

Preachers' Gatherings 2019

Preaching Deuteronomy

Booklet 2
Sermon Resources

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Possible sermon series in Deuteronomy

A. Deuteronomy in eight sermons

Sermon No.

Prologue (ch. 1-4)

1. Ch. 1 Remember God's promises and your waywardness.

God's covenant with his people (ch. 5-31)

a. Its core: the ten commandments, ch. 5

2. Ch. 5 I rescued you. My design for life: the ten commandments.

*b. Its spirit: the love of God (ch. 6-11)**

c. Its stipulations: the law expounded (ch. 12-26)

3. Ch. 12 Uproot idolatry, worship God and enjoy life.

4. Ch. 20 Principles of war and The YHWH War.

5. Ch. 24 Care for life esp. that of the disadvantaged.

d. Its sanctions: penalties and blessings, 27 & 28

e. Its acceptance: vassal to sign, ch. 29 & 30

6. Ch. 30 You need new hearts. It's not difficult. Choose life.

f. Its preservation: public reading every 7 years, ch. 31

Epilogue (ch. 32-34)

a. Moses' song, ch. 32

b. Moses' blessing, ch. 33

7. Ch. 33 Moses' blessing. Underneath are the everlasting arms.

c. Moses' death, Joshua succeeds him, Moses' epitaph, ch. 34

8. Ch. 34 Moses dies, Joshua takes over. God knew Moses face to face.

*If there were a ninth sermon it should be on ch. 6 with its moving Shema, love for God, family life, sharing the faith.

Note. Occasionally in the sermon resources I write 'wee exp.' or 'lively exp.'. It means 'relax and explain in a brief, lively way.'

For each sermon passage I have suggested its '**glowing heart**' and '**OHL**': the **O**bjective which, it seems to me, it has for our **H**earers' **L**ives including ours; and recorded the **core headings** I used recently for the eight sermons.

B. Deuteronomy in two sets of seven sermons

Sermon No.

Prologue (ch. 1-4)

1. Ch. 1 Remember God's promises and your waywardness.

God's covenant with his people (ch. 5-31)

a. Its core: the ten commandments, ch. 5

2. Ch. 5 I rescued you. My design for life: the ten commandments.

b. Its spirit: the love of God (ch. 6-11)

3. Ch. 6 One Lord, one love, one family loyalty.¹

4. Ch. 7 Exclusively chosen and loved.

5. Ch. 10 Walking in his ways.

c. Its stipulations: the law expounded (ch. 12-26)

6. Ch. 12 Uproot idolatry, worship God and enjoy life.

7. 16.18-17.20 Leadership in God's kingdom.

.....Series 2.....

8. Ch. 20 Principles of war and The YHWH War.

9. Ch. 24 Care for life esp that of the disadvantaged.

d. Its sanctions: penalties and blessings, 27 & 28

10. Ch. 28 The blessings and dangers of being in covenant with God.

e. Its acceptance: vassal to sign, ch. 29 & 30

11. Ch. 30 You need new hearts. It's not difficult. Choose life.

f. Its preservation: public reading every 7 years, ch. 31

12. Ch. 31 Keep remembering God's covenant with you.

Epilogue (ch. 32-34)

a. Moses' song, ch. 32

b. Moses' blessing, ch. 33

13. Ch. 33 Moses' blessing. Underneath are the everlasting arms.

c. Moses' death, Joshua succeeds him, Moses' epitaph, ch. 34

14. Ch. 34 Moses dies, Joshua takes over. God knew Moses face to face.

¹ Modified from Chris Wright's title

Resource notes for suggested 8 sermon series

The booklet traces the sequence of thought in Deuteronomy, with the resources for each of the eight suggested sermons inserted after the introductory comments on that chapter.

The sequence of thought in Deuteronomy

Ch. 1 – 4. Historical review

Ch.1. Heading to whole book, and review of circumstances that brought them to this point. ‘Here is Deut. East of Jordan, after an 11 day journey that took 40 years, Moses preached as God directed.’

‘After Sinai YHWH took us north to enter the promised land, and I appointed leaders to help govern. At Kadesh we sent out spies. They found a good land but you grumbled and despite my protest would not enter. God was angry. “OK, you will not enter; I’ll give Canaan to your children. Back to the desert with you.” You then disobeyed by trying to enter after all; and of course were defeated.’

→ NT: 1 Cor.10 and Heb.3.15-4.7. Don’t deprive ourselves through unbelief and idolatry.

→ 2019: Useful lessons for when we start any new project. Easy to fear as we leave our comfort zone. Then reluctance. But risking all and moving on can bring so much joy. Put unbelief to death. ‘You hate us’ they said (1.27); do we believe God likes us?

Sermon 1: Chapter 1 ‘Here we are about to enter; remember God’s promises and your waywardness’

Glowing heart: God is all generosity but his people can be an untrusting bunch. They say the unexamined life isn’t worth living: this gives the opportunity to learn from previous unbelief, trust him and take possession of what he gives them.

OHL: To be freshly open to the ‘Rest,’ the territory God has for us in salvation.

Notes towards a sermon.

- *The situation:* God’s people Israel on the edge of the promised land, about to enter at last. They needed to think about what was at stake.
- *The message for them:* We’re here 40 years late because of our unbelief, yet God has so much for us. Learn from our mistakes.

- *Christian implications:*
 - Have we *learnt* from our mistakes?
 - God offers us in spiritual fulfilment what he offered them in physical history. *They* were to enter the land as their rest (12.9,10); *we* are invited into God's rest, Heb.3.1-6 and 3.16 – 4.7.
 - How many stop short of full salvation, of wholly following the Lord (see Caleb, v. 36) and of the fabulous freedom in Christ, joy at new life, possession of all that God gives. These studies are your opportunity; start now.
- *Lesson for us:* So many Church folk fail to take possession of what God brings us in salvation. Appeal along lines of Phil.3.12.

My sermon's core headings: God –

- Achieved our rescue
- Calls us forward
- Wants us to learn
-

Ch. 2. Review of more recent events. ‘Then we came north. We had to be peaceful with Edom, Moab and Ammon because YHWH gave them their lands as descendants of Esau and Lot. God has so looked after us (7). The unbelieving generation has now died out. We crossed the Arnon, offered peace to Sihon (whose land I have given you) and when they attacked us, conquered them.’

→ Jesus → 2019:

We too enter territory already given by God: salvation is a completed work (John 19.30) and good works are prepared for us, and we for them (Eph. 2.10).

Ch. 3. Historical review ctd. ‘Similarly with Og of Bashan, destroying the inhabitants and possessing TransJordan all the way from the Arnon gorge to Mt Hermon. I divided it between Reuben, Gad and Manasseh, their fighting men to help conquer Canaan. YHWH would not listen to my plea to enter but I encouraged Joshua in that regard.’

→ Jesus → 2019:

(1) Reuben wanted TransJordan for wealth's sake (echoes of Lot) and was allowed it as a concession; but it cost him dearly in the end.² Guard against covetousness.

² Num.32.1-5; 1 Kings 22.3; 2 Kings 10.32f, 15.29 etc. Comment in J Philip.

- (2) Joshua to take over: God might bury his workers (and denominations?) but he continues his work.
- (3) See how invested Moses was in God's promises (3.23); am I?
- (4) Was God being mean to Moses? Heb.12.4-11 he was acting as a good father, and Moses later entered the land and met Jesus³: the 'harvest of peace and righteousness for those who have been trained by it.'

Ch. 4. Recall to the covenant. Ch. 4 is like the opening movement of a symphony, introducing the themes that later movements develop:

- God is especially present among his people *by his Word* (throughout the chapter, but esp v.12f).
- v.35 draws attention to God's 'singularity and integrity'⁴: there is no god like him, hence the hostility to all idolatry.
- God's justice and mercy work hand in hand (25-31).

'Observe my commands carefully: it will bring you respect among the nations. Teach them to your children. Flee idolatry: keep remembering God's covenant with you. Has any other god acted as I did at the Exodus? He is *God*.' Moses appointed TransJordan cities of refuge; v. 44f is the heading to the main message of Deut., really to ch. 5-11, -26 or -31.

→ Jesus → 2019:

- (1) On v.6 the effect on the nations: the fullness of the spirit evokes respect.⁵
- (2) The importance in our generation of our children knowing the difference between right and wrong;
- (3) Living God's way is still the road to his blessing.⁶
- (4) Keep remembering God's mercy and telling the next generation;⁷ how much part did Acts 21.5 (disciples, wives and children praying together for Paul) play in the continuation of the early church?

³ Mark 9.1-13 and parallels

⁴ McConville's terms; cp Jas.1.17

⁵ Acts 2.42-47; 2 Cor.2.15f

⁶ Mark 10.28-31; John 14.15-27, 15.1-17

⁷ Eph.2.11f; 2 Tim 1.3-7, 3.14-4.5

Ch. 5 – 11 Loving God with all your heart

Intro: the spirit of ch. 5-11.

With ch. 5 we come to the next major section of Deut. Even just seeing the GNB headings gives matter for reflection. ‘The Lord’s own people ... the *blessings* of obedience ... a good land to be possessed ... the Lord’s greatness ... the blessings of the promised land.’ It’s reminiscent of Eph. 1.3-14 ‘The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ... every spiritual blessing ... chosen us to be his ... because of his love ... make us his sons ... free gift ... forgiven ... grace in such large measure ... the Holy Spirit the guarantee.’ The sermons on this section just must put on display the grace, the largesse of God and the Person who overflows with them.

