

The Foreigner in Deuteronomy

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- [0 : 0 0] Good morning. It's very nice to be here. I'm very excited about it. I hate to do this, but I think I'll do quite a lot of Bible flipping today.
- And I see there's some people without Bibles. So if you could have access to a Bible, that would be great. Yeah. Is that all right? It won't be only Bible, but we'll be going back and forth a little bit.
- Is that all right? That's a Second Day Adventist hymnal. I'm sure it's great, but it's not quite the scriptures. And I've made a little handout as well, so maybe I'll just help pass that around as I begin.
- Thank you. That's from me. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Yeah, I made 30. I think there's more than 30 people here. So maybe this might be a lesson I'm sharing as well.
- The handout is not essential. It's just kind of a rough guide of where I think I'm going. And if you'd like to follow me, you can follow me.
- [1 : 0 9] If you'd like just to listen, you can listen as well. There's quite a lot of Bible references that I'm not going to go through, so they're on there if you want those later. Great. Okay, great.
- I'm still getting set up here. So, as I said, I did a class on the Book of Deuteronomy. I had heard of Daniel Block, and I have read the Book of Deuteronomy, but I've never done any serious study on it before.
- And it was really quite an amazing summer. Every day, so I had 10 days of classes, every day Daniel Block said something that changed quite something significant about what I thought about the Old Testament or the New Testament.
- So he began, the first thing he said in the class, so I'll begin by saying a few comments about the book, because I really appreciated Daniel Block. He said, I've been writing a book about Moses, and I was looking for a picture of Moses to put on the front cover, and I wanted to find a happy picture of Moses.
- And I couldn't. I paid someone to find a happy picture of Moses, and one didn't exist. There's every picture of Moses. He's frowning and stern, and it's wrong because Moses preaches the gospel.
- [2 : 3 6] And Moses is happy. He's not angry. And he spent the whole week trying to tell us that the gospel was in the book of Deuteronomy. It's quite amazing, actually.
- Deuteronomy does have law in it, but it has grace first, and it's good news first. And if there's anything else that you take away from today, you can think about Moses smiling.
- So he's writing a second book about Moses, and he's commissioned someone to make a picture of Moses smiling. So there's now one in existence, a picture of Moses smiling.
- I think I didn't appreciate how important the book of Deuteronomy was. Deuteronomy, Daniel Block argued, Deuteronomy is the most important book in the Old Testament.
- I guess people who study their own book will say their book is the most important. But I think Deuteronomy is at least very, very important. It's the capstone on the Pentateuch.

[3 : 40] It kind of sits there and summarizes it. And it's the foundation for lots and lots of other things in the Old Testament. So all the narratives, like Samuel and Kings and Judges, are sort of like story pictures of what is talked about in Deuteronomy.

All the prophets use Deuteronomy as kind of what they're talking about, basically. So if you read Deuteronomy, and then the prophets side by side, you'll see that the prophets are working out of Deuteronomy and using it as what they're applying.

The wisdom literature actually also is sort of jumping out of Deuteronomy as well. So Deuteronomy is kind of the theological center for the whole Old Testament.

So very, very important. Deuteronomy is theological, theological, and devotional. It has some very clear applications and some very high stories about God.

Deuteronomy is probably the most important place in the Bible for a theology of God's Word. It's very, very clear in Deuteronomy. Really, really wonderful. It was really just great.

[4 : 54] So I kind of just encourage you, have a look at Deuteronomy again. Here is a commentary by Ganga Block, and I just want to recommend it.

I've preached for about four years in my life, and mostly I dislike commentaries.

I hope that's not an offensive thing to say. Mostly I find commentaries a bit boring, and I'm looking for insight. When I read a commentary, I'm looking for not just to tell me what the text says, but trying to give me some why, what is the implications of it, that sort of stuff.

And this is a great commentary for that. Daniel Block has written this. He actually wrote an 800-page commentary, and the people said, we only wanted about 400 pages.

Now, I think he wrote 1,200 pages. They said, we want 400 pages. So this is 400 pages of his commentary, and the full one is about to be released. Bill, do you know if it hasn't been released yet?

[6 : 00] Yeah, yeah, yeah. I think it's coming out at any moment. That's two fat volumes. So this is the light version, and it's really, really wonderful. Yeah, yeah.

Really, really wonderful. Okay, so that's the book of Deuteronomy. Today I'm going to talk about this person or character who is in the book of Deuteronomy, who is, we translate him in English, the foreigner or stranger or sojourner.

I put the little Hebrew word down there. It's letters GR. So GR is how you say it in Hebrew. That's your one little Hebrew word for the day. And this character shows up in the book of Deuteronomy about 15 or 16 or 17 times.

He's all throughout, not in one place. He kind of keeps on showing up. And so I wrote my paper on what does the book of Deuteronomy have to say to us about someone who's a stranger or a foreigner or an outsider or something like that.

