

Fresh Look At Deuteronomy with Rev. Harry Robinson Pt 5

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Date: 01 January 2000

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[0 : 00] And of course that undergirds most of the epistles, doesn't it? That the mission of the gospel traveled first to the synagogues in many parts of the world.

And so Judaism by then was already in a sense an end in itself. Very much admired for his ethical and moral teaching.

So they had many adherents to it who were not themselves Jews. So the local synagogue was the center of everything instead of having to go to the temple.

The temple wasn't there. Yeah, it was the only thing. And I love to remind people that for the Jews today, the earliest records of synagogue worship had to be found in New Testament.

I missed that sort of nice little paradox, I think. The synagogue worship didn't include sacrifice though, did it? No. Did Jews practice the tithe today?

[1 : 34] Today the prince? Did they practice the tithe? No, giving to the synagogue. I would think so.

I don't know. Ask your neighbor. Ask your neighbor. You're talking about tithe. I will.

I will. I will. her are still looking for the Messiah.

Do they think the Messiah's gonna be Jewish? I've always been with that one. Do they think he's going to be Jewish?

I heard some very learned rabbis discuss this as to the nature of the Messiah.

[2 : 37] And of course it's a very sensitive point with them, but they have varying ideas about who the Messiah might be, or what he might look like, or what that person is, or she is.

Do they take that option and then look at being one? Do they what? Do they have that option, thinking it might be a sheep?

Well, these guys were prepared to look at all sorts of options. I mean, one of them stood up and very eloquently said, the Messiah is death.

It brings the whole human suffering to an end. That's the blessing. Which was a kind of faith of despair, but he looked at it that way.

And they look at it in different ways. Or it could be a sexless angel. It could be, though.

[3 : 55] Yeah. No. And they do it. I'm wondering, you know, all these questions is how Jews today deal with Deuteronomy, isn't it? You know?

Yeah. How they do it? I've got this book that I'm going to bring down, maybe tomorrow evening, to show you, which is from my neighbor.

And it will tell you how Jews deal with Deuteronomy. And not in the kind of way that we do, but it has, it has, it tries to expose several passages from Deuteronomy and how you do it.

So I'll bring that so you can, you can hear that. Listen to this now. This is the business of hearing. You mean that, the thing that...

[5 : 05] I was very much reminded of was, there was an obituary in Christianity today for Elton Trueblood.

Does that mean anything to you? Well, he was quite a prominent man in the 50s. And a very strong advocate of small home Bible study groups.

And that wasn't really a big thing in the churches. I mean, it was, it certainly wasn't in any Anglican church I'd ever been in as a child.

And, and it is, I think it is a big and important thing now. That people get together in their homes and they hear Scripture together with other people.

And, and, and, you know, I know some of you have had lots of experience in this.

[6 : 16] But, but groups really do become good listening posts, don't they? I mean, you reading the Scriptures alone, then you're going and meeting with a group of friends who read them together and talk about them together and discuss them together and share them together and pray through them together.

And that's what's really what small Bible study groups do. And that, that really is a kind of corporate hearing. Yeah. Which Elton Trueblood was advocating 50 years ago.

And, and he, you know, and I think has been very important to the church and probably, you know, that, that, that we, we learn to do that, that, that we have, you know, I, I, I, well, that, that's a kind of return to the church.

That's a kind of, a kind of pre-printing, pre-literate time in the church. I mean, when I was, when I was, when I was first in the ministry in the 50s, there were elderly people there who, you were talking about what happens to elderly people.

And so, in those days, I mean, you could go into a woman almost in a state of coma, I remember, in St. Mary's Hospital in Kingston once.

[7 : 48] And, and I would go in with the prayer book and start the service. And she who hadn't spoken for days would pick up the words of the prayer book and say them with you because she knew them, you know.

And that was, they, they, they, they, and for people who have memorized all the callings in the prayer book was not unusual.