Ch. 5. The covenant in essence. ‘God made a covenant with us, starting “I brought you out of slavery, have no other gods before me.” You said “Moses we are afraid, you hear him for us.” Well, walk in this way so that you may live.’

→ Jesus → 2019:

This is not a ‘religion of works in order to attain life.’ It is the expression of gratitude for redemption. It is out of this that all ‘doing’ springs.

Sermon 2: Chapter 5 The covenant God makes with his people, then and now

Glowing heart: The Lord says to them/us his people: We are thirled to one another in solemn, fraught covenant. I’m your Saviour, here is the sort of people to be.

OHL: Wow, Jesus is in momentous personal covenant with me! Lord, change and mould my heart to live so that is the living truth about me.

Notes towards a sermon:

- *Introduction:* We’ve seen that the people of Israel are on the verge of entering the promised land. They’ve been wandering for 40 years. Now is the time to get their faith right before crossing the Jordan & the battle of Jericho, starting a whole new life as a nation in their own land for the first time. Apprehensive, excited. *It is a key moment in their story.* They need a steadying, motivating, guiding word. Nor is this just an ancient problem. We too can plod along in the duties of life, work and church yet living on the horizontal plane alone. As J.N.Darby said, ‘Alas! How often we have to reproach ourselves with going on in a round of Christian duty, faithful in general intention, but not flowing from the fresh realisation of the love of Christ to our souls.’ Let this moment from the Lord reach us too, today.

- *Content:* Here in Deut ch. 5 God affirms the covenant relationship that he has with Israel. In a sentence it is this, in all its sovereignty and grace: ‘I will be your God and you will be my people.’ Just like that, whether or not they want it, irrespective of desert, simply because God declares and thus makes it so. It is just the same with us.

But think about that for a minute. In James Philip’s words, ‘When we think who the Lord is, Creator of the ends of the earth, almighty, all-glorious, the Father of an infinite majesty – the greatness of God is so staggering when we think of it, yet that God takes pleasure in his people! The God who made the universe by the word of his power, the God who said Let there be light and there was light, the God who created the milky way with a snap of his fingers, that God takes pleasure in his people! The thing is absolutely fantastic, absolutely astounding.’⁸

In this chapter God makes two basic points. The first – he is their saviour. The second – the type of people they are to be. Let’s look at those in turn.

1. God is their saviour. ‘I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.’ (lively exp!). It is the situation of every believer now, although more so. Not from external slavery in the country of Egypt, but inner slavery to sins, sin and Satan. Rom.3.23f, John 8.36 ad lib.
2. The type of people they are to be: he states the ten commandments. This is the kind of people humankind was created to be, the sort that Adam and Eve were before the Fall, although now mostly put in negative terms because they are now sinners. It’s worth very briefly rehearsing:
 - a. The first four commandments are Godward: to have no other god, to make no images of gods, not to misuse his name by their actions or words; to give one day in seven altogether from work to him. Let him have top place in their hearts and lives.
That God is top in our hearts and comes first in our lives is still the most important and happiest thing for a human being, as Jesus said: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind: this is the first and greatest commandment (Matt.22.36f wee lively exp!)
 - b. The next six commandments are manward: to bring honour to our parents, to save life and not destroy it, to be faithful about marriage, to respect others’ property and not steal it, to tell the truth, to put covetousness and envy to death and to be content.

⁸ J Philip, Bible Study 2 June 1976 ‘The theological basis of prayer’ p. 3,4.

Again, Jesus affirms the second table of the law: ‘And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments’ (wee lively, w illustration)

God concludes, ‘Oh that their hearts might fear me and keep my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children for ever!’ (v. 29).

- *Conclusion.* The preacher Aijith Fernando tells of an occasion when planes by the score had to be cancelled at a certain airport. You can imagine the chaos. There was one staff member who kept her cool the whole time, explained what was happening, took all the vilification, helped with the alternative arrangements. A man came up to her at the end of it all and asked her name so he could write to the airline about her. She said, ‘well sir, you can write to the airline if you wish, but I’m not really working for the airline, I’m working for Jesus Christ.’

To what extent would you say *you* are gripped by the glory of God being in a covenant with you? To what extent are those two ‘tables of the law’ (Godward, man-ward) the sort of person you are? Could this be a day, for you, of a fresh marriage to Jesus? Or of choosing him as your saviour?

My sermon’s core headings: God’s covenant with his people:

- The grace that starts it
- The decrees that guide it
- The provision for failure (it was a communion service. Matt.26.27f)

Ch. 6. Love God and teach your children to. Ch. 6 puts in place the link between the Decalogue and the future life of Israel. The one-ness of God is a dominant theme (v.4). ‘Listen so as to enjoy long life. Hear, Israel, YHWH our God is one. Love him with all your heart, soul and strength. Have the commandments on your hearts, impress them on your children. When prosperous, take care not to forget them. When your children ask, explain the Exodus rescue and God’s command to obey so that we prosper.

→ Jesus → 2019:

- (1) Jesus said the Shema is the most important commandment (Mk.12.29). He wants not just hearers but disciples: in justification through faith, obedience has not become superfluous or secondary.⁹
- (2) ‘Wear this on your hands and foreheads, doorposts and gates’ (v.8) means ‘let this be how you think and behave at home and wherever you go.’¹⁰
- (3) Impressing it on our children remains a value: Acts 2.39; Eph. 6.1-4 // Col.3.20f; 1 Tim.3.4f.

⁹ Emil Brunner, quoted by J Philip ad loc.

¹⁰ Micah 6.8

Ch. 7. Drive out the current inhabitants. Ch. 7 is ‘the main exposition in Deut. of Israel’s election.’¹¹ The rejection of other nations goes with this: all other rule is excluded, so that Israel can be a paradigm of God’s kingdom to the world. ‘Exterminate the Canaanites and their religious artefacts and do not intermarry with them: you are YHWH’s. He chose you because he loves you. If you follow his ways he will make you flourish. Do not fear them: remember YHWH and the exodus. But again: stay clear of detestable things.
→ Jesus → 2019:

- (1) The resolution called for in our growth to holiness, cp 1 Cor.9.26f, 2 Cor. 6.14-7.1 ‘Let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.’
- (2) from the words ‘if you obey he will love you.’ God can express his love to us when we walk with him, in a way that is not possible otherwise. // Christ lives in me -> I was caught up to paradise, heard inexpressible things.¹²
- (3) from ‘fear not; remember:’ recollection is the cure for fear.¹³

Ch. 8. Obey and stay grateful. The chapter is about dependence on God. ‘In the desert God tested your hearts. He made you hungry and provided manna so you would realise man lives not by bread alone but also by what he commands. How good he is: your clothes did not wear out (etc) for 40 years, and he is bringing you to a good land. Don’t forget, lest when prosperous you become proud.’

→ Jesus → 2019:

- (1) God continues to mature us by his disciplines.
- (2) the dangers of affluence. Stay grateful.
- (3) the importance of thankfulness: how good God was to them, is to us.¹⁴

Ch. 9. God will give you success; but remember you are golden calf people. On what basis may Israel enter the land, make his promises their reality? Entirely on the basis of his grace.¹⁵ ‘God will bring you into the land. When you drive out the Anakites don’t say that is because of your righteousness. It’s because of their wickedness. You are stiff-necked: remember the golden calf, Taberah, Massah, Kibroth-Hattaavah and your unbelief at Kadesh-Barnea. I prayed 40 days and nights for God to relent towards you and save his reputation.’

¹¹ McConville p. 162.

¹² Gal.2.20 → 2 Cor.12.1-6, 1 John 1.1-7; John 14.21-23, Luke 7.36f.

¹³ 1 Cor.11.24; Eph. 2.11f; 2 Tim.2.8; Heb.10.32; 2 Peter 1.12

¹⁴ v. 2,4,7,15,16. Ps.33.1, 107.8. Luke 17.15f; 2 Cor.9.15; Eph.5.20

¹⁵ McConville p.191

→ Jesus → 2019:

- (1) We are in the same danger of resisting the Holy Spirit.¹⁶
- (2) God will fulfil his purposes for us as he did for them.¹⁷
- (3) Much to learn and imitate from Moses' prayer life. The people, God's reputation, meant so much to him.¹⁸

Ch. 10. Second set of Decalogue; do fear God. 'It is nothing less than a discourse on loving God. As such it becomes one of the profoundest expressions of deuteronomic theology, because it develops this love command in the context of covenant faithfulness.¹⁹ It says, 'In response, God re-carved the ten commandments and let us go on.' Brief narrative about the priesthood. 'He asks that you love him and walk in his ways. He owns the universe, yet chose *you*. He cares for the weakest; do that too.'

→ Jesus → 2019: (1) That re-carving of the Decalogue speaks of God giving another chance, as he does so often.²⁰ (2) They had priests, and Christians are mediators to the world, 1 Pe.2.9. (3) Let those who speak against Christians keeping the law remember v.13: God's ways are for our good.²¹ (4) *What* a God is shown in v. 14-18; cp Acts 17.24-28.

Ch. 11. Choose God and be blessed ... or not. Your choice. 'Love God and keep his laws for you are the Exodus people, both saved and warned (v. 6f). Do realise that obedience gives strength and long life. The promised land is so fertile; don't be enticed away from YHWH. Keep his words in mind, teach them to your children and you will spread abroad victorious. You have a choice between blessing and curse, which you will declare on Mts Gerizim and Ebal.'