So I'm going to begin by just saying, who is this person? Make a little definition of who the foreigner is. And so here's our first Bible verse, Deuteronomy 14, 21.

[7 : 23] But that one's on the sheet. If you can read the sheet. If you can't, you can go to the Bible. So I'll read Deuteronomy 14, 21. You shall not eat anything that has died naturally.

You may give it to the sojourner who is within your towns that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner. For you are a holy people to the Lord. So this comes in the food laws in Deuteronomy.

So don't eat pigs. You can eat the cow. That's good. That bit. And there's this really interesting, almost like a throwaway comment, but it kind of helps us to understand who this character is.

So this bit of the law says, you shall not eat anything that dies naturally. So if you've got a cow that you own, you can kill it and you can eat it, and that's fine.

If you're walking down the street, you come across a dead cow, not okay. We don't know how it's being killed. Maybe the blood hasn't been got rid of properly, some whatever.

[8 : 35] But you may give it to the foreigner who is within your towns. I take it this means that the foreigner person doesn't have to keep kosher.

So they're not bound by the same law. So they're going to be ethnically different. So probably someone from one of the surrounding countries who is meant not be circumcised, might be visually different.

So there's a sense of ethnically different here. The second thing is, notice there's two different people in this verse. It says, you may give it to the sojourner who's within your towns, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to the foreigner.

So there's the sojourner, and there's the foreigner. And it says, you can give it to the sojourner, or you can sell it to the foreigner. So I take it from this.

There's two people, both who are ethnically different, but one of them can't buy the cow carcass from you, because he's poor. The other one can.

[9 : 46] So he has money. He is able to buy. So maybe the second one is like an Egyptian who has come on a business deal.

He's a trader, and he's got goods that he's selling in Israel, and so he has money. He is wherewithal. The sojourner doesn't.

The sojourner's not someone who can afford to buy much. He's a poor person. So I put, he's disadvantaged.

So probably, it's something like a refugee. Yeah. Someone who's ethnically different, who doesn't own land, and is at risk, sort of.

So that's the person we're talking about. And the third thing is, he's semi-permanent. So again, it says, you may give it to the sojourner who is within your towns.

[10 : 44] I think that the idea here is that it's a person who's from another nation who's being forced to live in Israel for whatever reason. And so he's left his home country, left his family.

If he had land, he's left that, and he's been forced somehow to leave that, and now he's living sort of permanently. He's a feature of the culture in Israel.

So, I'm an Israelite. I've got my land, and my wife, and my family, and here's the local, the grr, that he doesn't have much, and we've got to take care of him.

So that's the sort of person we're talking about here. So I've got a quote from a dictionary. It says, this guy, the sojourner, is a man, either alone or with his family, who leaves a village and tribe because of war or famine or epidemic or blood guilt.

That's if he killed someone he has to run away and seeks shelter and residence at another place where his right of land and property, marriage, and taking part in jurisdiction, cult, and war have been curtailed.

[11 : 54] So, this is a person who is ethnically different, who is at risk somehow, and is living in Israel in a semi-permanent way.

So, I think we can sort of think about feelings of strangeness, think about feelings of language barrier, think about feelings of cultural animosity, think about feelings of poverty here and disadvantage.

Yeah. So, there's references to this character all throughout the Old Testament. There's three of them here. And, I've written all the ones in Deuteronomy. So, if you would like to take the sheet home and look throughout Deuteronomy, look up this character, you're welcome to do so.

I'm not going to go through all of them now. That's quite a lot. So, I put down four other references earlier, and the point of these four references is this.

the Israelites saw themselves as sojourners previously. So, in Genesis 15, Abraham says, I am a sojourner.

[13 : 17] He uses this word. So, when God calls him to leave, his own land, he goes to Canaan, and when he's in Canaan, he is a *gur*, a foreigner, a stranger.

He doesn't own his land. God blesses him while he's there. But, all throughout his life, he kind of has this experience of being different, and the New Testament picks up on that. In Genesis 23, God says to Abraham, your children, when they go to, you're talking about Egypt, they will be sojourners.

So, when they go to Egypt, they will have that experience of being foreign, being not from there, and that doesn't go so well for the Israelites there.

Exodus, that's going to be 22. This one was an interesting one. So, this is Moses' wife, and she names their son by this name.

It's Gershom, which means the name of stranger. And she says, I have felt like a stranger in a strange land. And Moses' wife names her son the name stranger.

[14 : 30] It's quite interesting. I don't know what to make of that. So, the point of those references is this. The Israelites have in their minds that their father Abraham was a sojourner, and that they were sojourners when they were in the land of Egypt.

So, it's actually part of their own story, part of their narrative, that we used to be sojourners, and when God rescues them from Egypt, they are not sojourners anymore.

