

Fresh Look At Deuteronomy with Rev. Harry Robinson Pt 2

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Preacher: Harry Robinson

[0 : 00] ...for sermons to them. That's the context in which this has happened. And he's saying, this is who you are. Please don't forget it. And that's what he's saying in verse 5 following.

I have taught you decrees and laws, as the Lord my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of.

To me, it's very important that Moses says, I'm not teaching you these laws. I'm passing on to you what the Lord commanded me. And you see, that's what our Anglican worship should be about. It shouldn't be the latest ideas of contemporary preachers who mucked off too much, of which I have been one most of my life.

But it's the people who go beyond that to what the Lord is committing. So that you've got, it's making that connection.

[1 : 10] Observe them carefully, he says in verse 6. This will show you, show your wisdom and understanding to the nations who will hear all about these decrees.

and say, surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. Maybe you can give me the source of this quote.

But some famous person said to some famous person at some famous moment in history, give me one word that proves the existence of God.

And the answer that was given was, the Jews. That's a very profound answer.

And when you think of the peculiar nation they are throughout all the world, the number of Jews in the world is probably less than the population of British Columbia.

[2 : 24] I mean, it's very small, relatively speaking. But the influence, I mean, there isn't a paper published that news of what's happening in the Jewish world isn't there.

So, there they are, and they are recognized by the nations. What other nation is so great as to have their God near them the way the Lord, our God, is near us whenever we pray to him?

There's the contrast between the religion of the Jews and the religion of the other nations. And what other nation is so great as to have sure, righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?

You know, one day during this week I've got a copy of the Canadian Constitution that I'm going to bring in and read to you. Just a very brief excerpt to show you.

Because you see, what the book of Deuteronomy is about is to remind this people whom they have...

[3 : 51] is to remind this people of what's happened. First, they were...

there was Abraham. You know, this is why I read that psalm. Abraham is brought out of Ur of the Chaldees. Abraham is promised a land. Abraham is finally given a son.

Isaac inherits the land. And Isaac gives birth to Jacob. And Jacob gives birth to 12 sons.

Famine comes to the land. So that just at the point when the sons of Abraham were becoming a nation with a land of their own, suddenly famine descends and they disappear into a dominant culture of Egypt.

And there in that dominant culture of Egypt, though they grow vastly in numbers, their place in Egypt goes down and down until they are slaves.

[4 : 59] and the promise that God made is just about left until Moses comes along and says...

calls these people out and gives them back their sense of being a nation. And we went through the plagues and all the things that happened and how ultimately this nation of slaves drawn out from among a dominant and alien culture suddenly crossed the Red Sea.

You know. And there... And you can get it. When they cross the Red Sea, then they are in the wilderness.

And when they... And then they spend 40 years in the wilderness. And then this book is written on the eve of them going into the promised land.

And you see, one of the really difficult things about the Bible is that they knew how to live in dependence upon God.

[6 : 19] or clearly in the wilderness than they did in the promised land. And you could... You could actually...

And you see, one of the really difficult things about the Bible is that they knew how to live in dependence upon God more clearly in the wilderness than they did in the promised land.

And you could... You could actually identify your own spiritual biography by looking at the question of where you are in your spiritual pilgrimage.

You know, you know, are you lost in your culture and enslaved to it? Yeah, that's one possible position.

Are you in a position of utter dependence upon the Lord, which is the wilderness position? He's got to provide water.

[7 : 36] He's got to provide quail. He's got to provide bread. You live in sort of hand-to-mouth dependence upon God, which is the picture of what life in this world is about really is that we are as a people living in hand-to-mouth dependence upon God.

that that was what the communion service this morning was about, was this sense of that's that's our reality. Our reality is that we had ample pancakes and bacon for breakfast that we don't live by pancakes and bacon alone, as the book of Deuteronomy says.

We live by the word of God. And that word is imparted to us in the sacraments of bread and wine.

That's that's the source of our life. That's the source of the life of people in the wilderness. And there they are on their way into the promised land.

And what Moses is saying all the way through here is, this is one of the things, don't forget, don't forget, don't forget, remember, remember, remember.

[8 : 58] Because you've got to live as though you were in the wilderness even though you're in the promised land. While our culture says we are in the promised land, why do we act like we're in the wilderness?

Only because we are. You know, that's, and that's what our culture can't understand and what we can easily be deceived with in ourselves.

