

SESSION #12 (26 Jan 10)

I. INTRODUCTION & REVIEW

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|-----------------|---|
| 1:1-5 | Introduction to God's spokesman, the 1st Prophet Moses |
| 1:6-4:40 | 1st Exposition of the Torah = <u>motivation</u> to obey from <u>past gracious actions</u> of Yahweh |
| 1:6-3:29 | Historical analysis of Israel from Sinai to the Transjordanian victories |
| 4:1-40 | Implications for the future of the nation |
| 4:1-8 | A unique way of life for a unique nation |
| 4:9-24 | A unique divine revelation for a unique nation |

The basis of politics and law:

Righteousness has to come *from inside out*.

Righteousness is genuine only if there is *a personal relationship with God*—otherwise it's just another legalism full of arrogance and "human good"

John Adams: "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

Two Uniquenesses of Israel:

1. Contract with God
2. Continuing line of prophets

II. THE AUTHORITATIVE UNIQUE REVELATION (4:9-14)

4:9 take heed to yourself and diligently keep your nephesh

Keeping or guarding your life (nephesh)

Prov 13:3 "He who guards his mouth keeps his nephesh"

Prov 16:17 "He who keeps his way keeps his nephesh"

Prov 19:16 "He who keeps the commandment keeps his nephesh"

lest [purpose clause]

forget the unique relationship between Yahweh and the nation = effort is required to remember past historic revelation because it is not _____ **4:9, 23, 31;**

6:12; 8:11, 14, 19; 9:7; 25:19;

the events which your eyes have seen

2nd generation were just children under the age of 20 see **Num 14:29**

all the days of your life

No sense of history = no accumulated wisdom = *endless* learning curve

1st historians were NOT the Greeks, they were the OT prophets *because they had a purpose in studying history (outwork of contracts)*.

Pagans—ancient and modern—see no grand purpose → life is meaningless.

teach them [imperative command]

dynamic of the family to connect with 3rd and 4th generation (into the Judges period)—see 6:7, 20; 11:19; 31:13; 32:46

4:10 the day you stood before the face of Yahweh your God at Horeb when Yahweh said to me, “Assemble the people and I will cause them to hear my words [by which] they will learn to fear [respect my authority] all the days which they will live upon the earth and their children they will be teaching”

Moses cites God’s exact words at Mt. Sinai to justify his command in 4:9

Fear = respect for authority

| Concept | Consequences in Practice |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Positive Law (ethics = law) | + law is objective ; - unjust law impossible |
| Social Good (ethics > law) | + law relates to social reality; - individual valued in terms of social usefulness & difficulty of calculating the “good” |
| Natural Right (ethics > law) | + law relates to the individual; - evolutionary worldview weakens concept & difficulty of specifying the “rights” |

Basic question: “who says so?”

authority is implicit in law → lawgiver or source of law is the authority or “god”

- Genesis 3 debate between God as lawgiver and *the creature* as lawgiver
- A network of laws reveals the de-facto “*religion*” of a nation
- Historically paganism: *vox populi = vox dei* as in Mao Tse-Tung “Our God is none other than the masses of the Chinese people” (The Foolish Old Man Who Removed Mountains) But the “elite,” the “strongest” decides because anarchy leads to totalitarianism.
- authority respected and honored = glue of a culture
- can’t believe without respect for authority: (John 5:41-44; Acts 20:21)

4:11 mountain was burning with fire to the heart of heaven—darkness, clouds, dark cloud

4:12-13 sound of words you were hearing but form you were not seeing---only sound And he declared to you his contract which he commanded you to do—10 words—and he wrote it upon two tablets of stone.

4:14 commanded me (contrast with “commanded you”)

10 words are pure and absolute. . . .

the *statutes* and *judgments* that followed applied those 10 words to a fallen society (Jesus on divorce).

1 Kings 6:12 statutes vs. judgments

III. UNIQUENESS MUST NOT BE COMPROMISED (4:15-24)

4:15 and be very careful for your lives (nephesh)

PRINCIPLE: Human responsibility is always honored by God regardless of election. All of God's children do not persevere—we can fail miserably in the Christian life, go down in physical discipline, and will be ashamed at the Lord's return. One of the great weaknesses in most Reformed Theology.

4:16 lest you cause ruin. . .image. . .

A. Why idolatry rather than immorality??

Spiritual process in Rom 1:18-23

General revelation is always and everywhere available → all people are responsible

1:20 unseen are clearly seen. . .ever-working power (providence understood as a divine purpose in history) and Godhead (sense of deity)

1:21 did not glorify. . .nor were thankful. . .

became 'futile' in their reasoning. . .foolish hearts were darkened. . .