Now, they have a land, they have a place, they have a security, they have identity, and they've moved from this sojourner category into this safe, good category with God.

And that's part of their story, that they were sojourners, and they're not sojourners anymore. Okay, so that's kind of the background of what's happening. And these characters are there, and it's in the mind of Israel's.

Okay, so, let's go to Deuteronomy. Let's go to Deuteronomy 24. If you have a Bible, I'm going to read from the Bible. If you don't, that's fine, I'll read it out loud.

[15 : 42] Deuteronomy 24. So, we're going to look carefully at two bits of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy 24.

So, Deuteronomy 24 is in the laws. From about chapter 12 to chapter 26, it's just a bunch of laws.

There's some organization, but not much. Just all these things. And right at the end of chapter 24, we get this section, and I'll call them humanitarian laws.

They're laws of compassion. And this is one of the important places where the stranger is mentioned. Okay, I'm going to read starting at verse 14 to the end of chapter 24.

Moses says, You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor or needy, whether he is one of your brothers or one of the sojourners who are in your land, within your towns.

[16 : 56] You shall give him his wages on the same day, before the sun sets, for he is poor and counts on it. Lest his heart cry against you to the Lord, and you be guilty of sin. Fathers shall not be put to death because of their children, nor shall children be put to death because of their fathers.

Each one shall be put to death for his own sin. You shall not pervert justice to the sojourner or to the fatherless, or take a widow's garment in pledge.

But you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you from there. Therefore, I command you to do this. When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it.

It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over them again.

It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not strip it afterwards. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.

[18 : 11] You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt. Therefore, I command you to do this. I just love these verses. I think they're wonderful.

Really, they're a call for those who own land and have money to be kind to those who don't own land and do not own money.

That's basically what they're doing. So there's four laws here. The second one doesn't have anything to do with what I'm talking about, so I'm going to talk about it. So the first one is verse 14 and 15.

And that's about which one is it? Wages. That's right. So verse 15, you shall give him his wages on the same day.

So this is when you have a field and you hire somebody and so I have a field of wheat and it's time for reaping, say.

[19 : 15] This strange person or even another Israelite comes and I hire him for the day. Moses says, I have to pay him that day. I need to pay him that day.

We are a culture that wages is quite normal. In Israelite culture, if you were paid wages, it meant you didn't own land, which means that you're definitely in the lower society.

So the fact that you're working for wages means you're in, you didn't want to work for wages. That's, you wanted to have your land, that's what you wanted, but if you don't have land, then you're dependent on those who do have land to get anything that you have and you don't have your own land and you can't get your own food.

So wages are the food that you'll eat that day. So Moses says, someone works for you, you've got to pay him that day. Verse 14 says, you shall not oppress a hired servant.

And so if, if I'm a owner of property and I have a person coming, if I pay them the next day or the day afterwards, Moses calls that oppression.

[20 : 29] It's quite interesting. Even if I do pay them but a little bit late, he says, that's oppression. I think that has to do with this idea of there are those who have in Israel land.

One of the things that Daniel Block pointed out was very interesting was who are these laws addressed to? And he was actually talking about firstly the Ten Commandments.

And he said the Ten Commandments in the first place is not addressed to all people in Israel. It's addressed to male landowners because he talks about when you have slaves, when you have a wife, don't covet that other person's slave or that other person's wife.

Very interesting. So, I don't, the Ten Commandments still applies to all of us. Don't worry about that. but it's actually taking a view of how justice works in society.

And Moses is talking firstly to those who have, those who have land, those who, so, the father was the head of the household and was viewed as the authority over that.

[21 : 42] And Moses says, that's the person that I need to hold accountable first. It's the person who has, the person who has some sort of power or respect or authority.

And that is the person who the laws are, so you who have the power, you need to make sure when you use that power, it's used in a compassionate and kind way that looks after other people.

Quite, quite interesting. And that's the same here. So, it's a law to those who have land to protect those who do not have land. And here's the key bit here, verse 14.

He says, you shall not oppress the hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he is a brother or one of the sojourners who are in your land, in your town. I just get the sense that Moses is aware that there are these foreigners sojourners around and Moses cares about them.

And he says, don't forget to be kind to the sojourner. Verse 17 is the next one. So, that was about wages. This one is about when you make a promise.

[22 : 51] So, you shall not pervert justice due to the sojourner or the fatherless. You shall not take a widow's garment in pledge, but you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord, your God, redeemed you from there.

Therefore, I command you to do this. So, here is a poor person who maybe I'm loaning like my cow for the day or maybe I'm loaning my garment or something, my money so they can do something.

And when, when I loan that thing, there's other laws about pledging, but this is particular for the fatherless, the widow, and the sojourner.

And I can't take their cloak. So, this could be for two reasons. One, it could be for the cold. Maybe if I take their cloak for the night, it'll be a hard night for them to sleep.