→ Jesus → 2019:

- (1) Here is the final, heart-felt appeal before the detailed stipulations of ch. 12-26. It is warm yet astringent. God is all grace, provident, rescuing, faithful; his ways bring strength and life in all its fullness. It is the same today.
- (2) The significance of the forward reference to Gerizim and Ebal: they will plant God's word in Canaan, as the Apostles did (Acts 12.24). Let us be quite clear how momentous it is to be the land of the Book.

¹⁶ Acts 7.51; Eph.4.30; 1 Thes.5.19; Gal.5.17

¹⁷ 9.1; Ps.90.17; Is.43.13; John 6.37; Phil.1.6; Heb.6.17

¹⁸ 9.2; Ex.32.32; Luke 11.5-13, 18.1-14; Rom.9.3 – can we say that?

¹⁹ McConville p. 207

²⁰ Isaiah 42.22 – 43.13; and with John Mark, Acts 15.38 -> 2 Tim.4.11.

²¹ Also 1 John 5.3 and note 26 above.

Ch. 12 – 26. Laws for God’s church-state in the promised land

Ch. 12 opens Deut’s long central section and affirms its starting point: Israel is set apart to YHWH, so her first vocation is to glorify and enjoy him.

Preaching ch. 12-26

If we are not preaching every chapter, choosing which chapters to include raises the question what are the absolutely core themes in Moses’ practical application of the Covenant. Interestingly, the different analyses that approach this problem all produce three themes, but different ones.

(1). *Millar’s* solution for the purpose of drawing lessons from ch. 12-26 is to analyse the chapters thematically. ‘(Their) ethical demands result from the application of the Deuteronomic theology of *worship*; of *the land*; and of *human relationships*, to Israel’s new existence’ (italics mine):

- Worship: their primary responsibility in Canaan: not as the Canaanites, but at the place and in the manner God reveals.
- The land: God’s gift so that they may enjoy his company, and therefore not to be defiled eg by sin.
- Human relationships: they must do everything in their power to guard justice and equity so that the relationship for which they have been set apart may be fully enjoyed.²²

(2). *The Bible Project* takes the following as its themes. It has the advantage of taking the chapters in order:

- Ch. 12-16a Israel’s worship
- Ch. 16b-18 Israel’s leaders
- Ch. 19-26 Civil laws (marriage, family, business) and social justice.

(3). *My proposal*. I have taken account of the checklist (Booklet 1 p. 3) of issues that Moses himself treats as large and deals with repeatedly as the heart of God’s covenant relationship with his people: the land with its ‘one place for worship’ (which is the land in microcosm, being where he blesses and is especially present) in microcosm; the heart; obedience; the love of God. I have chosen the three passages **ch. 12** (centrality of God; death to idolatry), **ch. 20** (the battle to enter God’s territory; enlightened warfare) and **ch. 24** (what righteousness and justice look like in action in a community) to reflect these.

²² Millar p. 145, 146

Ch. 12 Loyal worship in contrast to Canaanite religion. The negative *inclusio* vv.2-4 and 29-31 against Canaanite worship surrounds the positive issue of worshipping YHWH. The emphasis is on obeying YHWH:

- v. 5-7 it is to take place where YHWH says
- v. 8-12 theological basis: (a) as a pilgrim people, (b) enjoying YHWH's actual Presence.
- v. 13, 14 'not anywhere you *see* (NIV has 'anywhere you please') but as commanded:' i.e. let the ear ('as God says'), not the eye ('this is an attractive-looking place; let's have a satisfying spectacle') be your canon.
- v. 15-25 Don't let this restrict your lives. Enjoy meat meals with the family (although not with the blood in) wherever you are living.
- v. 26-28 But the sacrifices – do them right, that it might go well with you.

Seeing this chapter through Jesus spectacles, notice the pilgrim spirit²³; the joy²⁴; the 'as God says' ²⁵ and the v. 15-25 fullness of life²⁶.

Sermon 3: Chapter 12 The centrality of the united worship of God alone

Glowing heart: First requirement: be rid of all pagan homage and worship God where and why he says.

OHL: The first part of my spiritual reality will be to worship God, among his people, in his very presence: like the first question in the Catechism which says the chief end of man is to glorify and enjoy God for ever.

Notes towards a sermon:

Introduction. Today we take our first study in the core of Deut, ch. 12-26, in which Moses spells out how the ten commandments will work out for the religious, civil and moral life of Israel when they are in the promised land. v. 1 speaks of decrees and laws. There is not a great distinction between the words; 'decree' comes from 'to engrave' a precept or rule that should be obeyed, while 'laws' comes from to judge or govern, implying that they are the sceptre or ordinances by which the Lord exercises his reign over us. Significantly, Moses deals first with worship. A right relationship with God is the beginning of everything. He puts his description within a framework of 'not the way the pagans do it' (v. 2&3, 29-31) lest the people be tempted to wonder, especially in difficult times, how their predecessors in the land went about *their* worship and are seduced away to other gods and practices.

²³ Phil.1.23; Heb.11.13; 2 Peter 1.13-15; Calvin's Golden Booklet (Inst. 3. 6-10) on living with our gaze on heaven; 1 Cor.11.26 anent the Lord's Supper.

²⁴ Acts 2.45f; Rom. 5.11; Phil.4.4; 1 Tim.6.17; 1 Pe.1.3-9

²⁵ John 14.15; Rom.12.1f; 1 John 5.2f

²⁶ John 10.10

Moses strikes three special notes about worship:

1. *Not to other gods.* Just look at 2 & 3 about the previous inhabitants' worship places: Destroy completely, break down, smash, burn, cut down; wipe out their very names.

Don't imagine for a moment this is narrow-mindedness. We prepare engaged couples for wedding vows that include 'keeping me only unto thee:' it's not unknown for people to hang on to rival relationships but it's unthinkable, it's a betrayal. Alcoholics know they mustn't touch a drop. Pagan worship brought people power, and sex, and wealth; there are times for being selective and exclusive, and worship is one such activity.

Even Jesus was tempted to wrong worship, and he answered the Devil from Deut: 'worship the Lord your God and serve him only.' The converts in Ephesus brought their sorcery scrolls and burnt them publicly, financially valuable though they were. Jesus called us to hate even our family in comparison to him. His place in our lives, as our God, is a place for him alone.

2. *With joy, in God's very presence.* He will have given them safety, and rest, and their inheritance (v.9, 10) – why not rejoice to belong to such a God, and enjoy him as they offer their worship? Three times Moses says, rejoice (7, 12, 18). How much more reason have we to enjoy God; cp Rom.5.11 and Bklt 1 n.36.

Seven times in this chapter alone, Moses speaks of *the one place* for worship (v. 5,5,11,14,18,21,26). The NT internalises that principle: 'neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem;' God seeks those who worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4.19-26).

3. *Amidst freedom of life.* There are sacrifices and freewill offerings to offer God centrally, but in the many places where they will live let them have all the meat they want (15, 20), the clean and the unclean alike (22). This liberty would also keep them from the temptation to turn to local Canaanite shrines.

Conclusion. The chief end of man is to glorify and enjoy God; have you discovered what you are for?

My sermon's core headings:

- Refuse the world's seduction
- Embrace the Lord's salvation
- Enjoy the Lord's provision

Ch. 13.1-14.2 No idolatry. Why is loyal worship so key? Because the idolatries of our neighbours are so attractive. They offer power, crops, sex, wealth, parties... Note the thrice-repeated protasis ('if...'), apodosis ('then...') and motivation (therefore...). The sin warned against is being enticed to other gods. The penalty is death. The three potential enemies of our souls are impressive prophets (1-5), our family or friends (6-11) and 'wicked people' (lit. 'sons of Belial', 12-18) enticing whole towns. Notice the reasons for capital punishment: to purge of evil; deterrence; to deflect the Lord's anger; and to open the door to his blessing.

Seeing this chapter through Jesus eyes reminds us how very important it is to guard our relationship with him. Cp 'you have forsaken your first love;' being enticed by modern day Balaks and Nicolaitans; tolerating Jezebels; putting our particular idolatries to death; the courage of some in Ephesus.²⁷

Ch. 14. Clean and unclean food and tithes (resuming the tithes and food theme from ch. 12). The two themes are linked superficially by the act of eating (3ff, 26ff), but more importantly by their expressing Israel's holiness: 'you are a people holy to the Lord, his treasured possession' (14.2).

- **Food.** The basis of the clean-unclean distinction is still not clear (hygiene? The 'normal' which speaks of life and the 'less normal' of death?). We are left with the important message to live by the distinctiveness God calls for, whether or not we understand it. v. 21b about not cooking a kid in its mother's milk occurs three times (also Ex. 23.19, 34.26): apparently a term in common currency, shorthand for 'avoid pagan practices.'²⁸ Simon Manchester made the useful suggestion it is wrong because it mixes what is life-giving with death.
- **Tithes.** A link section typical of Moses in that it simultaneously continues the eating theme and introduces the humanitarian instructions that follow. Bring a tenth of your produce, or what it buys on sale, to the one worship place. Again the basis is theological: God is the landowner, so eat it in the place he directs. Every third year, give it to the Levites and the poor (thus introducing the poor relief of ch. 15).

Ch. 15.1-18. Cancelling debts, releasing slaves. The dominant idea is release (the Son sets us free). Time and again Israel fell spiritually to a dominance by the rich, as the prophets tell. The release laws reverse this inequity. 'Every 7th year cancel debts and release slaves.' It is right to

²⁷ Rev 2.4, 2.14f, 2.20; 1 Cor. 10.14 with Col. 3.5; Acts 19.18-20

²⁸ Discussion by Millar p. 118f

distinguish their slavery from that which Wilberforce helped to eradicate. Slavery in Israel was an institution whereby the wealthy provided, by way of temporary indenture, employment to destitute self-employed small farmers.²⁹ In spirit it was a kind act, to be followed by release in the 7th year. Deut is notable in urging the additional generosity of a golden handshake matching God's generosity to the master (v.14). The challenge in v. 11 and 4 is very impressive: there will always be poor *in the land* but there should be no poor *among you*.

