

Deuteronomy • The Consequences of Love

Introduction

As most commentators and references will point out, “Deuteronomy” comes from the Greek for “second law”, thought to refer to the requirement in Dt. 17:18-20 that every future king of Israel will personally write his own copy of this book and personally study it daily for life. But what may be most unique to Deuteronomy from the rest of the books of the Torah is the explosion in the use of the word “love”. Found in Genesis but 4 times, in each of Exodus and Leviticus only twice, and not at all in Numbers, it is used 20+ times in Deuteronomy. This restatement and encapsulation of the Old Testament Word of God provides the same foundation for what is at the heart of the New Testament Word of God: An unbreakable connection to God’s love.

This theme is revisited at different intervals throughout the entire book, so this study visits them across the whole book that we might understand the greater message and purpose of God’s Word and not forget what is most important in the course of our overall study. The love message of Christ was not entirely new, but fulfilling and building on what had already been established here.

³⁵“To you it was shown that you might know that the LORD, He is God; there is no other besides Him. ³⁶Out of the heavens He let you hear His voice to discipline you; and on earth He let you see His great fire, and you heard His words from the midst of the fire. ³⁷Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great power, ³⁸driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in and to give you their land for an inheritance, as it is today.

[Read 4:35-38]

Q: What is supposed to be the purpose of why God reveals Himself to someone?

A: “...that you might know that the LORD, He is God; there is no other besides Him”. (v.35)

Point: Any proclaimed “revelation” of God which does not assign to Him all sovereignty and authority above everything else is actually no revelation at all.

Q: What is the greater representation of v.36?

A: “His voice” and “His words from the midst of the fire” are describing His Word.

Q: Once someone has an authentic revelation of the One True God, what is the subsequent effect of His Word upon them?

A: “...He let you hear His voice to discipline you”. (v.36)

Point: An authentic revelation of God is proven by the change in our behavior going forward conforming to His Word and ways. Such no longer act the same way any longer.

Q: How is this ultimately expressed as the working of God’s love?

A: According to v.37, those to whom such a revelation is experienced are chosen by God.

¹³But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because **God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.** ¹⁴It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us. — 2 Thessalonians 2:13–15

¹⁹We love, because He first loved us. — 1 John 4:19

Q: How would v.37-38 apply to believers today in the context of the New Testament?

A: By His love God called us out of the old life (“brought you from Egypt”) leading to an eternal inheritance in Christ to be fully realized in eternity.

Application: God’s love initiates His calling so we may be transformed by His Word.

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⁶For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ⁷The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, ⁸but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. ⁹Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments; ¹⁰but repays those who hate Him to their faces, to destroy them; He will not delay with him who hates Him, He will repay him to his face. ¹¹Therefore, you shall keep the commandment and the statutes and the judgments which I am commanding you today, to do them.

¹²“Then it shall come about, because you listen to these judgments and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep with you His covenant and His lovingkindness which He swore to your forefathers. ¹³He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock, in the land which He swore to your forefathers to give you.

[Read 7:6-13]

Q: How does v.6 provide more detail as to the expected qualities of those whom God has chosen?

A: When they come out of the world, it is to be “a holy people to the LORD your God”—that is, set apart and devoted exclusively to Him. This is dramatically emphasized with the designation they are “for His own possession”.

⁹But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰**for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD;** you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY. — 1 Peter 2:9–10

¹⁴who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify **for Himself a people for His own possession**, zealous for good deeds. — Titus 2:14

Q: According to v.9, how is one's love of God tangibly proven?

A: “...those who love Him...keep His commandments”.

³By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; ⁵but **whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected.** By this we know that we are in Him: ⁶the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. — 1 John 2:3–6

Q: How is v.10 explaining there is no middle ground when it comes to God?

A: We are either obedient through the Word and therefore exhibiting our love for God, or disobedient to His Word and therefore demonstrating hatred.

Point: There is no partial circumstance of simply “liking”, being “fond of”, nor “respecting”—without obedience to God's Word and ways there can never be a love relationship.

Q: What are the three things specified in v.11?

1. “...the commandment”. (Heb. “*mistvah*”) A specific requirement which must be kept when entering into a covenant relationship with God. These are the agreements or stipulations in our “contract” with God, the specifics we are committed to upon entering into this relationship.
2. “...the statutes”. (Heb. “*chok*”) A prescribed task or boundary of a permanent nature such as the rules for sacrifices and holy days or limits on marriage. They serve to separate God's people for exclusive service to and worship of Him.
3. “...the judgments”. (Heb. “*mishpat*”) The application of God's Word to every situation whether or not it is specified word-for-word in Scripture. It is measuring all things against the greater “spirit of the law” so that our heart and mind always operate according to His Word and ways.

Point: There are no “loopholes” where God's Word is concerned; it commits us to a changed path regardless.

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Q: But according to v.12, what is the most important thing for us when it comes to God's Word?

A: That we do not simply "listen", but also "keep and do them". To "hear" biblically is always proven by putting it into practice.

²²But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. — James 1:22

Q: According to v.13, what is God's response to complete obedience to His Word?