It might also do because of decency. So, it mentions the widow in particular and maybe there'll be some sort of shame associated with not having that particular garment.

[24 : 00] I'm not sure which it is, but the idea is when you, when you loan to someone who has ability, I can be a little more stricter with what pledge I take.

But when I loan to someone who is a sojourner or a widow, I just have to be a little bit understanding that even the pledge they give me back isn't going to be so good. And the third one is about verse 19 to 20.

This one I think is a bit famous. So, I'll read the first verse. When you reap your harvest in your field, you shall forget a sheaf in the field. You shall not go back to get it.

It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. So, I have my land, I have wheat, I send my servants to go cut the wheat down.

Don't go to the edges. You've got to leave some at the edges. Same for olives. So, it says don't beat the olive trees twice.

[25 : 06] So, I think they had like sticks and they'd whack the olive trees and the things come down and I'm going there whacking the things. So, probably, like, I'm the servant watching my, I'm the master, sorry, watching my servants go back and forth and I see they hit it once and most of them came down but there's some olives left in the tree.

Go back, beat the tree again so I'm going to get all my olives. And God says, no, you need to, they go through once and that's good and you get your olives but leave some olives on the tree so that the foreigner, the widow, and the orphan can go pick for themselves.

And same for grapes. When you go for grapes, go through once, don't go back a second time. And the point of it is this.

It's again, it's generosity. It's saying, we, this person who owns the land has material goods for bread, olive oil, and wine and we need to leave some so that these people who don't have land can get it for themselves.

I think the idea is this. The land doesn't belong to this person who has. It actually belongs to God. It's a strong theme in Deuteronomy.

[26 : 32] The land belongs to God and it's sort of like on loan to the people who are there. And because it's on loan, they need to be aware of the fact that it's on loan to them.

And so, they leave some, and some commentators think it even, it's even expressed in a way that those edges don't belong to the person who has the land.

They belong in a sense to this sojourner, widow, orphan. and it's giving an opportunity for dignity actually. We don't even just give them food, we give them a chance to have a bit of work and people who do this sort of thing often talk about restoring dignity.

I think this is a restorative dignity type thing. Okay, so, there's a little section where the sojourner comes up in almost every verse and there are these three laws and they're basically laws of compassion.

laws of kindness, laws of understanding. So, here's this character, the sojourner and God, as Moses, is calling the people of Israel, remember this person and when we do business, let's make sure we think about this person.

[27 : 49] Okay, that's the first section that I'm going to spend some time on and the second one is Deuteronomy 10. So, let's go to chapter 10. Am I making sense?

Okay, good. Okay, yes, Deuteronomy 10. Deuteronomy, from chapter 5 to chapter 11 is just wonderful.

It really is just wonderful. It, it's the, it's the, so chapter 12 starts kind of the laws and chapters 1 to 4 are mostly kind of the story, although chapter 4 is going into, again, really wonderful things.

but chapter 5 to 6 is kind of like this section of preaching and he goes between like high theology and really like amazing calls to love God and this is where Jesus gets lots of his stuff from.

And, so chapter 10 verse 12 to 11 verse 1 is sort of the central three commands actually in this whole section.

[29 : 21] So, there's the Ten Commandments and there's the Shema and those are quite important but this little section is almost as important. And, there's three commands in this section.

So, verse 12 God commands fear the Lord to walk in his ways and to love him and to serve him with all your heart and soul. That's one command.

Verse 16 is circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart and verse 20 you shall fear the Lord you shall serve him.

So, these are the three kind of central calls that Moses is making in this section and yeah, they're wonderful.

So, I'm only going to talk about the second one which is verse 16 to 19 because this is where the sergeant comes and I'll just say this, it's quite amazing that the sergeant comes here.

[30 : 20] This is sort of the central like Moses, this is the one thing I want you guys to get and the sergeant is there right right in the middle of it.

It's quite amazing. Okay, verse 16 I'll read out this kind of one command. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart and be no longer stubborn.

For the Lord your God is God of gods and the Lord of lords the great and mighty and awesome God who is not partial and takes no bribe.

He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow and loves the sojourner giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner therefore for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

So the New Testament picks up this language of circumcising your hearts. Circumcise the foreskin of your hearts. Moses said it first. It's there. And in this command Moses ties it to one application and that is loving the sojourner.

[31 : 33] He says to have a circumcised heart the one thing you need to make sure you have to have a circumcised heart is you love the ethnically different poor sojourner in your midst.

Very interesting. And Moses gives two motivations here. And I think as I think about how we do think about compassion to the poor today this would be the first text I'd go to in the whole scripture I think actually.

yeah. So God gives two reasons that they're to love the sojourner. The first is God loves them.

That's the first reason. So verse 17 and 18 the Lord is your God the Lord your God is God of gods Lord of lords the great and mighty and awesome God who is not partial and takes no bribe.

