 26] We go away from camp and then we just fall into slumber again. We need to, the scriptures are just rich treasures for us. God speaks with a clear single message.

He doesn't speak with a forked tongue. His idea is not to confuse us. We have the resources we need. We've got brains, we've got the spirit working within us, we've got the word, we've got cross-reference, we've got hundreds of years worth of scholarly literature that's been accumulated for us by God's grace and we can answer a lot of our own questions with some serious-minded study of scripture.

So can I encourage you to pursue your own questions, pursue them deeply in the word, ask somebody if you get stuck, cross-reference, but for goodness sake, let's take some responsibility and learn, study, dive into God's word and we will find riches and maturity waiting for us in doing that.

So, Ryland, while it's good to have a speaker to answer our questions, it's not necessary. He's not a cultic figure. I don't mean that with any disrespect. We don't have cultic figures.

We have the word that's immediate and will give life and vitality to us if we will dig into it and live in it. Andrew. Andrew. Andrew. Andrew. Andrew. Andrew.

[70 : 48] Andrew. Andrew. Andrew. Andrew. Andrew. Andrew. Andrew. Andrew. Andrew. Andrew. Andrew. Andrew. Andrew. Andrew. Andrew. Andrew.