

**SESSION #26 (1 Jun 10); Deut 10:1-22; Loving Yahweh: Pagan Ethics vs. the Ethical Nature of God**

**I. INTRODUCTION & REVIEW**

1:1-5	Introduction to God’s spokesman, the 1 <sup>st</sup> Prophet Moses
1:6 - 4:40	1 <sup>st</sup> Exposition of the Torah = <u>motivation</u> to obey from (1) <u>past gracious actions</u> of Yahweh and (2) <u>sovereign destiny</u> of the nation ( <u>future gracious actions</u> of Yahweh)
4:41-49	Editorial comment on context of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Exposition of the Torah
5:1 - 26:19	2 <sup>nd</sup> Exposition of the Torah = proper response to Yahweh in heart and soul
5:1 - 11:32	Loving Yahweh with all the heart
5:1-33	The Mt. Sinai event & ramifications
6:1-25	“Living in the Word”
7:1-26	Joining in Yahweh’s war—requirements & resources
8:1-20	Surviving success by maintaining the mental attitude of creature-hood
9:1-10:11	Surviving success by maintaining the mental attitude of <i>fallen</i> creature-hood in need of God’s grace
<b>10:12-11:32 Concluding appeal</b>	

Deut 8:1-20	<i>Adversity Test:</i> deprivation of necessities of life
	<i>Lesson:</i> awareness of God’s providential supply under the appearance of “our” efforts
Deut 9:1-10:11	<i>Failure Review:</i> from the very beginning at Mt. Sinai until years later
	<i>Lesson:</i> awareness of the need for a Mediator for God’s grace

Historic manifestation of Deut 8 principle in US history:

Senate Resolution March 22, 1863 during Civil War asked President Lincoln to declare a national fast day for confession of sin and prayer. Here’s an excerpt—note the truths of Deut 8!!

**“ . . .we know that, by His divine law, nations like individuals are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war, which now desolates the land, may be but a punishment, inflicted upon us, for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole People? We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us!**

**It behooves us then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.”**

The importance of the heart attitudes toward God was well-known to former generations of Americans.

## II. FALLEN CREATURE-HOOD NEEDS A MEDIATOR FOR GOD’S GRACE (9:1-10:11)

**9:1-6** Succinct summary of the principle: Israel’s conquest of the land isn’t due to its self-righteous superiority with God because the Canaanite tribes “got their’s”. All have sinned—depravity is universal. Proper mental attitude keeps one’s [\_fallen nature\_]\_ in view.

**9:7-29 & 10:1-11** is Moses’ intense speech about Israel’s sinful heart disposition and the need for divine grace. Utilizes rhetorical re-ordering of historic details to emphasize his point. Tonight we extend the structure slide all the way to 10:11.

Historic sequence	Speech sequence	Details	Moses’ Point
2	9: 9-11	40 days for 2 copies of covenant	Yahweh-Israel contractual relationship broken & restored
3	9:12-17	destruction of covenant copies	
6	9:18-20	40 days of mediation	
4	9:21	destruction of the golden calf	Actual events and locations of rebellion
1,9	9:22-24	other incidents before & after Sinai	
7	9:25-29	intercessory logic of Moses with God	Glory of Yahweh kept
5	10:1-3	making of 2 <sup>nd</sup> 2 tablets & Ark	Tablets, Ark, & Priesthood
8	10:4-5	2 <sup>nd</sup> tablets written & stored in Ark	
10	10:6-9	Post-Sinai priesthood & Ark (editor?)	
6	10:10	40 days successful mediation	Israel saved & ready to conquer
8	10:11	command to begin conquest	

Why does Moses stress upfront in **9:9-20** the contractual relationship between Yahweh and Israel?

What do you see and what is the importance of it in **9:21** last clause?