He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow and loves the sojourner giving him food and clothing. So here are the two parts of God. God is big he is the God of gods he is strong he controls everything he made the world we call this the transcendent God he's beyond even all the other gods that they've heard of he is great this God loves the widow the outsider the foreigner he does justice to these people and he loves them it's these two parts of God he's the mighty one who loves the disadvantaged he's the strong powerful one who gives justice to the widow who can't get justice for herself because she's got no power in society and he loves the sojourner giving him food and clothing so somehow as we think about the sojourner he he gets along somehow he eats he has some clothes and

[33 : 48] God has given that to him God has provided for him very interesting so God says I I love that's that word I love the sojourner we need to remember that Israel thought of themselves the elect nation right verse 14 no verse 15 the Lord set his heart in love on your fathers so Israel has a strong sense that God has chosen us and God has loved us Moses has been very clear it's not because you guys are really good that I love you that previously but nonetheless it's quite clear in Deuteronomy that God loves Israel and now right after that here he says God loves the sojourner and that's the first reason that's the first reason Moses calls people to do that so verse 19 is the second reason and he says love the sojourner therefore for you were sojourners in the land of

Egypt so if the first reason to love the sojourner is that God loves the sojourner the second is this sense of identity that Israel had we used to be sojourners as I said before Abraham was a sojourner all the people of Israel in Egypt were sojourners they were there foreign and now they've been brought out and they're not anymore they got land they got safety God's protecting them and because basically God says you know what it was like it's not because you're great that you're not sojourners anymore this is part of who you are and part of who you were don't forget what happened in Egypt and this will help you not to be like Egypt because they treated you like that and I want you to be different I want you to remember what that's like so in this section

God is calling he puts the one application of circumcised hearts as loving the sojourner to me that's quite astounding actually and he gives two reasons I think they can be for us two reasons that God loves the sojourner and that in New Testament terms most of us probably here are Gentiles and we were strangers from the promise we were strangers from the people of God Paul will say and we have a similar sort of narrative spiritually okay let me second my time I'm doing well I think we go till maybe I'll try and go 50 more minutes and then time for questions is that right yeah yeah okay so there's a lot more references it's quarter now yeah yeah yeah and I'll go I won't go through these next five I'll just talk about them there's something that I did not expect in

Deuteronomy and that is this it's like by living in the land although he doesn't eat kosher the sojourner begins to operate like one of the people of Israel like to kind of include him and there's three things he gets included in he gets included in the sabbath so in the ten commandments God says make sure you have the sabbath and he has a list of people make sure you have sabbath your female servant your man servant your donkey your ox and make sure that the sojourner who's probably hired for you make sure he has sabbath as well festivals there's three big festivals let's see if I can get them there's Passover the festival of booths and the festival of harvest I think and anyone help me out here

I think those three yeah if you'd like the 16 verse 9 to 17 talks about them and when they have festivals not for Passover interestingly for the second to God says when you have these festivals make sure you include this stranger make sure you include the widow the orphan and make sure you include the sojourner I think there's a sense of as for Israel the sabbath and the yearly festivals are a strong part of what it means for them to the people of God that's the ongoing activity that's pointing to the realities of what God has done the cult we call it and they're sort of being included in these activities because they're living there and the third one was quite interesting so I put they're included in the covenant but I put a question mark on that so in 29 and 31 are the two covenant ceremonies to the end of

[39 : 03] Deuteronomy and they're there at the covenant ceremony so one of them is about when the Levites read the Bible I think it's just once I think it's every seven years that's this one so every seven years the Levites have to stand up and read the book of Deuteronomy so Moses says here's this book this book of Deuteronomy this book is like the covenant document as a people of God it's got to be in your heads so I want you to read it out every seven years and keep reading it out and Levi's going to get up and you sit and he's going to read and it's going to take a couple hours and this is important not every year every seven years a couple hours and the sojourner has to be there and they have to listen to it it's quite interesting and I think yeah

I don't know what we say about this theologically but the sojourner is different they don't eat kosher but they're sort of being kind of like the covenant has porous boundaries almost and it's quite interesting anyways maybe you can ask me about that okay so just to put this all together so here's a summary of what Deuteronomy says the book of Deuteronomy is a big book with lots of stuff and some of the things in the book of Deuteronomy is laws about how we live and I think about it like this Moses is thinking about all sorts of stuff one of the things on his radar is this person the stranger the foreigner and Moses says don't forget this person don't forget the stranger as you do your business as you loan out stuff remember you were sojourners and I love this person so you need to make sure you also consider this person and love this person and it's a kind of a humanitarian impulse