Well, that's it, you see, the forging of a nation. so that's why Moses says to them in verse 9, only be careful, watch yourself closely so that you don't forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live.

life. You know, you're to live with a full heart at the heart of your being, the center of your being, is the source of your life and that is, you know, thy law have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against you.

I want to live out of a heart that is, understands God, like the Puritans said, a heart that wills to obey God, like the Puritans said, a heart that loves God, to fire our will and our understanding.

[10 : 44] You see, the genius of Anglicanism, if I may say something in me, is that the great leaders of Anglicanism are people who had both, I mean, we have great, great scholars in Anglican history.

Can you think of Cranmer and Hooker, and it goes on all the way through Anglican history. George Herbert, John Don, all those, and I suppose T.S.

Eliot and people like that, brilliant men, but whose will was, they weren't brilliant in the detached academic sense of our culture that says, you know, you can separate the two.

They were brilliant because they understood with their minds and they love, and they will to obey, and they love the God whom they knew.

And you find that lot together. And that's why, you know, that you, that's the genius, if you want, behind the best of Anglican liturgy.

[12 : 11] Teach them to your children and to their children after them. Remember, be careful, watch, remember, remember the day you stood, in verse 10, the day you stood before the Lord at Horeb.

And that's, you know, that's Sinai. When he said to me, assemble the people before me to hear my words, they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children.

See, that's, that's, that's, I, I gotta quit, because it's, it's time to do it, but, and, I could handle it with, we have, we have some time to get it tonight if you're free.

But, does anybody want to ask a question before, or, anybody got a question?

to, we can refresh our minds on Deuteronomy so that we don't miss out anything in the discussion?

[13:42] for instance, you've started to verse 4, have you got a suggestion that we should maybe read a chapter, not verse 4, chapter 4, read 1 to 4 or something so that we keep up read a book.

Or is for you to think that's necessary? What we should do? Ruth, you tell me whether you think this is true or not, but what I would like to contend is that Deuteronomy is not a book to be read sequentially necessarily, you know.

It's not like a novel which opens in the first chapter and moves towards the climax and then fades into a happy conclusion for people to happily ever after.

So that I want the sort cumulative impact of Deuteronomy so that I don't consider it to be, you know, I can't, it would be impossible to go through Deuteronomy verse, even if I had the wick key in this week.

But what I want to do is pick up themes and show you themes in chapter four in a sense summarizes a lot and you, you know, I think that you should read as much as you can and can enjoy, you know, but I'm a terrible reader, you know, and I get lost.

[15:29] Unless I have a pencil to underline and a notebook to write things down in and that kind of thing, I find it hard just to sit and read through something like Deuteronomy.

Like, you can give yourself an excuse and say, I'm going to study all the geographical references in Deuteronomy and that'll keep you awake and alive and you can write them all down or you can write down, you know, pick out a theme of something like remember or don't forget or know or heart or there's all sorts of typical words like that that can carry you through because the story sequence won't carry you through.

When are we presenting you the chapter? During, during, when, when, when we come together each time I will call on one of you to give us a chapter of the line just and take five minutes to do it. Well, did you get your question answered? Yes. Well, I think, I think I did. So we should just relax and, and float with you and, and not worry about covering Deuteronomy and our, just work on what we've discussed in the poem.

Well, there is a sense in which by the end of the week you'll have a pattern. I mean, as I say, Deuteronomy is basically four sermons and, and, there's lots of places to get bogged down in Deuteronomy when you should slip lightly over the top at least once or twice because, because otherwise I left these here for you so as you can, if you do get bogged down you can come and get some help from one of these.

[17:30] What are the four sermons? What are the four sermons? They're the book of Deuteronomy. Oh, yeah, but, I think where, which, do you want to know where they are?

Yes. All right, I'll call on Mr. Craigie to tell you exactly where the four sermons are. The first sermon is 444.

Wait a minute. Oh, yeah, the first one is 1-6 to 4-43.

The second sermon is 444 to 2619.

We didn't get out of church until 1 o'clock. the third sermon is 27-1 to 28-69.

[18:54] It's actually to 29-1, you better put. And, and the fourth sermon is 29-1 to 30-20.

And then the postscript is the rest of the book. Harry, if you're jumping around a bit and not in sequence, does that mean that we don't know when we will be called on for our text here?

Or will it be 1-2-3-4? I think it'll just be 1-2-3-4 because, because the themes come up again and again in, in that different.

Since you've just done 4, I would like to change it to 30. Okay. 30 is non- oh yes it is.