No neutrality—all men, believer and unbeliever, daily respond to God's presence around them.

1:22 professing to be wise. . .they became fools

Exactly opposite to what they say (e.g., "Age of Enlightenment")

1:23 changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible. . . .

1:24ff immorality follows idolatry. . .

a "re-engineering" of reality to avoid the implication of general revelation = personal responsibility

Example of Nimrod's "kingdom" in **Gen. 10 & 11:**

Man defines all *meaning*.

[Ellul quote]

"The rebellious people are tired of . . .being the recipient of a name. They want to name themselves. . . .It is the desire to exclude God from His creation. And it is this solidarity in a name, this unity in separation from God, which was to keep man from ever again being separated on earth. . . .It was in this, man's environment, built by man for man, with any other intervention or power excluded, that man could make a name for himself. . . ." Jacques Ellul, The Meaning of the City (1970), pp 15-16.

[Rushdoony quote]

"Whenever a society has a naturalistic religion, grounded on the concept of continuity, man faces the total power of the state. . . .Where there is no transcendental law and power in a separate and omnipotent being, then power has a wholly immanent and immediate source in a state, group, or person, and it is beyond appeal. The state becomes the saving power and source of law; it becomes the priestly agency of its own total power. . . .[It] becomes god walking on earth, and its every tyranny is identified as liberty. . . .In this faith, for man to be free means to be in the state." Rousas J. Rushdoony, The One and the Many (1971), p60f.

Idolatry precedes immorality because it breaks down the authority of God's revelation by making man his own authority. Man then is no longer motivated and empowered to subdue his fallen flesh and resist the principalities and powers.

Isaiah 41:1-7 a sarcastic prophetic assault on idolatry

Situation is during the exile with the rise of Persian King Cyrus

41:2 who. . .who. . .who??

God's historical sovereignty

41:4 calling the generations from the beginning. . . first. . .last. . .

41:5 fear

International fear over the rise of Cyrus

41:6 neighbor. .brother. . .be of good courage. . .

Talking heads. . .psychological pep-talks. . .

41:7 that it might not totter. . .

This is the "vanity" that Paul spoke of = *separated from reality*

Back to Deut:

4:19 host of heaven. . .given to all the peoples. . .

Celestial sphere is linked to the principalities and powers in the Bible. Satan has title to the earth and all nations (cf temptation of Christ **Matt 4:8-9**).

4:20 but Yahweh. . .his people

Totally different historical power available to Israel BUT CONDITIONED UPON HER OBEDIENCE.

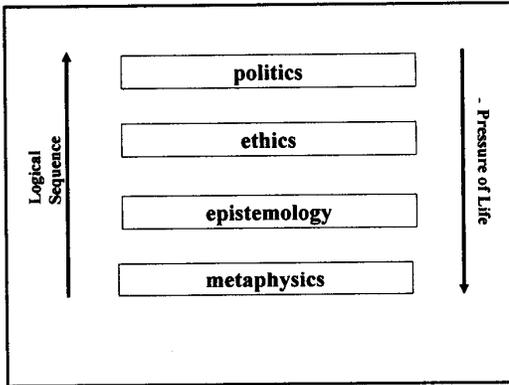
4:21-22 parenthesis AGAIN to argue for the serious consequences of a relationship with God.

4:23-24 take heed for yourselves. . . .consuming fire. . .

Moses' repetition of **4:9, 15**

III. CONCLUSION

- Israel has a unique relationship with God—different from all other nations by virtue of its purpose in history and the testimonial features of the Sinaitic Contract
- This uniqueness is cosmic, reaching into the heavenly realm of the principalities and powers.
- At no point, however, does God alleviate personal responsibility of the consequences of choices made.
- The events in Israel's history are never to be forgotten revelations of God's character.



THE ONLY SOURCE OF A JUSTIFIABLE PLAN OF HISTORICAL PROGRESSION: THE BIBLE !

CREATOR & REDEEMER

"Only the Hebrews, so far as we know, made covenants with their gods or God." W.F. Albright, Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan.

"guarding your life"

- Prov 13:3 *"He who guards his mouth keeps his nephesh"* = tongue
- Prov 16:17 *"He who keeps his way keeps his nephesh"* = behavior
- Prov 19:16 *"He who keeps the commandment keeps his nephesh"* = mental attitude

The 3 Great Concepts of "Justice"

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