I think part of the book has a picture of God blessing the people of Israel they get lands they get safety from enemies they get rain that makes harvest and crops grow and God is giving them a physical monetary economic abundance and God says share that that's meant to not bless just you only that's meant to bless other people okay so Deuteronomy has this impulse I think impulse is the right word impulse to make sure we care for this character the stranger okay so I'll just chase this idea a little bit through the Old Testament and the New Testament the afterlife of the idea yeah this is really interesting I think a lot of people here will have seen this in the New Testament maybe you've seen it in the Old Testament before so I'll say it in the Old Testament first there's this two motions that's happening and so one motion is a motion of inclusion and compassion and this happens throughout the Old

Testament so for example Psalm 146 verse 9 says Yahweh watches the sojourner so there's lots of verses like this in the Old Testament so God is looking to see how this person gets treated he makes sure this person gets treated well Jeremiah 6 7 7 6 yeah the verses are on the sheet sorry if you don't have a sheet I'm very sorry I have not blessed you with all my abundance it's two sided yeah thank you yeah that's what it was there's two sides on the sheet yeah on the back here yeah so point number seven the afterlife of this idea Jeremiah 6 7 is an accusation Jeremiah makes to the people of Israel you have not done justice to the sojourner and that accusation happens about seven or eight or nine times in the prophets and they're saying you know all these things you're doing wrong you know your bad sacrifices you're you know lying to each other you're taking bribes one of the things the prophets say is you have not done justice to the sojourner the stranger the book of

Ruth when Naomi goes she becomes a sojourner when she leaves Israel and some commentators think we talked about the gleaning laws the harvesting laws maybe the whole book of Ruth can be thought about as kind of like a narrative illustration of what that harvest law is about right a guy with land compassionately gives to a person who's ethnically different and poor and needs help and he blesses her through his blessing quite amazing Ezekiel 47 is very interesting this is near the end of Ezekiel and he's looking towards the new thing the new Jerusalem and he's talking about the land and he says the sojourners are going to get their own piece of land in the new heavens and the new earth very interesting these people who don't get land in the original real historical covenant in the new thing

[45 : 03] God's going to give even them land so much land and so much abundance even these people on the outside so in Deuteronomy and throughout the Old Testament there's this kind of motion I'm going to call inclusion and God is trying to say we need to include the stranger and care for him and to love him but there's also this other motion of exclusion what I mean is exclusion from this earth so a sense of that even the people of Israel are sojourners as they live here and we're being separated so why don't you look up Psalm 119 verse 19 this is quite interesting I think we've read this idea in the New Testament before but I had never seen this in the Old Testament Psalm 119 the longest chapter in the Bible verse 19 says

I am a sojourner on the earth hide not your commandments from me and I take it this is talking about an allegiance to God first and to the earth second saying that even for an Israelite their allegiance was to God and there's a sense of even even in the land of Israel I don't really belong here where I belong with this God so these two motions this motion of inclusion a motion of exclusion from the earth happen in the New Testament so the most important thing to say would be probably the Gentiles so Ephesians 2 Paul says to the Gentiles you are no longer strangers and aliens but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God so this motion that comes of foreigners being included goes into the New

Testament and spills out into the Gentiles being included into the people of God and that's one of the big deals of the New Testament I think there's also sort of this idea is picked up in a relationship with God so in Hebrews it talks about drawn near to God I think this is the same sort of idea of like being coming closer to God those who are away come closer the life of Jesus I think we can think about Jesus' life in this frame really well I guess this has to do with boundaries barriers things people need to cross so there's poverty and ethnicity here and Jesus comes and he looks at those barriers and he crosses them so I put down Mark 4 34 this is when Jesus heals the woman who's been bleeding for years and there's lots to say about that story but one thing to say about that story is there's many social barriers she's a woman she is unclean because of her bleeding she's ritually unclean and people shouldn't touch her because of that she's now poor and she's religiously out so there's all these barriers that exist and Jesus comes and he crosses those barriers all of them and he she touches his robe but then he speaks to her and he talks to her and he gives her a new identity and he proclaims forgiveness and salvation over her quite amazing yeah quite amazing

I think there's this impulse in the New Testament for including those who are out but again there's also this opposite of exclusion so the most clear is 1 Peter 2 Peter says beloved I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh which wage war against your soul so as Christians now we have a deep sense that this is not the place that we belong and we we are somehow sojourners strangers foreigners we don't belong here where we belong is with God and we're waiting to go here to go and be with him and that will determine how we live our lives and there's two motions I was surprised to find both those motions in the Old Testament actually but I think we've heard about those in the Old Testament before a motion of including those who are out but feeling like we're out as well somehow because of the fact that God's chosen us okay so

I'll just say some thoughts and applications so this is mostly just being kind of trying to show you what's there and I'll just say a couple of words so I think after a talk like this it would be easy for someone like me to say this is the most important thing and we all need to do this with all of our lives and I don't want to say that I think Christian ethics and Old Testament ethics is complicated I think there's many things that have to be thought about maybe it's like a huge big woven pattern big beautiful thing and maybe what I'm saying is this this theme of sojourners is like one of the colors that should be there for us so it's not the whole thing it's not even maybe the most important thing but it should be there it should be there this impulse to love strangers love the outsiders somehow that should be part of what it means to be the church to have this kind of impulse there's lots of other impulses and I don't want to say this is the most important one or exclude other ones but it should be one of one of the characteristics of what it means to be the church to do this