And for people who have heard the gospel and epistle read Sunday after Sunday through the 60 or 70 or 80 years of their life meant that they, they knew it all by heart, that it was, it was theirs.

Well, in contrast to that, Neil Postman writes about our society and something strange that has happened in our society, which is, which ties in very closely with what Deuteronomy is saying and this whole problem of hearing.

Can you stand one more thing, throw them at you? Well, anyway, this is, this is what he says. He's talking about the development of printing.

[9 : 03] And he says, at the same time as the printing press unleashed a heightened and unabashed self-consciousness in writers, it created a similar attitude in readers.

For prior to printing, all human communication occurred in social context. In other words, people talk to people.

It was, you know, that's, that's partly why I'm contending vigorously that, that, that, you know, we don't read about God in the absence of God because our basic communication is within.

It used to all occur that way. Even such reading as was done, used it, used as its model in oral mode.

The reader speaking the words aloud while others follow along. I mean, reading silently was, is, was an unknown art.

[10 : 11] You know, you, the whole idea of reading was to read out loud. But with the printed book, another tradition began.

The isolated reader and his private eye. Orality became muted and the reader and his response became separated from a social context.

The reader retired within his own mind. And from the 16th century to the present, what most readers have required of others is their absence, or if not, their silence.

In reading, both the writer and the reader enter into a conspiracy of sorts against social presence and consciousness.

Reading is, in a phrase, an anti-social act. So, that's, it was that statement which in part is, is my concern for this group that, that, that, you know, that, because we are all trained in, in the anti-social behavior of reading, just for our own benefit and for, and to ourselves.

[11 : 40] And for our own private consumption and interpretation, we are being very anti-social and that, what, what we're trying to do here is, is, is to redo lonely together as a social act.

something that I not only have these two ears or this mind to comprehend, but I can perhaps begin to hear it through all of you as well as you listen.

And I find that very helpful. Let me pray.

Father, again, all the words that have flowed today, I just pray that you will strike from our memory things which are not helpful and confusing, things which you want us to hear. We ask that you will burn into our hearts, that you will forge our own wills, and you will keep them with a love for you so

that we may understand your word, that we may obey your word, and that we may do it because we're responding to the love that you have shown us in Jesus Christ.

Help us to hear. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. This is a brand one.

[13:28] Oh, is that a brand one? This is a brand one. You might have to dress it. Then look at the baby. Okay. This is your dad. Okay, are you all ready to go?

We're all... We're all... We're all... I say that in the hopes that if you're all ready, then that'll be... Help me to be all ready. Actually, Harry, we had a question about last year.

Did you? Mm-hmm. Are we going to do it now? Yeah, right now. Yes. You said, and I quote, recognition of our personality, individuality, which keeps us in confrontation with God.

I wondered what you meant by this confrontation with God. Could you just explain that a little bit? I'll explain it.

Uh... Yeah, it's... I'm very happy to explain that. Uh... I mean, it'll come up all the way through this morning.

[14:48] But I... Well, you asked me towards maybe at coffee hour, will you? Oh, yeah. Because I... Because it...

Because in a sense... That's... You're liable to... Pull the lever that'll bring the whole load of hay down, if you ask me that question.

Okay. Okay. Well, that's a good one. Now, does anybody else have a question?

Then I can read the Bible. No, we can answer it like that. What? We won't have any more of you.

You're going to ask this night. Well, it's not that I'm not going to answer it, but I mean, it's...

It's too soon. It's... Yeah. What we're doing this morning, I think, will answer it more fully. And I'd rather do it that way. Any... Let's...

[15:52] Let's read Psalm 160. It's another one of these historical reviews that... But... You...

I don't know if any of you know this, but... After our long discussion last night, it seemed almost a godsend, but...

Marks McCavity, the director of Sorrento Center, came up to me and said, By sheer coincidence, a friend of mine who's a rabbi from Victoria has come to spend the night here.