→ Jesus → 2019: Seeing this chapter through the eyes of the Jesus revolution brings Acts 2.42-47, Acts 4.32-5.11 irresistibly to mind; cp Acts 11.27-30; 1 Cor.11.17-22; 2 Cor. 8 & 9; Gal.6.10; Philemon.

Ch. 15.19 – 16.17 Firstlings and festivals. The feasts, ensuring that Israel regularly assemble before the Lord, further emphasise Israel's status as YHWH's people. 'The firstlings are YHWH's so eat them (without the blood); and celebrate Passover, Weeks and Tabernacles, where he appoints: the *whole* community (16.11).' Note the joy (11,14,15): God made it his part to liberate and give the land (= rest, 12.9f), theirs to enjoy and worship (could there be a sermon there). 'Celebrate' ('hg' מן, v.1,10,13) has the root notion of feast, holiday. Eg in 1 Sam.30.16 after the Amalekites raided Ziklag David found them eating, drinking and 'hg-ing': variously translated as revelling, dancing with joy, rejoicing and celebrating.

→ Jesus → 2019:

Celebrating God's mercies. Rom. 5.11; Phil.4.4; 1 Tim.6.17; 1 Pe.1.3-9 (as note 17 above). When Christian came up with the Cross and his burden loosed from off his shoulders, Bunyan goes on,

'Then was Christian glad and lightsom, and said with a merry heart, *He hath given me rest by his sorrow, and life by his death*. Then he stood still a while, to look and wonder; for it was very surprising to him that the sight of the Cross should thus ease him of his burden. (then tears, and peace, and change of raiment, and Seal, and Bunyan goes on) 'Then Christian gave three leaps for joy, and went on singing.

*Blest Cross! Blest sepulchre! Blest rather be
The Man that there was put to shame for me'*³⁰

They *celebrated* Passover; could we find ways of making the Lord's supper more like that while avoiding the dangers?

²⁹ Wenham p. 72

³⁰ John Bunyan *Grace Abounding and The Pilgrim's Progress* Oxford 1966 p. 169f

Ch. 16.18 – 18.22 Authorities: judges, justice, the king, the prophet.

Deut. moves from worship to the political and religious organisation of Israel. Moses will not enter the promised land. Torah will in his place, with the responsibility for its day to day living lying with the people, and its formal implementation lying with the judges (16.18f). Even then failure to obey will arise, and God will raise prophets to recall the people to God (18.14f).

16.18-20 lays down the general principle. Give (yes) the nation judges to dispense ‘justice-righteousness’ (v. 18) - a unique double word - and follow ‘*justice* justice’ (v. 20; my italics): a doubling that is also unique in the Hebrew Bible. This really matters. The tone of a nation (and congregation) is set by its leaders. Let the tone of the nation’s life be set by fairness in the courts. People must get a just deal in Israel.

Detailed procedure follows. Idolatry carries the death penalty (17.2-7). Let difficult cases be sent to judge plus priest (8-13). The objective: to purge the land of evil. The king, when appointed, must not be extravagant, must make himself familiar with Deut. and live accordingly (14-20). Priests and Levites to be supported by the people’s offerings (18.1-8). Detestable practices: remove them (9-13). God will raise up prophets, and one in particular, to be his mouthpiece and to be executed if they speak for other gods. ‘A prophet like me’ (15-18) is the one clear Messianism in Deut., which Peter made capital out of in his great speech in Solomon’s colonnade.³¹

→ Jesus → 2019:

- On good procedure: Matt.18.15-20; 1 Cor.6.1-8; 1 Cor.14.40
- On appointing authorities to ensure it in the church: 1 Tim 3, Titus 1, 1Pe. 5
- On supporting and respecting them: 1 Cor. 9; Gal.6.6; 1 Thes.5.12f; 1 Tim. 5.17-20; Heb.13.7
- On Christian respect for lawfully constituted authority: Rom. 13, Titus 3, 1 Pe.2.13f
- The Deut-promised prophet: Matt.21.11; John 1.1-18 esp 17f, 6.14, 30-35, 15.15; Acts 3.22, 7.37, Heb.1.1f. Compare the close of Deut. 34 and John 20: ‘many miracles ... none like him.’
- Luther’s doctrine of the godly prince being for the weal of the nation.

³¹ Acts 3.17-23

Ch. 19.1 – 22.9 Protect life, especially human.

The concern is to limit loss of life. The cities of refuge (19.1-13) protect those guilty of accidental manslaughter from revenge murder by the go'el, the relative of the deceased³². The boundary stone legislation (19.14) safeguarded a person's livelihood. The two-witness requirement (15-21) protected justice. Principles of war (ch. 20), the only OT laws on warfare, specified exemptions from military service and required attackers to offer terms of surrender except for the unique holy war of taking Canaan, 16-18. The latter has the purpose of securing Israel's 'rest' in their land.³³ Spare the fruit trees even in war (19f): you have a future to provide for. Murder pollutes the earth below us; 21.1-9 provides a procedure for unsolved murders in order to purge the land of that contamination. The case of the female POW (10-14) leads to prohibition against disinheriting a rightful heir; perhaps a livelihood as well as a justice issue (15-17)? Capital punishment for the impenitently rebellious son is afforded the protection of careful, proper procedure (18-21). Removing the body of a criminal from a tree (22f) likewise protects the land from curse and contamination; Paul makes use of the theology in expounding the Cross.³⁴ Animal life is protected in 22.1-4, 6&7; why transvestism is placed at v. 6 is a mystery. The parapet round a flat roof is a life-saving regulation (22.8).

→ Jesus → 2019: Jesus *our* 'city of refuge' acts as go'el, not only as older brother kinsman to redeem us from slavery but who conquered the Devil to avenge us. He bore our curse so that it might not fall on us. He protects our lives: John 3.16, John 10.

The principles of war (ch. 20) show compassion for both Israel (eg exemption if you were engaged to be married or simply afraid) and the enemy (offer terms of peace, don't ravage the land) and deserve to be learnt from. The two examples of total destruction are of the Canaanites who have had 400 years to repent and only become worse (7.1-7; 20.16-18), and apostate Israelites who have made a whole town deliberately idolatrous (13.12f). On the former, see the note on ecological cleansing in 'historical setting' in Booklet 1 p. 10.

Whether **ch. 22.9-12** on mixtures and tassels belongs here or in the next section, or Moses is being *stream of consciousness* in the Spirit and without known rationale in the order of decrees and laws at this point, is unclear to me.

³² Numbers 35.9-30

³³ McConville p. 322

³⁴ Gal. 3.13f. Jesus in bearing the curse removed it from us so that we Gentiles might receive the blessing, promised to Abraham, through Christ Jesus.

Sermon 4: Chapter 20 Is the OT bloodthirsty? And is ch. 20 connected with the spiritual warfare in which we engage?

Glowing heart: Israel were entering a theatre of war; God must rule in how they conducted it, and that has prophetic power in respect of modern warfare. The Kingdom of God is a theatre of spiritual war waged with different weapons but Deut. 20 has plenty we can learn from.

OHL: unembarrassment about the unique YHWH war of entry into the promised land; vision for the way wars must be waged if they become essential; clarity about our spiritual battling for the souls of the lost.

Notes towards a sermon:

Moses has dealt with personal violence in ch. 19. Ch. 20 deals with corporate violence, the practice of warfare. There are three sections to the chapter:

- preparation for war (1-9)
- principles of war (10-18)
 - general, and w.r.t. cities further afield: ‘ordinary’ war (10-15)
 - specific action w.r.t. the inhabitants of the promised land (16-18)
- the ecology of war (19, 20)

1. *Preparation for war (1-9)*. Two features make this extraordinary chapter noteworthy. Do you see the God statements in 1, 4, 13, 16, 17, 18? The key to warfare is not their relationship with the nations but with the Lord. This sermon is not a war manual, it is ‘torah’, pastoral instruction.

a. So in v. 1-9 Moses the pastor addresses the fear that must accompany the prospect of battle. *First*, acknowledge the cause of it: horses, chariots and an army greater than yours. True. *Then*, the antidote to it: God goes with you, fights for you, will give you victory (the imperfect verb is saying ‘be treading fear down’ for those reasons. After all, God conquered the Egyptian army (v.1). *Finally*, the method of providing the antidote: the priests remind them that God goes with them, and the officers will offer a beautiful range of exemptions from military service and appoint commanders to ensure the people are well managed.

b. Secondly, kindness runs almost every stage of the process. There are plenty of let-outs for Israel: marriage, business, even plain fear (5-8). And there is a let-out for the enemy, the prior offer of peace (10f).

2. *The conduct of ordinary war (10-15)*. Besiege the walled city that refuses the peace offer.³⁵ The men who refused peace are to be killed. The women children and livestock are to be spared. The plunder may be kept and used.

³⁵ Compare Ezek. 4.2 for more detail

All this is much more enlightened and moderate than the barbaric practices of the time.