[51 : 35] I think we can draw three application lines for who is the gir that we should think about the foreigner I think there's a very like straight application when we think about refugees here in Vancouver people who are ethnically from somewhere else who have a serious amount of disadvantage and need our help it's a big subject it's a complicated subject and some Christians have a big sense of being called to that and some Christians don't have a big sense of being called to that and I'm very thankful for friends like Sophia Underhill or Sophia Turner who yeah like just go to that and are drawn to help with that I think we can draw a sort of broader application line to those who are disadvantaged so

Deuteronomy has the foreigner and the widow and the orphan and the common thing between those things is that they are at some sort of economic disadvantage and I think there should be an impulse in the church to care again it should not be the only impulse it's not the main thing maybe even but it should be there should be an impulse for us as a church and maybe maybe I have a picture of the whole church has lots of different parts about who we are lots of different impulses and all of the impulses should be there contained in the church and in our own lives each of us will have our significant passions but maybe we should all be non experts in all the things so for example not everyone's an evangelist but we should all be able to get along in evangelism you know when someone asks you be prepared to give a reason for the hope that you have right so

I've got friends who are strong evangelists I'm not a strong evangelist but I feel like I'm prepared to give a reason maybe it's a bit like that not all of us have this main calling to love the disadvantage but I think we should all be prepared to give love for the reason of the hope that we have maybe something like that and the third line of application is just I'll say stranger and I think part of what's happening in Deuteronomy is that there's these barriers and today we have lots of these barriers multicultural society lots of things happening Vancouver loneliness isolation and all sorts of perceived and real barriers ethnic age race gender life position life situation those sorts of things and then my neighbor who I don't know those sorts of things I think this impulse to cross those barriers because

God crossed a barrier to us should be a strong one I'll say one more thing and that's this as in Deuteronomy for us if there is any impulse to love the outsider it has to be a gospel motivation and the gospel motivation is we were outsiders and that God has loved us and brought us in okay I think I've done about my time thank you very much for listening yeah so we're taking questions that was a hand right away great more more more more more like an illustration paying daily one time when I was quite poor age he had no food I went to the casual labor office and was sent out and I was paid by check that may have seemed reasonable enough but in that time and place I couldn't get any money from it then so I had to wait until the next morning plus I couldn't go to the casual labor office at the same time so I missed possible opportunity that was a serious inconvenience yeah yes thank you yeah

I think I think that's right I think part of I didn't say part of what's happening with Deuteronomy is those who have actually need to be organized so those who are at some sort of advantage don't be put in these situations and actually Moses calls that oppression quite interesting yeah just on that thought I mean maybe from a labor background but the only negotiating tool you have as a worker is your work and if somebody owes you money you can't go to another employer right then you're hooked into that person and so I think it would be really easy to have that power over that person if they keep coming back and you can kind of treat them the way you want because you've made them dependent on you and I think it's kind of insidious when you're in a position of power to have a hold over someone and not and maybe just it's ignorance you don't understand just how much an impact that will have on the person's next day but I also see it as kind of creating a kind of a hostage situation where they have to keep working only for you because if they go to the next employer they're not available to go back to you to try to get the wages that you owe them from the floor yeah this has been interesting

[57:17] I don't think I've ever taken Deuteronomy quite as seriously as I am now going to do you refer to generosity in a number of things in the days when I used to write term papers like you do I did one about the development of social responsibility in western culture and it comes from the Jewish law and I don't think we always realize how different this tribe was on that subject from the surrounding ones it only has a real reference to a society that made any law and it was coded it's the code of Hammurabi which predates the writings that we have about anything related to social responsibility the danger that women and children were in if she was widowed slavery was just really a huge danger unless there were other people that would look after you if you lost your husband that really placed you in major disadvantage our societies have carried that through and you compare it with countries that were broadly influenced by

Buddhism you do not find this I know social workers that went into places in India for instance at the end of World War II trying to get people to look after the populations that were hugely displaced there and in need and it was a hard sell they didn't want to do it why would you do that you know you talked about it being an impulse I would suggest it's learned behavior that God is trying to teach them this is what I want you to do that you will always have sojourners or you will always have others that you need to take some responsibility for at some time and it has been a major impact because all of that was transferred loving your neighbor as yourself etc.

into the gospel that went to Gentiles I actually did wonder if this was a method of proselytism with Jews if people who had to be included in the festivals and they had to eat with you but not the same things you know this kind of stuff if it actually brought some people into Judaism and it's remarkable the difference sort of pre-coming out of Egypt and going into Egypt I mean you look at the way people treat each other even in this tribe Abraham put a woman into exile that he had been responsible for Joseph was sold by his brothers Jacob well maybe Jacob is best not talked about but there were different they did not have this law and God I guess thought okay they're ready for it I can't leave them to their own time yeah thank you that's yeah lots of interesting things yeah there's a bit in

Deuteronomy that I didn't talk about where God says there will be no poor amongst you anymore and then he turns around three or four verses later and says when there's poor people make sure you care for them it's quite interesting yeah yeah and there will always be poor people and just quoting Deuteronomy actually yeah yeah is Mr.