Wendy Weber is doing 30. just look at this again. Okay.

[20:33] Let's just pray and go. Our God, thank you for one another. Thank you that you are the God who speaks.

You are the God who is present by your Holy Spirit. You are the God who preserves and sustains us second by second of our lives.

God God who is God from whom the whole of our being and our consciousness derives. So help us in the unique gift that you've given us to be together around your word written to know the reality of your word conveyed by your Holy Spirit to our hearts and your word fulfilled in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

and your word experienced in the life of the church. We ask this in Jesus' name.

[22 : 04] Amen. Amen. In terms of our hearing and and I guess I mean what I think I'm trying to work on with you is is this question of hearing because I mean I've been preaching all my life to people who as far as I know never heard that thing I said.

there's no no bitterness in that I probably didn't say any way that they say so I but it's you you become very aware that it's it's difficult to hear and and I think that when you take a group of people for whom you know who who who aren't you know who need to learn to hear and then you take a book like Deuteronomy which is not easy to hear in our culture and in our society then you you can quickly sort of relapse into doing something religious for the sake of doing something religious and and you know it's I remember we used to play this children's game do you remember how we used to play where

I say do you do you know how to play rabbit he says no I don't know how to play rabbit and he turns to Judith and says Judith do you know how to play rabbit and she says no I don't know how to play rabbit and then turns to Nancy and says the same thing and Nancy says no I don't and you go all the way around the room and then finally you ask me do I know how to play rabbit and I say no I don't know how to play rabbit. Then you had the kids involved in this game for about 10 minutes by now working on it and so you say well what are we all doing here? We're all crouched down on our knees together in a circle and it would be interesting to start a church service that way. Do you know what we're doing here? No I don't.

So I want to look at that question. So would you find it, I mean what I'd like to do is take a minute and think about this business of hearing. The other thing, another thing I'd like to do is I'd like to hear from one or two of you who've done chapters just so that we begin to get the chapters, you know some of the content of Deuteronomy in our minds.

So I'd like to do that. I want to, Judith has agreed to have you agreed to read the story for us. I've seen Judith in plays of various kinds at various times and she knows how to do things like read so I thought it would be better if she should do it than me. So, in the course time we have I'll give you, I'll get you to read that part but just want to tell you.

[26 : 25] In the litany there's a, there's a, there's a prayer, you know, you know the prayers of the litany are good Lord deliver us. And it gives four conditions from which we seek to find deliverance. You know, it says, in the day of tribulation, in the day of prosperity, in the day of our death, in the hour of our death, and on the day of judgment, in the day of our death, in the day of judgment, good Lord deliver us.

And, you know, there's, there's a particular sensitivity to hearing when you are in the day of tribulation.

There's a particular insensitivity, insensitivity to hearing in the day of our prosperity. We don't, we become almost totally deaf. In the hour of death, we're again very sensitive and perhaps can hear lots of, Jim, you must know from ministering to people and they have a capacity for hearing which is quite surprising.

It's, I guess, in fact, it's not surprising. But, and, and on the day of judgment, you know, can we, can we hear?

So, hearing becomes very important and I, I want to, I want you to be, you see, I guess what I'm, I'm doing, because I, I know that I'm frustrating some of you a little bit by not spending all this time on the content of Deuteronomy, but my, my great concern is that when you leave from here that, that you'll be able to read Deuteronomy.

[28 : 51] You know, that it, it won't be the impossible book that it is for most people. Ah, that it'll be a book that, that you can read and, uh, read because, ah, you've learned something about, by God's grace about hearing.

So, the first question I want to ask you is whether, whether it would be good for you to get into groups of four or five and share with one another for a few minutes on the question of what did we hear this morning?

Now this is quite different from what did Harry say this morning, which was to fill the air with words, but, but what did we hear?

Do you think that would be a valuable thing to do? Could you, would you mind doing that? Just pulling yourselves into, ah, sort of, four groups? And because there's one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, eleven, eleven, eleven, eleven, eleven, eleven, eleven, eleven, eleven. I think, ah, three groups of four and one group of five would do it. Okay? So, four, four, and then the last five would do it.

[30 : 15] Okay, okay, okay, okay, okay, can we get a, a, a little feedback from each group just so the other groups can hear? Like if we started with that group over there?

Well, that was the point. Well, that was the point. Well, that was the point. Pointy. And, ah, there were three points that, um, I will try and pass on.