Would you like him to come and talk to you tomorrow morning? And... But his... His wife and his children said, no, they're on a holiday and they want to keep going, so they're traveling through.

But I had breakfast. I had coffee with him after breakfast this morning. And talked to him a little bit about things. So... And... And he...

[16:56] You know, tried to get some of his insights on... One... The book of Deuteronomy, which...

He says, well, I always use it when I'm preparing a boy for Bar Mitzvah, because it looks back and it looks forward. It gives you that perspective and preparation for Bar Mitzvah.

I think he used Bar Mitzvah almost as a verb that you were sort of Bar Mitzvah-ing somebody. But he described that.

Anyway, this is part of looking back and looking forward. And it's Psalm 106. And... James, will you...

Will you... It's James. James. James. Oh, it's... It's a little bit. I'll go out of my mind by the end of the week if it doesn't stop.

[18:01] James, would you lead us in response to the reading of Psalm 106? Okay. Praise the Lord.

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures forever. Who is the kingdom of my hands, O Lord? For fully declare His praise.

Blessed are they who maintain justice, who constantly do what is right. Remember me, O Lord, when you show favor to your people. Come to my aid when you save them.

That I may enjoy the prosperity of your chosen ones. That I may share in the joy of your nation, and join your inheritance in giving praise.

We have sinned, even as our fathers did. We have done it wrong and acted quickly. When our fathers were in Egypt, they gave no thought to your miracles.

[19:10] They did not remember your many kindnesses, and they rebelled by the sea, the Red Sea. Yet He saved them for His name's sake.

He gave His mighty power known. He rebuked the Red Sea, and it dried up. He led them through the depths as through a desert. He saved them from the hand of the foal, from the hand of the

enemy, He redeemed them.

The waters covered their adversaries. Not one of them survived. Then they believed His promises, and sang His praise. But they soon forgot what He had done, and did not wait for His comrade. In the desert they gave into their craving. In the wasteland they put God to the test. So He gave them what they asked for, but sent a wasting disease upon them.

In the camp they drew images of Moses and Aaron, who was consecrated to the Lord. The earth opened up and swallowed Dathan.

[20 : 17] It buried the company of Abarin. Fire blazed among their followers, a flame consuming the wicked. At Horeb they made a calf, and worshipped an idol cast from metal.

They exchanged their glory for an image of a bull, which eats grass. They forgot the God who saved them, who had done great things in Egypt.

Miracles in the land of Ham, and often deeds by the Red Sea. So He said He would destroy them, had not Moses, His chosen one, stood in the breach before Him, to keep His wrath from destroying them.

Then they decided to turn to the land, but they did not believe His promise. They grumbled in their tents, and did not obey the Lord. So He swore to them with an uplifted hand, that He would make them fall in the desert, make their descendants fall among the nations, and scatter them throughout the lands.

They yoke themselves to the veil of the ear, and the eight sacrifices offered to the life of the gods. They provoked the Lord to anger by their wicked deeds, and a plague broke out among them.

[21 : 40] Then Phileas stood under the intervening, and the plague was shed. This was credited to Him as righteousness, for endless generations to come.

By the waters of Maribam, they angered the Lord, and trouble came to Moses because of them. For they rebelled against the Spirit of God, and rash words came from Moses' lips.

They did not destroy the peoples as the Lord had commanded them, but they mingled with the nations, and adopted their customs. They worshipped their idols, which became a snare to them. They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons. They shed a distance of God, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the islands of Canaan, and the land was desecrated by their blood.

They defiled themselves by what they did. By their deeds they prostituted themselves. Therefore the Lord was angry with His people, and unborn His inheritance.

[22 : 50] He handed them over to the nations, and their foes ruled over them. Their enemies suppressed them, and subjected them to their power.

Many times He delivered them, but they were bent on rebellion, and they wasted away in their sin. But He took note of their distress, when He heard their cry.