A: Love and blessings.

Point: *That which is initiated by His love toward us is made complete by Him in the proof of our love by our obedience to His Word. It is a cycle which begins and ends with Him.*

Application: *There is no biblical love without biblical truth in either our beliefs or our behavior.*

¹²Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³and to keep the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?

[Read 10:12-13]

Q: What is God's list of requirements where an authentic relationship with Him is concerned?

1. "...to **fear** the Lord your God..." (v.12)
2. "...to **walk** in all His ways and love Him..." (v.12)
3. "...to **serve**...with all your heart and with all your soul..." (v.12)
4. "...to **keep** the Lord's commandments and His statutes..." (v.13)

Q: What is being described by the term "His ways"? How is this distinctly different from "commandments", "statutes" or "judgments"?

A: The Hebrew term "derek", translated in English as "ways", refers to a well-traveled road, a course which God reveals as the right one from which humans are not to stray.

Application: *Biblical love is proven by clinging to God's path alone.*

Q: To what are each of these action verbs tied to?

A: Obedience to God's Word and ways.

¹*You shall therefore **love the LORD your God**, and always keep His charge, His statutes, His ordinances, and His commandments. — Deuteronomy 11:1*

Q: What might be significant about the characterization in Dt. 11:1 that biblical love means to "always keep His charge"?

A: The term "charge" refers to an assignment given or obligation which must be fulfilled.

Application: *The only genuine respect (biblically called "fear") in the course of service to God is qualified by devotion to His Word and ways. Such all come together to define what it biblically means to love God.*

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¹If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, ²and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' ³you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

[Read 13:1-3]

Q: What does "a prophet or a dreamer of dreams" represent in the context of the current discussion?

A: It is the antithesis of the working of God's Word.

Q: How is this shown to be working toward the opposite results of God's Word?

A: As stated previously in Dt. 4:35, God's purpose is "...that you might know that the LORD, He is God; there is no other besides Him". Here, a false word is designed to accomplish the opposite: "Let us go after other gods...and let us serve them". (v.2)

Point: False figures always attempt to detract if not outright reject the authentic.

Q: But what if the dreamer or false prophet performs a real sign and wonder? Doesn't that confirm their authenticity and authority?

A: No, we are warned not to listen to them even if "the sign or wonder comes true". (v.2)

Q: How are such deceivers characterized? What is actually taking place?

A: "...for the LORD your God is testing **you** to find out if **you** love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul". (v.3)

Q: And based on all the other parallel usages, how can it be proven that one's love of God rises to the standard "with all your heart and with all your soul"?

A: Such love only meets this requirement by a total commitment to following God's Word and ways alone, to never straying from His path even when enticed by such deceivers.

Application: Genuine love for God will always embrace and practice His Word in the course of rejecting a false or deceptive counterfeit.

¹⁹"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, ²⁰by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

[Read 30:19-20]

Q: How does one "choose life"? How does one achieve "blessing"?

A: "...by loving the LORD your God..." (v.20)

Q: And how is this love achieved? How does it meet God's requirements?

1. "...by obeying His voice..."
2. "...by holding fast to Him..."

Application: Biblical love is a personal choice which cannot be separated from obedience to His Word and ways.

⁵"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

[Read 6:5]

Q: Now that you have studied God's Word more thoroughly on the subject, how would you say that this familiar scriptural phrase is accomplished by each of us personally?

A: It can only be accomplished in tandem with complete obedience to God's Word.

Application: “All your heart”, “all your soul” and “all your might” describe the effort we put into our obedience to God’s Word and ways to accomplish the goal of biblical love for God.

¹¹“For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. ¹²It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?’ ¹³Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?’ ¹⁴But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it.

The Consequences of the Will [Read 30:11-14]

Q: Is it impossible to accomplish this task of biblical love?

A: Obviously not.

Q: What is the three-fold action we are supposed to take where God’s Word is concerned that it may accomplish this?

A: It is to be in “your mouth”—something we continually speak ourselves, and “in your heart”—something by which we truly live and put into practice, that it may produce the end result “that you may observe it”.

Point: God’s Word is to continually be on our lips and heart.

⁹“Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. — John 15:9–10

Application: Biblical love is only difficult if pursued apart from God’s Word.

Overall Application

⁵But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. — 1 Timothy 1:5

Q: What is a “pure heart”?

A: “Pure” in Scripture always describes something “unpolluted by sin”. This is a heart which does not abide any sin whatsoever. This is accomplished by the application of God’s Word to our heart.

Q: What is “a good conscience”?

A: Always choosing God’s ways over the world’s ways or one’s desires, following God’s leading instead of our own inclinations. This is accomplished by the application of God’s Word to our mind.

Q: What is “a sincere faith”?

A: “Faith” in both the Hebrew and Greek can be translated either as “faith” or “faithfulness”. Another way to phrase this is “sincerely faithful”—to never stray from God’s path. This is accomplished by the application of God’s Word to our soul.

Application: The achievement of God’s love in our life is only possible by a total personal commitment to His Word at every level—our heart, mind and soul.

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