Uh, we felt very strongly that when, ah, we remembered the part that when we were under the word, we were, it's, it's our, the, the transfer of our minds, our will, and our affection, and that these are things that can't be singular, they can't be singled out in effect, they can become very destructive, singularly, but they need to be worked, in conjunction with each other.

Um, for instance, our, our affections need to permeate our minds and our will.

Um, for instance, our affections broken down are love and feelings. Love is the positive, the strong and the good, and the feelings can become modern and sentimental, and therefore can be a negative.

[31 : 47] Um, and then, that's the one section here. And our comfort, our culture, ah, in our culture at work, we're empowered.

We're people, people are empowered, and the strength is the person, and this is very strong in the workplace. And, the empowered person, it becomes the perfect person.

And under the word of God, we're empowered and freed up by God. And it's God, but God is the power.

He is the one that gives us power, not power coming out of ourselves. So, we're always under this struggle.

Sometimes it can be positive, sometimes it can be very negative. And then we started talking about hearing. And, God is speaking to us all the time.

[32 : 56] And we must take responsibility for our own hearing. And be aware. We've got a part in our hearing too.

We have to be aware of where we are in our hearing. And sometimes just dress up to the fact that we can't hear anymore.

We are human beings, and our intellects and minds, and our attention span are limited, and sometimes we can't hear. So, it's not just God, it's God working with us, and us working with God to hear.

Thanks, Mindy. Does this group have someone? Good. Good. Good.

Good. Good. Good. I think we were more focused on the context, the cultural context of hearing the book.

[33 : 59] and we realized that this is removed from our experience, but it is essential to our sense of being. That we are too focused on self, and we spend our lives building up individuals, trying to make our students, our children, our spouses, and so on, feel better about themselves.

And yet, perhaps, it is the bolt because we need to find our identity and be subordinate to God. So it's not so much in seeing the rules that he sets, but knowing the God who has set the rules and why they are set.

Knowing, like having a referee explain the rules of the game prior to the game, so it's the rules to make life easier, so that we don't wind up in chaos.

We talked a little bit about the image of God from the point of view of the Old Testament, particularly Deuteronomy, and seeing Moses bringing his rules down, and, you know, very heavy judgmental thought in our parlance, our way of understanding and knowing God.

And this kind of God is difficult for us to see and hear about, because we want a nice, botherly, sweet God that doesn't offend us, and doesn't have judgments or decrees, doesn't frighten us, doesn't speak out of burning bushes and another, you know, rather bizarre phenomenon.

[35 : 57] And that, I guess that was probably the essence of most of our discussion, was this cultural way of seeing that we need to move out up to understand the book and why it was written, and why we need to know it in that sense, rather than in the sense which we might interpret it if we don't set aside our cultural project.

Thank you. Thank you. Who's the next group for? James, are you? James. James, are you? James.

James. James, come on! James, come on! James, come on! Oh, a lot of things we were struck by the, again, the three-fold way the Puritans had of studying script with intellect, will and affection, and, again, her, this, you know, this is a radical challenge to sit under God's Word, which I remember being a lot of things that people have said.

Because, we talked about, again, that image that's used of the modern ideal, as one of human beings breaking out of all that limits them so that we achieve our full potential within ourselves, that sort of thing that we are so indoctrinated with, and that the idea of sitting under scripture is something very hard for us to re-grasp.

And, again, see Deuteronomy is something that points us not to ourselves, but points us to God, and points us to holiness. And it's impossible in some ways, as that past seems to us.

[37 : 59] It came out in our discussion that the idea of prayer as the primary language is one of the ways in which that becomes possible. And that, I think we were struck with prayer as being a response to God, in that sense, and to the God who has revealed to us in scripture.

And we, as well, talked about hearing, and talked about the fact that that seems to be something that we do find hard in this highly visual, quick-paced society.

And that scripture itself was read in community. And it's a very recent thing that as individuals, we go into our rooms and read scripture. That scripture was heard together.

And it's a very recent book, Hero Israel, or, you know, the image that strikes me as Josiah reading the book, the law that has been rediscovered, the people that gathered.

And people who, people of the book who are people who heard. And that's something to look at.

You had three points as well, and that's it. But it didn't write down, and they were really good. Just what Harry said, he's fine about hearing, understanding, and then reading.

[39 : 27] Yeah. Thank you. And what about this group over here?

Do you have a spokesman? There she is. Do you have a spokesman? No? No? No? No? You do. We started out talking about the, going for the newspaper and being struck by how much we were involved in that, and how temporal it was.