For their sake He remembered His covenant, and out of His great love He relented. He caused them to be pitted, by all who found them captive.

Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from the nations, that we may give thanks to Your holy name, and glory in Your praise.

Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Let all the people say, Amen. Praise the Lord.

[23 : 48] It has that wonderful reality of Scripture, doesn't it? I mean, it's...

We, so often in our churches, we like to cover the whole thing over with icing, and just talk about the icing on the cake, and the hard reality of daily life, we ignore.

And yet God gets into that hard reality of our daily life, that is very much a part of it. So, that's what I wanted you to look at.

That. Then, can we look at the other question here?

Does anybody have a summary that they want to give us?

[25 : 02] Do you want to look at chapter 2? Yeah. Are you... Yes, I have... Okay, should we look at chapter 3 then with you? Chapter 3.

And the first 11 verses are almost the exact repetition of Numbers 21, 33, 35. That is, that the Lord had told Moses that he had given King Od all over to him, his people and his land, King Od's people and his land.

So, King Od, his sons and all his people were killed, and they took possession of his land. The battle was at Edry. King Od was buried in the large iron-colored bedstead, 15 or 14 feet by 6 feet.

I don't know what that's got to do with it. The half-tribe of Manasseh was given the territory of Og. There were 60 fortress towns. A detailed account of who got what of Og's territory was given in the next verses.

[26 : 23] The Lord will do the same to all kingdoms, which you are about to cross, he told them.

Do not fear them, for it is the Lord your God who fights for you. The Lord tells Moses, he will not cross over the Jordan, but he is to go up on the mountain and see the promised land.

Moses is to choose Joshua to take his people into the promised land. The Lord was angry with Moses, not only for what he had done, but because of the Israelites.

Where do you find it, the Lord was angry with Moses? Well, I went over, it said to go to Numbers 20, 12, and I think that's where I found it.

Numbers 20, 12. Numbers 26, it says something about because the Lord was angry with me. I was trying to remember why he was angry.

[27 : 39] Was it because he hit me and walked twice instead of once? Was that the moment? That seems to have been, got caught up in that, and we'll probably come to that again this morning.

But it's the fact that Moses had led, and that this is part of the dynamic of Deuteronomy as Moses is telling them everything.

Because his death is coming, and their crossing into the promised land is coming, both things are going to happen at the same time. And for 40 years, Moses has been the means by which they were held together as a community, and now that was being taken away from them.

And Moses had to give them this book, this message of Deuteronomy, sustain and carry them after he was gone.

And so, that's part of the story. Anybody else? Now that's, what's up?

[28 : 55] How? How? I didn't answer. Why? I thought I was mad at Moses. I didn't answer. To me, you didn't answer.

Well, I will. He said it was coming. He said it was coming. He's coming today. If you look at, at verse 16 of chapter 6, it will come up to you, but, that, look at Exodus 17, 1-7, is the reference there.

Exodus 17, 1-7. Would someone like to read that for us?

The whole community of Israel set out from the wilderness of sin and traveled by stages as the Lord directed. The encamped at Bethlehem, but there was no water for the people to drink.

And a dispute arose between them and Moses. When they said, give us water to drink, Moses said, why do you dispute with me? Why do you challenge the Lord? The people became so thirsty.

[30 : 46] There was, people became so thirsty there that they raised an outcry against Moses.

Why have you brought us out of Egypt with our children and our herds to let us die of thirst?

Moses appealed to the Lord, what shall I do with these people? In a moment, they will be stoned in me. The Lord answered, go forward ahead of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and bring along the staff which you struck them out.

Of which you struck them out. Go, you will find me waiting for you there by a rock and a chereel.

Strike the rock. Water will pour out of it for the people to drink.

Moses did this in the sight and the elders of Israel and the elders of Israel named the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites had disputes with him and put the Lord to the test and their question, is the Lord in our midst or not?

that's the story from Exodus which is always identified with why Moses doesn't get to go to the promised land that he got involved with impatience and defiance because God had left him in this predicament and he became impatient with the people and impatient with God and it was from that point that the Lord said you're not going to go into the promised land.