3. *The unique YHWH war of entry (16-18)*. Complete destruction (the famous *herem* or ban) is to apply here. The reason stated at this point is the protection of their relationship with the Lord (18) but others are given elsewhere. God had waited 400 years giving opportunity for repentance and the Canaanites had simply become more corrupt in disgusting ways (see booklet 1, historical setting and Gen.15.16-21, Lev. 18.24-28). He was executing justice on them using Israel: this was God's activity. 'God's elimination of the Canaanites was a necessary step in the history of salvation. A holy people requires a holy land.'³⁶ Not only so. We know from God's mercy to Rachel and family that repentance, siding with God and salvation were available to any that wanted it.³⁷ It was, moreover, a pattern role: we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ and 'receive what is due for the deeds done while in the body.'³⁸ If we think this punishment was bloodthirsty, it is a mere foretaste of judgement day: Jesus and the apostles give awesome warning of that judgement, where (to use their language) the worm is not quenched, the flames are prepared and the blood will run horse-high.³⁹ And think how muscular Jesus' thinking was about tragedies like those who died when a tower fell on them. 'Were they more guilty than other Jerusalemites? No; but unless you repent, you too will all perish' (Lk 13). We have no cause for embarrassment about God's unique, judging war of entry into the holy land.
4. *The ecology of war*. In the conduct of war, Israel were to be enlightened even about nature around them. Retain the fruit trees in the area: they are not your enemy (20.19), though you may use non-productive trees for siege. How different recent history and future health would be if Deut. 20 had been observed. Use of the defoliant Agent Orange in Vietnam not only destroyed half a nation's agriculture; even now and into the indefinite future its poison is causing frightening frequencies of genetic birth defects in the population. Listen to Deuteronomy.
5. *The spiritual battle for the kingship of God*. There is a war for the souls of humankind⁴⁰ but it is not a war against flesh and blood. We use spiritual

³⁶ D. Block, *Deuteronomy* p. 483

³⁷ Joshua 2.1-16, 6.22f

³⁸ 2 Cor.5.10

³⁹ Mark 9.48; Matt. 25.41 & 46; Rev. 14.20 & 19.13

⁴⁰ 1 Tim.1.18; 1 Peter 2.11

and argument weapons to rescue sinners from Satan's grip⁴¹ and the armour that God supplies against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms in our own battles.⁴²

My sermon's core headings: A God of justice: rules of war –

- Look to God (v.1-4)
- Keep his rules (v. 5-15)
- The one LORD'S war: execute the Canaanites (v. 16-18)
- No scorched earth (v. 19, 20)

Ch. 22.13 – 23.18 Gender and exclusion. ‘These laws aim to ensure that the people are able to enjoy all the benefits of belonging within the covenant community.’⁴³ Scripture is clear that our human sexuality somehow links us with God's own self, since ‘in the image of God he created him male and female.’⁴⁴ Edith Humphrey comments, ‘What we think and say and do about our sexuality is intimately connected to who we are - who we are in the created order, who we are in society, who we are with our spouses and friends, who we are ecclesially, and who we are in the new creation which God has brought into being and which he will complete through the work of the Holy Spirit. It is no doubt because of the inter-relatedness of this issue that it brings forth visceral reactions, for good or for ill.’⁴⁵

The evidence of order becomes ever more uncertain from this point, but the section is mostly about sexual relationships. 22.13-30 protects wives from unscrupulous husbands. Marriage is for life: he may not simply be rid of an unwanted wife but must provide proof of previous sexual experience (or perhaps of pregnancy⁴⁶) and so of belonging to another, abusing the covenant of marriage. The penalty is death ‘in order to purge the evil from among you.’ Deut. has modified contemporary legal ideas so as to emphasise the importance of women's honour, a value which sets Israel apart from all other nations.⁴⁷

⁴¹ 2 Cor.10.3-6

⁴² Ephesians 6.10-20

⁴³ McConville p. 343

⁴⁴ Gen.1.27

⁴⁵ E. Humphrey, ‘Why this issue?’ (i.e. homosexual practice). Article prepared for the Faith and Order Commission of the Anglican Church in Canada

⁴⁶ G. Wenham ‘Betulah, a girl of marriageable age,’ *Vetus Testamentum* 22.326-48 1972 quoted in Millar p. 137

⁴⁷ Millar 137

Adultery, fornication and rape follow. Exclusion from worship on the basis of castration (23.1) perhaps refers to self-mutilation associated with Canaanite cults. Illegitimacy (23.2) is on the basis not of sex before marriage but of intermarriage with one of a pagan religion. Moses continues with exclusion from the Assembly: Moabites and Ammonites but not Edomites or Egyptians (23.3-8); the clean-ness of the military camp (9-14). Refugees are to be made welcome (15f); the section ends by forbidding cult prostitution (23.17f).

Ch. 23.19-24.7 Property law. What drives these remarkable regulations is the vision of a society truly different from others, in which the use of wealth serves Israel's calling to be a brotherhood.⁴⁸ We are called to live out the covenant. Not charging an Israelite interest; paying one's vows (about property pledged to God, says Wenham); permission to hand-glean: these are clearly property issues. Proscribing remarriage is less so; it might involve the scam of acquiring your wife's dowry by making a false accusation against her.⁴⁹ Military exemption, security for debts and kidnap conclude the section.

Ch. 24.8 – 25.4 Protect the disadvantaged. Kaufman and Harman link this section to the ninth commandment about false witness (see tables 2 & 3 above) but given the content of the section that looks forced. I have chosen Millar's heading. It has the advantage of drawing attention to the repeated emphasis in Deut. on humanitarianism.⁵⁰

The section consists of regulations about leprous diseases, pledges for loans, fair wages, each person dying only for their own sin, leaving gleanings for the poor, punishments; and not muzzling a working ox.

Then Jesus → Col.3.15-24 and James 1.27 on kindness to others; 1 Cor.9.9 the rights of a working apostle, 1 Tim.5.18 honouring or rewarding a hardworking elder; Gal.6.10, Rom.13.8-10, and the passage on liberality towards needy Christians in 2 Cor.9.

⁴⁸ McConville p. 354

⁴⁹ R. Westbrook 'Prohibition on restoration of marriage in Dt.24.1-4' in *Studies in the Bible* ed. Japhet 1986 p. 387-405 quoted in Wenham *Exploring* p. 138f.

⁵⁰ Wenham quotes 5.14f; 10.18f; 12.18f; 14.21 & 29; 15.13-15; 16.11f & 14; 23.7, 15 & 16; 24.7, 14f, 17-22; 26.11-13 and asks us to notice how, and why, Deut wants slaves, immigrants, orphans, widows and the landless to be helped: p. 135.

Sermon 5: Chapter 24 How civil society will behave under God's reign, in Israel the church-nation, in the promised land.

Glowing heart: Let the wellbeing of the family and the vulnerable be the concern of all, for we are jointly in such a covenant.

OHL: Generosity, justice and kindness towards immigrant, widow and orphan.

Notes towards a sermon:

In our sermon series we move in this chapter from holy war to civil peace.

‘The broad themes of the integrity of the people and justice for all its members continue here.’⁵¹ We might not be under this law but we love to be its in-law. First, just get a feel for this society as I read the issues in this chapter:

No ‘divorce so as to get the dowry’ and then remarriage; marriage exemption from military duty; when taking security for a loan don’t take a person’s livelihood; kidnap is a capital offence; keep the regulations about leprous diseases. Preserve the dignity of debtors, pay fair wages on time. Punish only the guilty, not the family as well. Treat the alien, widow and orphan gently; leave the gleanings of the harvest for the poor to gather.

Can you see why Jesus said the second most important commandment was ‘love your neighbour as yourself’? Deut. ch. 24 is more than law; it is full of reasons for being fair to folk and nurturing the family. Here are some: ‘so that your wife can be happy’ (v.5); protect people’s livelihood especially those in difficulty; let evil be purged away. This is the opposite of exhaustive casuistry, it is illustrative examples of neighbourly integrity for a society where all are brothers. Let’s see some details; would you notice the reasoning underlying the commands:

v.1-4, the only divorce law in the OT, permits it for ‘indecent’ behaviour: a word usually meaning naked. The divorcer was probably able to keep the dowry; maybe he was thinking of that all along. So after her second divorce he must not marry her again: she has been declared defiled. The woman is a victim thanks to at least one husband, maybe two, shaming her: not allowed.

v. 5 exemption for newly marrieds from military service because it brings her happiness! Pro family, pro marriage.

v. 6 don’t take half a pair of millstones as security, it will deprive him of a livelihood. Family wellbeing and care for the poor again.

v. 7 kidnap is done for profit, it’s theft. Capital punishment to purge the land of this evil.

⁵¹ McConville p. 356

v. 8,9 leprous diseases: must follow God's declared procedure because they spread. Therefore the priest is to be involved.

v. 10-13 Don't be oppressive when seeking security for a loan; respect the person. Even return his cloak overnight so he can sleep: the covenant which directs our community life protects the interests of all of us. (*wouldn't this be great in the UK?*).

v. 14f Pay wages fairly and on time, whether Israeli or immigrant.

v. 16 affirms the legal accountability of each individual; it is wrong to impugn the whole family.

v. 17f Ensure everyone receives justice, including the poor & disadvantaged.

v. 19-22 gleanings: this gives those in the weakest position a stake in the harvest. Everyone in the covenant community has the right to share in the blessings of the land, because the Lord has given it to *all* Israel. That limits the profits of the wealthy and the rich-poor gap: good.

Overall, God's covenant with them gave the land to all Israel (v.4). They are slaves no more (v. 18, 22) and no-one's freedom is to be infringed. The purpose of the land is blessing for everyone; economic self-interest must not disserve God's covenant with his people.