Okay. More or less, Sandhya? And then we talked about the apparent harshness of the getting rid of the drug dealer in comparison with the killing of the people who worship Baal.

One of the people mentioned the fact that we're actually blips on the screen.

And we talked about the fact that society views us as defining God and breaking free.

[40 : 48] And Deuteronomy sees us as being fulfilled only, as God as creator and our being under the covenant.

With Daum... Interesting because I think, Can I do that? Let's, Can I Do that? Well, I mean it's fascinating isn't it?

The different emphasis that even we get from four groups, and then each group would have a different emphasis from each person, four groups and then each group would have a different emphasis from each person so it may illustrate what what i mean by our hearing but i want to talk more about about that tomorrow can we take a is anybody ready to give us a chapter outline on the base i mean you don't induce any of the prayers should we do that for tomorrow morning i mean i can do whatever you doing chapter one and i'm ready so you're ready okay what i'm doing basically is a summary it's a content summary really isn't it okay chapter one it starts out with an introduction that explains that what follows are going to be the words that were spoken by mooses to all israel in the desert 40 years after they were leaving egypt and um in verse five it says mooses began to expound this law but what i hadn't i was expecting when it's being law to be more real laws but what actually happens and is that he starts reviewing their history and i guess the law fits in there or that is you know it's just that was an interesting point to me anyway calling it law and what i would have seen it was history he goes but he starts at the point where god told them to leave horeb and take possession of the promised land and then what verse you're in um as you do if you have it if i have it well that's verse six yeah okay yeah god says you've stayed long enough this mountain now it's time for you to take possession of the land that i have given you and it describes the boundaries of it and it says go on and do it i promised it to your um to abraham isaac and jacob and their descendants and then mooses there is a there's sort of a sidebar here where mooses says at that point i decided i appointed leaders among you he said it was uh you were too heavy a burden for me to carry a loan and so he divided the people into thousands hundreds fifties and tens and

appointed commanders officials and then judges and then he reminds them that the judges were supposed to judge fairly and talks about that for a little while so he's saying at that time this is what i did but he uses it as a way to talk about about fair judgment and what is expected there so after god told them to leave horeb and to take possession of the promised land they did leave horeb and they went to kadesh barnea and moses said we've reached the hill country of the amorites which god has given you go and take possession so um now i'm around verse 19 or so but the people um felt that they wanted to send spies first and see just what they were up against and so they sent the spies and the report of the spies scared them and they grumbled and they didn't believe that god would give them the land they said the lord hates us so he brought us out of egypt to deliver us into the hands of the amorites and they basically were not intending to go and and take this land they were afraid so god became angry with them for their lack of trust and lack of faith and so he said that no one of that generation would see the good land except for caleb and joshua and it doesn't really explain in this part of the story why caleb but he was the one of the spies who felt that they should go ahead the other one of and um and then joshua was moses assistant and so god told them turn around and go back to the desert you're not none of these generation is going to get into the promised land well then when the people thought you know when this came to pass the people changed their minds and said well after all they would go and fight and so they decided to go and take this land as god had initially told them but god told them through moses don't do it i won't be with you and um they didn't believe it and they went anyway and they were soundly defeated and that's the end of chuck that's where we are at the end of chapter one excuse me is jeffuna joshua in in verse 36 joshua joshua joshua and then a few verses later it says that joshua yeah verses 38 says um because it says caleb could go in and then it says moses wouldn't be going in it mentioned but your assistant joshua will enter in verse 30 yes yeah yeah gotcha any uh any questions on that you rebelled you rebelled this is in 43 you rebelled against the lord's command in your arrogance you marched up into the hill country the amorites who lived in those hills came out against you they chased you like a swarm of bees and beat you down from seir all the way to horma you came back and wept before the lord but he paid no attention to your weak and turned a deaf ear to you and so you stayed in kadesh many days you see me i mean part of the the lesson of that is is that uh i mean it's it's certainly a lesson for our culture we we think we can do it i mean the lord tells us what to do and we say we won't do it then by some kind of reverse psychology we get to the point where okay we will do it but by this time the lord is not with and and uh and so that we will do it in our own strength you know because we and that kind of it's it's an amazing sort of picture isn't it of uh how human beings work you begin with the lord's command and then you do it instead of um beginning in your own strength and then and then failing anyway that's that's chapter one does anybody else have a chapter they'd like to give us before okay good what are you chapter five good um the ten commandments make up the basic