Bob sympathetic with that as a Tom Wright picture I find it extremely attractive I hope it's true but in Deuteronomy yeah the hidden presence is Adam and Eve that Adam and Eve have been kicked out of the garden because they just made a law and God's going to create a new Adam and Eve in a land one with the law it's all been made very complicated by sin but God is recapitulating the story and he's going to get it right with humanity at the end and I just find that like Sheila saying Abraham is still in Adam that's the problem and so are the Patriots all the Patriots Moses is in Adam and God is working on the salvation story is Mr.

[61 : 38] Bob does he think that way I want to put the Pentateuch together in other words I don't want to be another isolated text sure yeah yeah yeah sorry is your question about what does Daniel Bloch say about yeah does he have a big narrative what's the big narrative in the Pentateuch I think there is one I don't know what it would be if not that yeah yeah so yeah Daniel Bloch is very very interesting and he spent a long time talking about how basically God is a God of gospel always in starting from Genesis 1 throughout to Revelation one of the things he made a big point about was in Deuteronomy chapter 6 when at the end of Sathashimah and then your son comes and says dad what's the meaning of all these laws what's what's the you know we have to you know keep something on the edge of our house and we have to priest wear these kind of funny bells and what's what's the deal and you when your son asks you this you shall say my father was a wandering

Aramean and we were slaves in Egypt and God saved us from that and so the point is the whole of the Pentateuch is the story of grace that God is giving grace and the meaning of all these laws is that God has saved us and I think you're right and to take anything that I've said today or anything that's anything in the law out of that story that story of grace is that's going to add up to moralism and that's going to be deeply problematic I think yeah I think that's right yeah I felt quite a relief when you reached the point of saying that you know what in spite of what I've been saying before the land really isn't ours it belongs to God yes yes we are maybe the word you use would be stewards yes because until you reached that point I was feeling some anxiety the way you regard Deuteronomy today I think we have to set beside it the book of Kings and the exile and what happens to Israel and that there in God's great plan there is no temple on earth yes yes thank you yeah

I have not talked about Genesis no kings maybe that's been a problem yet thank you yeah yeah and we think carefully about how to do law applications it's quite complicated and I haven't done any thinking about that for this talk thank you yeah yeah just a comment I'm reminded the whole talk kind of reminded me of Romans 1 where after God says that everybody knew God that they neither glorified God nor gave thanks to him sure and it seems to me like the whole thing is about gratitude and realizing and grace as you said yeah that any good that I've got is not because of anything that I've done because God has been gracious to me and it's just the recognition of that and saying that even my even any more behavior than I've got I'd like to say that any bad that I do is my fault and any good that I do is God's fault and it seems like

I think it's Philippians where it says that God is at work in me both to will and to do as good pleasure so it just seems like a natural extension to say that if God has blessed me so abundantly with material provisions even with any good behavior that I've got that I realize that any shortcomings that anybody else has any lack of hell or any lack of provisions are God's opportunity for me to minister to God's and it also reminds me of Habakkuk the last the closing of Habakkuk where the guy saying there's no birds in the field there's no fruit on the trees yet I will give thanks to you that kind of speaks to me that we're just kind of passing through the next world yeah thank you yeah

I think yeah that's right good ramblings so maybe a land comment as we close yeah you know the thing with the slaves in different cultures like first nations where you take on someone as a slave because in those days there wasn't subsidized housing and in the Portuguese they were Christians but they had a huge slave trade from northwest Africa to Brazil and their slaves they invented that cap wear to disguise a martial art sedan so they didn't feel very very treated so in different cultures than how the slaves would be in Hebrew culture so different it would be very interesting in different historical cultures as what you did when you researched Deuteronomy thanks Jo well thank you Ben for that amazing insight into Deuteronomy I've said that I I'm not I'm not a big reader of Deuteronomy not even every seven years so you have inspired me and I just

[67 : 22] I don't know how you have maybe we'll do that at St. John's in seven years we'll meet back and I will be reading but I really love I think it's been so insightful and helpful about the Old Testament applies to our daily life and how do we walk better one of the tenants of learners exchange is talking about applications for Christian living so it's just been so helpful and we appreciate you so much and we would love to see that thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you