But these imperatives are not works of righteousness. They describe the integrity that flows from a right relationship with God and our neighbour; they flow from his Saviourhood into our community.

Challenge: Personal integrity and the wellbeing of others, including a limit to our own prosperity (time, talents and money) for the sake of the poor and vulnerable, form one seamless robe under the kingship of God. Does that value call for any reflection about my own approach to business, or to the poverty of so many Christians either here or in the world church?

My sermon's core headings: Signs of a Deut.24 society –

- Happy wives (v.1-5)
- Temporary debtors (v. 6, 10-13)
- Justice for all (v.16)
- Healthy neighbours (v. 8,9)
- Promptly paid workers (v.14,15)
- Support for the vulnerable (v.17-22)

Ch. 25.5-19 additional laws. This is the final section on individual inculcations before the rounding up of ch. 26. For Kaufman to link it to the tenth commandment (do not covet) seems to me to abandon exegesis. Its themes are Levirate marriage, a wife grabbing the opposing husband's testicles, honest weights, and the extermination of the Amalekites.

Ch. 26 Conclusion. Ch. 26, part of the framing structure around ch. 12-26, is a chapter of three great declarations reflecting exactly the covenant God has made with his people (v. 3, 5, 13, 17, 18):

- A declaration of God's salvation, 3-9
- A declaration of the people's commitment to obey, 13
- A declaration that both the people and the Lord are willing partners to the covenant, 17 & 18.⁵² (*I do like that*)

'As soon as you are in the land, bring the first fruits as tribute to the grace of God in getting you here and giving you this wonderful land as your place of rest: rejoice (11)! And be generous: it will open you to God's blessing (12-15).'
v. 16-19 closes the *inclusio* which 12.1 started. 'So, follow these decrees and laws because you are YHWH's treasured possession.' An excellent reason.

⁵² McConville's fine analysis: p. 377

Ch. 27-34 Weighing it up, closing the deal, staying faithful, moving on

Weighing it up: ch. 27 & 28 provide the cost-benefit analysis of living God's way or not.

Ch. 27. Mounts Ebal and Gerizim. God *made* the covenant with them at Sinai (5.2), Moses has been *teaching* them about it in Moab; they are to *reaffirm* it as soon as they are in the promised land, at Shechem with all its memories and future significance.⁵³ 'Prepare stones. Once across the Jordan, *write all this law* on them, set them on Mt Ebal and joyfully sacrifice fellowship offerings. *Recitation of curses:* for idolatry, injustice, bestiality, corruption. The people shall say 'Amen.'

→ Jesus → 2019:

- (1) All the sins listed are still wrong. How vital in our day that people know right from wrong and recognise that costs accompany breaking God's law.
- (2) The sacrifice to atone and restore fellowship with God is provided on Ebal, the mount of curses. A foreshadowing of the cross: Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us (Gal.3.13)

Ch. 28. Blessings and curses ctd. All of life is under our relationship with God.

a) *Blessings* that God will send upon obedience, in the form of children, crops, herds, general business, military victory, prosperity

b) *Curses* that will come upon disobedience, in the form of ruin, disease, defeat, failure, oppression, scattered among the nations.

→ Jesus → 2019:

Living God's way is good for us, tending towards health and flourishing. Rom.8.11 He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who lives in you ... streams of living water will flow from him.⁵⁴

⁵³ Gen.12.6 and 35.4; Jos. 20.7 and 24.1

⁵⁴ John 7.37, 4.13; Isaiah 58.6-14

Closing the deal: ch. 29 & 30 provide the terms for embracing the covenant and appeal to the people to choose life.

Ch. 29. The pep talk. The chapter drives home the momentousness of the choice they are about to make (ch.30). Narrative: ‘so, those are the covenant terms.’ (Moses:) ‘You experienced the exodus but you still don’t *see* it. You are here to embrace the covenant with YHWH so, no idolatry lest these curses come on you and people realise why. This revelation belongs to us and our children.’

Structure of chapter: 1-15 exhort to enter covenant; 16-29 warn vs apostasy.

→ Jesus → 2019:

- (1) the constant danger of 29.4: knowing the facts but not getting it. eg the religious establishment;⁵⁵ the crowds (eg Mk 10.48, 14.4-9); the disciples (Mark 8.14-20); ourselves.
- (2) the constant lesson of 29.29. There is plenty we are not told; but we are told enough, and it is for us. Cp Luke 13.1-5.

Ch. 30. Decision time: the promise of a new covenant and the call to choose life. Ch. 30 is the climax to which Moses has been leading. Now is the time, in view of all he has been saying, to make a definite, definitive, destiny-choosing, decisive Yes to God. It’s like Rom.12.1-3. ‘When you experience God’s curses and blessings and take them to heart he will bring you back to the land, change your hearts, make you prosper and delight in you. Now, settle it. This is not difficult: it is near you. The choice is life and prosperity or death and destruction. Oh, choose life.’

→ Jesus → 2019:

- (1) The restoration comes when we take God’s disciplines to heart (v.1). Do we learn from what God is trying to teach us? (Heb. 12.10f; v.6 is immense. New hearts is the only road to fullness of life and a healthy society.⁵⁶
- (2) Like Moses, Jesus and the apostles said what is at stake and called for a response. It isn’t too hard for anyone; it is a matter of mouth and heart (v. 14), as Paul points out.⁵⁷ People, choose life.

⁵⁵ Mark 2.1-3.6, 6.3, 14.63; John 3.10, 6.66, 9.28-34

⁵⁶ Jer.31.33f; Ezek.36.25f; John 3.3-8; Rom. 8.1-3; Heb.8.8-12.

⁵⁷ Mark 10.34-38; John 3.16; Acts 2.38, 16.29-31; Rom.3.19-26, and 10.6-11 where Paul uses v.11-14; 2 Cor.5.1-6.2.

Sermon 6: Chapter 30 New hearts are needed if we are going to obey the Lord. Choose life.

Glowing heart: Israel now knew what was at stake and it was decision time that day. Choose life: it needs to happen to every person.

OHL: Lord, I realise I need you to work in my life if I'm going to live as you and I want. I solemnly choose the covenant with you; do that inner miracle in me.

Notes towards a sermon:

Text: Deut. ch. 30

Context: The people know that they will end up in exile at some stage (28.64). They see how thick they've been recently (29.2-4). They know that a lot is at stake in whether a people choose the Lord or not (29.9, or 29.22 & 25?).

Content: Moses assures them that God will bring them back to the promised land even after a time of exile. He will change their hearts and they will obey him. Meanwhile today's task is plain and not difficult: it is, with heart and mouth (definite decision plus solemn declaration) to *choose life*. It's where the whole of Moses' preaching (Deut) has been taking them.

Relevance: This is a task for every person in every era. Many married couples do this sort of thing: they renew their wedding vows at 10 or 25 years married as though they'd never really said them before. For every Christian, time conceals a menace: going on in general intention, but dully. We need to renew our choice of Jesus.

Proposition: Let's follow Moses' sermon and come to that place.

Divisions: The chapter divides itself up very plainly:

- 1 - 10 A new covenant is promised
- 11-14 Today's step is not difficult
- 15-20 Choose life

Development:

1. A new covenant is promised, v. 1-10.

This is so exciting. Moses has been driving home how much they need God. 'You were unwilling; you grumbled; you did not trust; You are stiff-necked; circumcise your hearts; O that their hearts might fear me!' (1.26,27,32; 9.6 & 13; 10.16; 5.29). Their great need was an inner change, and that did not come during their lifetimes. But God here was promising the new thing that Jesus brought: a new covenant in which God would work inside a person. It's in v. 6: 'The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you love him with all your heart and soul, and live.'

Through Ezekiel God put it in these words: 'I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.' Martin Luther makes exactly Moses' point when describing the change God works through the Gospel:

'None of us can keep God's law from the depth of our hearts. Everyone finds, inside themselves, an aversion to God and attraction to evil. What the Holy Spirit does is to put an eagerness of love in our hearts as he frees us to put our faith in Jesus Christ.'

That change of heart enables the obedience which Moses promises in the next verses (*read v. 8 & 9*). [could brief exp Rom.8.1-3]

Have you known that warming of the heart towards Jesus? (*wee lively exp/ invitn*)

Moses put this event in the future, as indeed it was for Israel at that time. But in order for it to come about, Israel must respond to God's appeal for *that* day, and to that Moses now turns.

I don't know how long it took for Moses to preach the content of the last 29 chapters but the point was now reached where the people of Israel were called on to make a definite, intentional, destiny-determining decision about God's covenant with them. Moses spells it out as

- 11-14 it's not difficult:
- 15-20 accept, embrace, close with the covenant and commit.

2. Today's step is not difficult, v. 11-14

They didn't have to ascend to heaven for it. They didn't have to cross the seas. It was as close to them as breathing. It was to be a momentous, deliberate statement from the heart:

'the word is very near you: it is in your mouth and in your heart so that you can keep it.'

That's all it involved, and all it involves to this day as Paul affirms:

'The message about the Faith we are proclaiming is: if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, believing in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.' – Rom.10.8 & 9.

People evade it, fear it, avoid doing it; maybe some here today are avoiding it? It certainly is momentous and you have no idea where it will take you; but it is not difficult. Declare, believing: those are the steps.

3. Choose life, v. 15-20

Moses doesn't mince his words, notice. The choice is between (on the one hand) life and prosperity and (on the other) death and destruction (v. 15). In three verses he spells that out a bit more fully (16-18) and then calls heaven and earth to witness their decision.