[32 : 26] Okay. Thank you. Ruth, are you... I've done mine. I've got chapter eight. I need mine. And what? I haven't done chapter eight.

Do you want to do eight? Thanks for it. Do you want my plan? Well, no, I'll get to five. I'll tell you, you can't wait to sit.

Oh, close. You're going to do chapter eight. Yeah. Sorry, yeah.

The chapter eight seems to be divided into two sections. The first part of it is in Deuteronomy presents this 40-year experience as an ordeal or punishment unlike the prophets they sort of presented as the golden age.

The first part of the chapter is the desert experience which our desert experiences are like an ordeal and the last part of it is the promised land and its temptation.

[33 : 41] So, when I was looking at it it's quite a choice either desert and ordeal or the promised land and temptation. I found that helpful to put it in that perspective.

and making it applicable to today and there's a warning in the first verse to put these practices the commandments to put them into practice in order to survive that this is survival thing and in order to increase in numbers and in order to enter into the promised land that was offered to their ancestors I was interested in verses from 2 to 5 and in verse 16 as well and the purpose of this ordeal experience the purpose of this desert experience was God's intention to humble them and to test them and to know what was going on inside of them whether they would choose to be obedient or not and I began having some fun with that with this intellect will and heart thing humbling them I would like to do some work with the intellect and to testing them their will what kind of choices they would choose and their heart to know what was in their inmost heart so I thought that might be an interesting tie and how we started off and in verse 16 the purpose of it too is to humble you and to test you and I've got a Jerusalem Bible that says it's also to make your future the happier so that was one thing I was enjoying looking at and in verse 5 he's also saying look you need to learn from this experience and you need to understand that in this experience God is training you that's the motive behind it the end result being that you might follow him and fear him the purpose of the humbling experience in verse 3

I like this translation again because it says he humbled you he made you feel hunger hunger and then when you were feeling hungry he fed you with manna which neither you nor your ancestors had ever known before just to make you understand that human beings can't just live on bread alone but on everything that comes from God so there was sort of some for me there was some purpose behind everything that was going on the learning the training the testing like it's not it's not just a hard time we're going through but there's purpose in it so I appreciated that and then from verse 7 to 20 we get into the promised land experience where you won't want anything you'll have all you want and as we all know when we're in that kind of experience in verse 11 the first thing that often happens to us is because we're not dependent anymore like we are in the desert experience we forget in verse 11 and then we start neglecting we neglect the commandments and in verse 14 and in doing so we become proud of heart so forgetful neglecting becoming proud of heart so verse 5 is the challenge to learn from this experience this training experience when they start getting into the promised land there's lots of warnings in entering into it in this time of prosperity and in verse 17 this is how we start thinking when we're proud saying

I achieved this my own strength and the might of my own hand gave me the power to act like this and it's a reminder when we're in that arrogant state that it was God that gave us the strength to act effectively like this and if we get into this forgetful mode in verse 19 the outcome of that is following other gods and the end result of that is we die and this gets into the listening hearing thing again verse 20 we'll die spiritually will die because we haven't listened to the voice of God so I enjoy picking up this intellect will and heart team again

[39 : 43] I'm a a I want to do just one or two things to prepare you to hear what's going on today.

The Atlantic Monthly this month has the lead article in it. It has what it calls the crisis of public order, which is, of course, the crisis that Moses was facing too.

How is he to create public order as this people who had been under his authority and under his leadership and in this place of dependence upon God for 40 years?

Now we're going in, and what would happen when they got into... And he's taught...

And this is an article about public order in the United States. And I'm just going to read you the bold print things just to show you how the crisis of public order works.

[41 : 19] I mean, because it's a crisis in North America now, and you will identify with this crisis. How do you create order? We touched on it the other day when we talked about Canada and the fact that we have a nation, but we don't have...