**9:22** 1<sup>st</sup> clause?

**10:5** last clause?

**10:6-9**?

### Conclusion to 9:1-10:11:

- Consequences of being sinful men in relationship with a holy God is termination of the relationship unless [\_grace\_]\_ prevails.
- The only salvation is the existence of a [\_Mediator\_]\_ between God and such men.
- Basis for mediation is the [\_glory\_]\_ of God.

## III. CONCLUDING APPEAL OF MOSES (10:12 - 11:32)

One last blast at personal responsibility in Israel’s unique relationship with God = model of relationship with God for all time, for every dispensation.

## A. Loving God (Yahweh) and Man (10:12-22)

**10:12-13 to fear. . .to walk. . .to love. . .to serve. . .to keep. . . .**

5 verbs—imperative force → what pleases Him? What is He asking of you?

Famous verse in **Micah 6:8**

*“He has shown you O man, what is good;  
And what does the LORD require (ask) of you  
But to do justly,  
To love mercy,  
And to walk humbly with your God”*

**which I command you > doctrine of inspiration.  
for your good. . .**

## B. Contrast with Pagan Counterfeits.

**Pagan counterfeits** try to answer: “Who are you to tell me how I ought to live?” or “What is your ethical authority for the moral judgment you just made?” without reference to fear of God and His Word.

Theory #1: Subjectivism (relativism)—most basic version; all the other varieties usually collapse into this one.

“Ethical judgments merely express an individual’s emotions or attitudes toward an action.”

Argument for:

Counter-Argument: (real life consequences of man *made in God’s image* living in a *world of God’s design*)

Theory #2: Humanism—older generation’s position

“Ethical judgments start with the assumption that violation of human nature or needs is wrong.”

Argument for:

Human nature and needs together are a constant throughout history so that there is a stable, non-subjective standard for moral judgment against any violation of that nature and/or needs.

Counter-Argument: (ultimately winds up as “subjective” because it starts with man)

1. The *value* judgment that it is wrong to violate human nature doesn’t follow from the *fact* of violation of human nature—can’t go from “is” to “ought” without some sort of linkage.
2. Any required social agreement makes an “agreed-upon” value, but that kind of value isn’t objective; it arises solely from social agreement = subjectivism on a corporate scale.
3. Illustration of its subjectivity: modern ecology would proclaim such a value as “species arrogance”—why set violation of human nature and needs above animals’ natures and needs or the environment’s nature and needs?

Point about pagan counterfeits: they all end up as “subjective” in that autonomous man replaces God as lawgiver.

### C. The Character of Law-Giver Yahweh (10:14-22)

#### 10:14 heavens. . .highest heavens. . .earth

God as Creator is basis for true ethics. “Who are you to tell me how to live?” can only be answered by [God our Creator].

#### 10:15 He delighted. . .to love. . .

Emphasis upon sovereign election: God as Creator alone defines value.

Exclusivity of revelation → denies [inclusivity] of unbelief.

Basis of exclusivity = failure of Noahic civilization to follow the enlightenment they had from the “Noahic Bible.”

Question-begging nature of “inclusivity” = denies the God who is there and who is not silent (it already assumes that all religious claims [originate from man]).

#### 10:16 circumcise the foreskin of your heart and your neck do not stiffen it again

Call to deal with the heart: we are responsible for its condition but we need to rely upon the Lord to:

(1) show us the evil that lies in *its fallen nature*;

(2) root out such evil in response to our choices to reject such evil

The heart ethically IS what we look like to God.

“As in water face reflects face, so a man’s heart reveals the man” Prov 27:19

Abrahamic Covenant Physical Circumcision: (another analogy between physical appearance and the unseen spiritual reality):

- Testifies that the primary [initiator] of reproduction has been affected by the fall and must be fixed (fits with supernatural conception of Isaac as fulfillment of the “seed”).
- Testifies to [separation] (distinction) of Abraham’s children from the world.
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Spiritual Heart Circumcision: (spiritual heart is the source of who we are ethically).

The source of our manifested life must be fixed.

The “fixed” heart is separated (distinguished from the world).

“Circumcision of the heart” = work of Holy Spirit in individual believers in Israel (see Rom 2:29).