The appeal, significantly, is put in the second person *singular*. 'Yes it's an all-Israel thing but this challenge is to every individual here. Let each one of you think hard about this. Don't do it lightly; but oh, each of you, *Do* it.'

You've probably signed some document that needs to be witnessed: a Will or marriage schedule. Heaven and earth are witnesses to today's decision (v. 19 read).

There's no reason not to treat this as our decision today. As we've seen, some of Deut. needs careful thought on how to baptise it into Christ and live it out now. We are not the church-nation Israel in that land at that time. We are the international world-wide kingdom and Deut. needs interpretation for this change. But today's choice for them is today's choice for us: life or death, spiritual flourishing or destruction. The appeal is in the singular: each one of us puts our personal hand to the choice; and to its implications for good or ill.

Now, friends, choose life (v. 19, 20).

If you want words, here is how Betty Stam of the CIM put it in 1934:

Lord I give up all my own plans and purposes, all my own desires and hopes, and accept your will for my life. I give myself, my life, my all utterly to you to be yours for ever. Fill me and seal me with your Holy Spirit. Use me as you will, send me where you will, work out your whole will in my life at any cost, now and for ever.

Conclusion. Looking back, we see that Moses promises God's people the new covenant that has now come in the person Jesus Christ. This better covenant is the one we may embrace. We see that doing so is not difficult. It involves believing in the heart and solemnly professing with our mouths. God now calls everyone everywhere to do that. We see that the choice involved is between eternal life and destruction. I appeal to you therefore, in view of God's mercies, to close with Christ today, whether for the first time or in life-determining renewal.

Time for quiet reflection and responsive prayer.

My sermon's core headings: The need to commit. Moses prophecies –

- A new covenant (v.1-10)
- An easy act (v.11-14)
- A momentous choice (v.15-20)

Ch. 31. Call to keep the covenant alive by 7-year reading. ‘The chapter is crucial for an understanding of the divine presence.’⁵⁸ Moses: ‘I won’t lead you into the land, *God* will. Joshua, go with them.’ *The narrative then resumes.* Moses wrote Deut. down to be read every 7 years during Tabernacles. God warns the people will forsake him and be destroyed; commissions Moses’ song and Joshua to be leader. Deut. to be witness against them: so hard-hearted, due for disaster.

→ Jesus → 2019:

- (1) God buries his workmen, but carries on his work so focus on God’s purposes not our indispensability.⁵⁹
- (2) For Joshua that would require courage (v.6); fix our eyes on Jesus (Heb. 12.1f).
- (3) The law to be read to the whole assembly for renewal of commitment & understanding: importance of fostering a Heb.10.24f spirit, cp Acts 20.
- (4)

Ch. 32. Song of Moses. Starting with a structure that echoes an ANE lawsuit, Moses adds two sections about God’s grace:

The usual ANE lawsuit:

- Overlord calls witnesses, 1-3
- Accusation: I’ve kept the covenant between us but you haven’t, 4-9
- Overlord’s benevolence: think how I’ve cared for you, 10-14
- Whereas you’ve broken the covenant by your apostasy, 15-18
- Announcement of punishment, 19-25

‘But God’: two stanzas about God’s grace:

- But you are so thick, our Rock will show mercy, 26-35
- He will vindicate himself and save his people, 36-43

‘The song is a witness, first of all, to the deep and abiding love of Yahweh for his people.’⁶⁰

‘God be praised, his ways are perfect. But his people are warped. Think how he blessed Jacob; but in your prosperity you have deserted him. He will send calamity and repay those who hate him. Take this to heart, people.’ → Moses is to die on Mt Nebo.

⁵⁸ McConville p. 442

⁵⁹ Acts 20.22-32; Phil.1.12-24; 2Tim 4.1-6

⁶⁰ McConville p. 451, 461

→ Jesus → 2019:

- (1) Jesus and the apostles also gloried in God.⁶¹ (
- (2) Let us also remember (Eph.2.11f; Rev.3.3)
- (3) We too strive to hold out the word of life in a perverse generation (Phil. 2.15f); and watch and pray lest we too fall.⁶²

Ch 33. Moses' blessing. Opening and concluding praise (1-6 & 25-29) frame a benediction echoing Jacob's (Gen.49). A sense of God's actions (v. 1-5) takes Moses to a word for each tribe except Simeon. There is special appreciation of Levi, delight in Benjamin, blessing on Joseph. In summary 'The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.' Israel will live in safety: who is like a people blessed by the LORD?

→ Jesus → 2019:

- (1) the connection between what some of the patriarchs were and did in sticking up for God, and the benedictions pronounced on them, might well give us pause. It is both momentous for us personally:

'Sow an act, reap a habit
Sow a habit, reap a character
Sow a character, reap a destiny'

And crucial also for the entail on our children and their children.

- (2) The individual benedictions are bathed in God: 1-5 and 26-29. He is behind, in front, around, above, beneath us, sword and shield, driving out our enemy.

Sermon 7: Chapter 33 Moses' blessing. Underneath are the everlasting arms

Intro: Here are Moses' last words, full of God and full of wisdom. It is another many-bits chapter; how to make a useful single preach? Note the structure (see chapter intro above).

Glowing heart: May God – what a God – bless each of you as He appoints, for you with your particular history, character and destiny. He's king, and he will bring you nothing but the good that's right for you all your days.

OHL: Trust in God's providence, personally applied, with awe at belonging to such a God.

⁶¹ Luke 10.17-21; Rom. 11.33f; 2 Cor.1.3f; Gal.6.14; Eph.1.3-10; 1 Pet.1.3-5

⁶² Matt.26.41; Rom. 7.21-25; Col.3.1-5; 2 Pet.1.3-10

Notes towards a sermon:

Some famous last words (thanks to Simon Manchester's sermon)

- Joan Crawford (film actress) when her maid offered to pray for her on her deathbed: 'Don't you dare ask God to help me.'
- Machiavelli: 'I want to go to hell, not heaven.'
- Joan of Arc: 'Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.'
- Beethoven: 'I shall hear when I'm in heaven.'
- Lord Rothschild: 'Obey the laws of Moses and always consult your mother.'

And of course in Scripture we have quite a few records of last words, of which Jacob's recorded in Gen ch. 49 are the most closely connected with Moses' here. They differ in that Jacob speaks to individual patriarchs, Moses to the tribes whom they begat; and Moses makes no critical comments, he simply pronounces a benediction. These of Moses are magisterial, and prophetic in the most 'act of power' sense.

The blessing has three sections. The blessings on the tribes of Israel are sandwiched between tributes to God of equal length and linked by the use in each of Jeshurun as a poetic name for Israel:⁶³

- 1 – 5 Vision of God coming from Sinai to the people gathered at Moab
- 6 – 25 Individual blessings on 11 of the 12 tribes (not Simeon)
- 26 – 29 A hymn of praise to God for his mercies to his fortunate people

1. *The Vision, v. 1-5*

Moses tells how he had a vision of God coming, shining, from Sinai via Paran (near Kadesh) and Seir (=Edom: south of where they were) to Israel gathered at Moab to hear God's instruction (1.1,4). Myriads of angels attended him (v.2). He just loves his people in all their thrawn-ness (v.3). There they were, gathered: his glory was shining over them, a million guardian angels in attendance. An experience repeatedly granted to his people in time of special need. The medical missionary Chrissie Chapman,

⁶³ Experts vary in how they interpret the name. The word is linked to *yasar* which means straight or upright. McConville says it emphasises her chosen-ness. Harman says that no diminutive ends in '-un' and it is better to take it as meaning law-keeping or upholding justice, a bit like Scotland having been known as the land of the Book. Either way 32.15, its first occurrence, points out the irony. The law-keeper is a law-breaker; the straight or upright one is crooked; the chosen one chose against God.

for example, was in Burundi during the terrible civil war, with gunfire all around. David Ndaruhutse the centre director prayed God would open her eyes to see what he was seeing:

‘I saw dozens of huge angels standing shoulder to shoulder on top of the six-foot high wall that surrounded the perimeter of our healing centre. These strong, shining heavenly beings clothed in full armour with gleaming breastplates were standing on top of the wall in a complete circle with their backs to us, looking outward. They looked so huge and strong. I was filled with so much awe that every bit of fear drained out of my body and could no longer touch me. From that moment, and for the next twelve years during which the war continued, I have never experienced nor felt fear for my life.’⁶⁴

I wonder if we value highly enough the immensity of God, the love he has for us, the angelic protection unseen yet ever alert over our circumstances.

2. *The individual blessings on the tribes, v. 6-25*

It is fascinating, and thought-provoking, to see the link from the past into these words, from Jacob’s blessings on the tribal patriarchs (Gen. 49); and the effect into the future of Moses’ own words.

There is a lot here and I take just that one theme, linkage from past into future, in respect of three tribes that are mentioned and one that is not. You know the saying:

‘Sow an act – reap a habit
Sow a habit – reap a character
Sow a character – reap a destiny.’

See how that theme worked out:

The *tribe of Simeon* is not mentioned. Gen 49 regrets his violent behaviour. The tribe of Simeon lost its separate territory quite early after the occupation of the promised land and is virtually unmentioned after this time. Sow an act ...

The *tribe of Reuben (v.6)*: Gen 49 says how indecisive he was. Moses prays ‘let him live’ but accepts that the tribe might remain small.⁶⁵ That came true. Sow an act ...