You know, but we're not a nation. We have the territory, but we haven't been forged into a nation. There was a long process by which Moses forged a nation...

The Lord forged a nation by giving them 40 years for one generation to die off. Because that generation couldn't go into the promised land.

They weren't somehow qualified. And so here you have the crisis of public order. And I'll just read you some of the leading...

You know, how they put in heavy print. This is... And this, of course, is the United States, but it's... The Department of Justice now says that stranger murders have become four times as common as

family killings.

[42 : 34] And that the chances of getting away with one exceed 80%. Scholars say that nation's murder rate may soon double. The author says we are inviting this long-descending night of crime by teaching violent young people that we will do almost anything not to have to act to defend ourselves, our country, or our character as people of decency and strength.

We will do anything not to have to defend that. That we want... You want it as soon as then. In the next step.

Our greatest fear is of violence from a nameless, faceless stranger. Law enforcement agencies have always reassured citizens by stating that the great majority of murders are committed by a relative or an acquaintance of the victims.

Now that falsehood has been unmasked. The teenage and young adult population stagnated or actually declined over the past decade.

Crime has been rising because this smaller population has grown more violent. Now it is about to get larger in size.

[44 : 07] As a result, we will soon witness an epidemic of teenage crime. And he says, If we wish to return to the ratio of police officers to violent crimes, which gave many of us peace and security in the 1960s, we would have to add not 100,000 new police officers, but about 5 million.

Told this recently, some Department of Justice staffers giggled. So, I mean, you see, even as Moses did, this breakdown, and you see the...

You see that this is the pattern by which... In which our society is working. Now, if you look at our society, I think, and where this breakdown is coming from, I want to show you two or three things that are...

that Jeremy Bigby says are the strands of post-modernism. And he says, This is how we have got... See, the reason I'm telling you this, because when I start talking like this, you tend to mess over a little. And I... I...

[45 : 47] I get... and I... I want you to hear this only for the sake of reading Deuteronomy more intelligently.

That's all. I'm not... I'm not... But... This is how... Jeremy Bigby describes post-modernism.

And he says... He quotes, you know, Jesus saying, I am the way. Confidence in the gospel is politically incorrect.

It is arrogant. Evangelism is crassly arrogant. Pluralism needs to be faced.

You know, that's... That's one of the realities. And for Jesus to say, I am the way, the truth, and the life, is an intolerable statement in a pluralistic society.

[47 : 06] Global society wants to celebrate pluralism. We're at a time when in society, don't just talk.

I mean, don't talk. Just listen. Shut up. Pay attention. Is the... Is what our culture says to us.

You are to... Find these strands of post-modernism. The gods of the modern age are dead. And these were the gods of science, technology, utopia, progress, and ideologies.

They've all dropped dead. There is no such thing as absolute truth. People thinking their right is fascism and a cause of war.

To say Jesus is Lord is merely a subcultural value. It can't be true for everyone.

[48 : 21] You can't get behind the text. There is nothing outside. This is... This is... You have it. Oh. All right.

We read Deuteronomy because we think it means so. But our society says, It doesn't mean anything. It's just words.

And there is no reality behind it. That you... You can't... You can't find any reality behind it. That's why, you know, what we're doing here by reading Deuteronomy this week is a very strongly counter-cultural activity.

Because we're saying this text is basically important to our whole understanding of who we are. We are to celebrate pluralism. You know. To have a society in which the more choices you have, the more freedom you have.

[49 : 39] Now, I don't know if you've thought about that pretty much, but... A. A. Milne dealt with it very adequately when he said, There was an old sailor my grandfather knew who had so many things that he wanted to do that whenever he thought it was time to begin, he couldn't because of the state he was in.

And then he ends up lying on a shingle or the beach because he's totally paralyzed by...
Christ... In the beautiful... The mission... No with the he or her life in the■■■■