Future New Covenant in Jer 31 & Ezk 36 anticipates time when whole nation has circumcision of the heart.

NT speaks of our regeneration as a spiritual circumcision (Col 2:11).

1 John 3:9 even talks about the seed of Christ in us.

Moses’ final appeal that goes back to the very structure of society

**10:17 Yahweh your God. . .a God of Gods. . .a lord of lords. . .the Heroic God great and to be feared** (English word “awesome” is too overused today)

This is the one you’re trying to have a relationship with!!

**Who doesn’t lift up faces** [count some as more important than others] **and take a bribe**  
God never compromises His integrity.

**10:18 a doer of mishpat** [justice in case law][participle → His characteristic nature]  
Getting close to 2<sup>nd</sup> part of Deuteronomy here! Ethics flow out of relationship with God.

**for the orphan and widow**

Context is [a judicial proceeding] so there is a case involved here.

These 2 members could not hold title to inherited land so they were economically dependent upon others → they had no bribery capacity like a wealthy land-owner, nor political intimidation or influence on the outcome.

**a lover of the stranger to give to him food and clothing**

a foreign visitor had no “rights” like a Jewish citizen and so lacked a “lobby” for protection; could wind up without money to sustain him; Israel was to be a testimony to compassion.

**10:19 therefore love the foreign visitor for you were foreigners in Egypt**

**10:20 in His name take oaths**

In judicial proceedings—one of the social activities most clearly dependent upon correct use of language. Not language as sophistic tool of manipulation but as a tool that describes reality because we are made in God’s image for understanding and naming reality. Central to working ethics!!

**10:21 great things. . .your eyes have seen. . .**

Historical revelation of acts that fit with contractual promises (“show and tell”).

**10:22 seventy. . .multitude. . .**

As in Chapter 1—proof that Abrahamic Covenant is working: nation is so big that Moses had to have a multi-layered bureaucracy to lead the nation.

**CONCLUSION**

- Moses’ concluding appeal to the heart issues = foundation of the nation.
- Israel’s relationship with Yahweh (shaped by covenant) is the only source of ethics.
- Pagan counterfeits try to produce some sort of “objective” basis for moral authority but always wind up anchoring it in the heart of man with all of its limitations.

Structure of Chapters 8 and 9	
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**#1 Non-Biblical Answer to: "Who are you to tell me how to live?"**

1. Subjectivism (moral relativism): *"Ethical judgments merely express an individual's emotions or attitudes toward an action."*

**Arguments for:**

- Circumstances & generation differ from person to person
- Intolerant to impose one's values on others
- Two persons' conflicting judgments can both be true because they both accurately reflect the individual attitudes

**# 1 Non-Biblical Answer to: "Who are you to tell me how to live?"**

1. Subjectivism (moral relativism): *"Ethical judgments merely express an individual's emotions or attitudes toward an action."*

**Problems with:**

- Says nothing about actions themselves, only autobiographical expressions lacking basis for moral outrage over evil actions
- Self-refuting since every person inevitably judges others' actions (especially toward himself or herself)
- Resulting anarchy leads to totalitarian imposition of the judgments of the stronger against the weaker to avoid social chaos

**#2 Non-Biblical Answer to: "Who are you to tell me how to live?"**

2. Humanism (attempt to establish "objectivity"): *"ethical judgments start with the assumption that violation of human nature or needs is wrong"*

**Argument for:**

Human nature and needs together are a constant throughout history so that there is a stable, non-subjective standard for moral judgment against any violation of that nature and/or needs

**# 2 Non-Biblical Answer to: "Who are you to tell me how to live?"**

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**Problems with:**

- The value judgment that it is wrong to violate human nature doesn't follow from the fact of violation of human nature
- Any required social agreement makes an "agreed-upon" value, but that kind of value isn't objective; it arises solely from social agreement
- why set violation of human nature and needs above animals' natures and needs or the environment's nature and needs?