The *tribe of Levi (v. 8-11)* stood up for God during the golden calf debacle even against their own kith and kin: Ex.32.26-29. Moses said then, ‘You

⁶⁴ E.g. Chrissie Chapman *The Night the Angels Came* Monarch 2016 p.36f

⁶⁵ v. 6b is literally ‘may his men be *a number*’ whose natural meaning is ‘*few*’ says McConville, comparing Gen.34.30. The NIV footnote is to be preferred.

have been set apart to the Lord today.' Moses' blessing remembers this and prays 'bless all his skills, O Lord, and be pleased with the work of his hands' (v. 9-11). Sow an act ...

The *tribe of Joseph* (v. 13-17). Notice the abundance promised on what became the largest tribe, the two half-tribes Ephraim and Manasseh. The word for 'yield' of a crop is used five times: a fitting reaping for Joseph who had kept his relations, the land of Egypt and surrounding nations supplied with food in time of famine. Moses also mentions the burning bush: its only occurrence outside Ex. Ch. 3. Special blessing is pronounced on the man who had suffered so much, responded so nobly and come out as gold. The blessing came true in subsequent history. Sow an act ...

Does that not call us to examine our lives and consider what kind of entail we are bequeathing to our grandchildren? 'Sow an act' is of course a most New Testament vision:

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.⁶⁶

What kind of person am I going to be?

3. *Who is like our God? How fortunate, the people whose God is the LORD, v. 26-29*
We quoted some famous last words, above. Here are Moses' very last words; what words. Notice where God is:⁶⁷

- *Above them, reigning*: 'who rides on the heavens to help you, and on the clouds in his majesty' (26)
- *Around them, protecting*: 'the eternal God is your refuge' (27)
- *Beneath them, catching and carrying*: 'and underneath are the everlasting arms' (27)
- *Before them, advancing* his plans for their lives: 'So Israel will live in safety alone; Jacob's spring is secure in a land of grain and new wine where the heavens drop dew' (28).

This being surrounded by God is fulfilled in the new covenant by God putting us 'in Christ', the NT shorthand for all that is implied in being being-saved. Look at Eph.1.3-14 for a seminal summary. Moses' arms failed at a crucial moment (Ex. 17.12); God's will never be missing however low we have fallen, and you cannot fall out of them. Our sins, troubles,

⁶⁶ Galatians 6.7. Actually 6.7-10 if we want it spelt out further.

⁶⁷ Thanks to Simon Manchester's sermon for most of this paragraph

illnesses, deaths – nothing can take God’s people out of his arms. See Rom. 8. 28-38 and be glad.

My sermon’s core headings: Moses’ blessing –

- The God who loves us (v.1-5)
- The words that bless us (v. 6-25)
- The arms that hold us (v.26-29)

Ch. 34 Moses’ death (wow), Joshua’s succession. Moses’ Epitaph.

Moses saw the land and died at the kiss of YHWH, still fit at 120: and what years. God buried him. Joshua took over. Moses the prophet was incomparable, whom the LORD knew face to face.

Three themes thus mark the chapter: the gift of the land, the continuation of God’s work and the tribute to the great prophet. It is a picture of the life of faith: ever poised to receive God’s blessings.

→ Jesus → 2019: Luke 23.46, John 19.30, Phil.3.10-14 and 2 Tim.4.6-8, please Father.

Sermon 8: Chapter 34 Moses’ death and burial; Joshua takes over; final tribute to Moses

Glowing heart: You are your ministry

OHL: Lord Jesus that you and I might walk in close fellowship

Notes towards a sermon:

I don’t know if you have simply read Moses’ life, from Exodus to Deut. I did it as a young Christian because in those days ‘Search the Scriptures’ took you through the Pentateuch at the start of the course. The impact is almost overwhelming. I could hardly go to my lectures the day I read this chapter, so bereaved was I, so appalled that Moses was dead. There are lessons from Moses that modern Christians and pastors could benefit from.

The chapter structure is simple. *Moses dies* and God buries him; Moses had ordained *Joshua* who *now takes over*; important *final tribute to Moses*, important because it contains a message.

Each section says something profound to us.

1-8 *God’s care* takes us into and through death

9 *God’s next person* continues his work

9-12 *God’s key* is given to usefulness in his service

1. God’s care takes us into and through death, 1-8.

God showed Moses the whole of the promised land, north to south, east to west (v.1-3). He was promising that all Moses had worked for, God would faithfully bring about; but it was more than that. Viewing the land was part of the legal process when purchasing: in later times the legal transfer was secured by the purchaser's formal inspection. Abraham did the same, as did the man in Jesus' parable.⁶⁸ God says, 'This is the beautiful land: inspect what I'm transferring to this people, and marvel at it.' It wasn't Moses' call to take the people in: that was the next leader's task. And so Moses dies 'at the mouth of the Lord' (v.5 literally): a rabbinic comment says 'at the kiss of the Lord.' He was still strong: in AV's words, 'his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated;' but he had completed the task for which God had made him special and trained him, and God kissed him into eternity.

When I'm scared of dying, it's the method of Lazarus' home-call that reassures me, and it makes the same point: 'the angels carried him to Abraham's bosom.'⁶⁹ It's OK: God's care takes us into and through death. Moses was gathered to his people.⁷⁰ Although he had disqualified himself from entering the promised land at this stage, he did so later when talking with Jesus on the mount of Transfiguration (Luke 9.28-31). God's care takes us into and through death to more and better. As Robert Browning said, 'The best is yet to be.'

2. God's next person continues his work, v. 9

Joshua had been well prepared for this. He it was who had fought as Moses prayed. He had been beside Moses on Sinai and in the tent of meeting as God spoke to him. Joshua had spoken up for entering the promised land; no wonder the Holy Spirit endowed him with the gift of leadership. Moses had commissioned him to be his successor and now the Holy Spirit endows him with the gift of wisdom. Faithful in smaller practical things, he had been increasingly Spirit-filled and gifted for larger things.⁷¹ God buries his workers but continued his work; none of us is indispensable and we can safely leave his work in his hands. He will build his church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it (Matt.16.18).

3. God's key to usefulness in his service, 10-12

⁶⁸ Gen.13.14f; Luke 14.18

⁶⁹ Luke 16.22

⁷⁰ Numbers 27.13

⁷¹ Exodus 17.8-16, 24.13, 33.11; Num.14.6, 27.18; Deut 31.7 & 14, 34.9; Matt. 25.21

‘Moses, *whom the Lord knew face to face*’ (v. 10). That explains everything about Moses’ life and ministry. Jesus laid down the same canon: ‘Did I know you?’ (Matt.7.21-23).

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me: I *will not* set aside the grace of God.⁷²

What a giant. No one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did. But we have the same God. Everything that he intends to do through you will be accomplished; trust me.

My sermon’s core headings: Moses’ death and epitaph –

- God carries us through death
- He continues his work
- The key to usefulness

⁷² Phil.3.10f, Gal.2.20f

Main themes covered in the eight-sermon series

Chapter

Theme

Message

1	'How we got here' → Know yourself	Learn from our past and press on.
5	Covenant essence: I'm yours, you're Mine	Value God's covenant with us
12	Worship God alone, and enjoy Life	God First, and enjoy life
20	Principles of war; the LORD'S war	See life in the perspective of eternity and God's justice
24	Civil life under God's kingship	Labour for mutual support in our congregation and land.
30	Decision time: choose life	The need to choose eternal life while there is time
33	Moses' blessing: Happy you, such a God	Rest in God's blessing
34	Moses' epitaph. Knowing God was the key to his greatness	Work to be far ben with the Lord

Selected Bibliography for preachers

- If only buying one book for detailed exegesis, we are spoiled for choice. My recommendation is **Allan Harman** for its clarity, accessibility and up-to-dateness. You can go straight to a verse and find a clear explanation. But **J.A.Thompson** or **Peter Craigie** will serve equally well.
- For exposition again there is a genuine choice, between Brown and Block. **Raymond Brown** (331 pages) is my suggestion, just. He combines clear explanation (including ANE life and literature) with contemporary application. The 1990s provenance is noticeable sometimes. His divisions of the book are soundly chosen and his sub-headings in each chapter close to genius. The only danger of using a BST book is that the author, rather than oneself, might determine the structure of the sermons: Brown's are so good it's tempting just to use them.
- For **Daniel Block** (818 pages...) see my comments in Bklt 1. He would serve equally well: although a bit long-winded, he is more up to date, provides more exegetical foundation and leaves you more room for independence in sermon design.
- To do both of the above you could buy **Block** but it would be harder work than using Harman; or **Brown** who is so full of life.
- To get the feel of a passage in ten seconds: **Andrew Thomson**.
- For academic detail: **J. Gordon McConville** 'Deuteronomy' in the Apollos series, IVP 2002. Very able. He has a frustrating lack of signposts: after introductory issues the contents page just says 'text and commentary,' and you look in vain, through much text, for an outline and structure, although it mostly appears in bits as you go along. Each passage has five treatments:
 - his translation
 - notes on the Hebrew text (English transliteration of the Hebrew)
 - form and structure
 - comment
 - explanation

The outline and structure of a passage are given in the third of those. For what he sets out to do – theological interpretation of the text in the context of the Biblical canon – he is, if densely written, exact and admirable (I don't agree with him that 30.8 rather than 30.6 is the core burden of 30.1-10).

- Online: In addition to the video on Deut. described in Booklet 1, **The Bible Project** provides more *videos* on the Torah, including Deuteronomy, and lets you download the A4 poster: <https://www.thebibleproject.com> Menu, *Posters*, *Overviews*: Old Testament.

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For introductory material see
Preaching Deuteronomy **Booklet 1**.

For similar resources on other books of the Bible,
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