

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MOSES: REDISCOVERING GRACE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Daniel I. Block
Steinbach Bible College
April 4-5, 2014

Introduction: The Gospel according to Moses 100 Opening Our Ears to the Message of Grace

Synopsis: Deuteronomy is a special book, calling God's people to celebrate his grace and demonstrate covenant love for him with action that glorifies his name.

Introduction

A. How does the Old Testament talk about Deuteronomy?

Designations for Deuteronomy in the Bible

- *sēpēr tôrat mōšeh*, “the book of the Torah of Moses”
- *sēper mōšeh*, “the book of Moses”
- *tôrat mōšeh*, “the Torah of Moses”
- *sēper tôrat mōšeh bëyad mōšeh*, “the book of the Torah of Yahweh by the hand of Moses”
- *sēper hattôrâ hazzeh*, “this book of the Torah”
- *dibrê yhw h bëyad mōšeh*, “the words of Yahweh by the hand of Moses”

B. How do we talk about Deuteronomy?

1. What do we call the book?

The Name: Germanic languages: “Fifth Moses”

English: Deuteronomy = *deutero* + *nomy* (“second” + “law”)

2. Why this name?

Deuteronomy 5:6-22

Deuteronomy 17:18

C. How does Deuteronomy talk about itself?

Deuteronomy 1:1-5

1. These are the “words” (*’elleh haddëbārîm*)
2. That Moses “spoke” (*dibbēr*, vv. 1, 3)

3. This Torah (*hattôrâ hazzô`t*)
4. He began to “expound” (*bē`er*)
cf. Akkadian *bārum*, “to put in [legal] force”
5. By “saying” (*lē`môr*)

What is missing from 1:1-5? Legal Vocabulary: no *nomos*!

What is present? The real Greek equivalents to torah?

didaskalia

didachē

D. How may we hear the Message of Deuteronomy?

1. Principle #1: Hear the word!

The deuteronomic formula for life: Read ⇔ hear ⇔ learn ⇔ fear ⇔ obey ⇔ live

2. Principle #2: Recognize the genre and form of Deuteronomy

- a. Its Treaty Form

(1) The Ancient Near Eastern Covenant Form

<i>Preamble:</i>	An introduction of the Suzerain.
<i>Historical Prologue</i>	A summary of the prior relationship of the two parties with explanation of what led to this treaty.
<i>Stipulations</i>	Detailed outline of the response demanded of the vassal, usually focusing on absolute loyalty to the suzerain.
<i>Document Clause</i>	Arrangements for the transcription of the document, its storage, and regulations for its reading in treaty renewal contexts.
<i>Blessings and Curses</i>	A detailed outline of the consequences of the vassals' response, with an emphasis on the curses as warnings against disobedience or disloyalty.
<i>Covenant Witnesses</i>	A detailed listing of the names of all the gods invoked as guarantors of the treaty.

(2) The Treaty Form of Deuteronomy

<i>Preamble (1:1-5).</i>	This is not an introduction of the king but an editorial introduction to the document that follows.
<i>Historical Prologue. (1:6-4:43)</i>	A summary of Yahweh's relationship with Israel, including a sermonic exhortation by Moses (4:1-40). This may be allowed for since the book is cast as a sermon, rather than a formal covenant document.

<i>General Stipulations.</i> (4:44-11:32)	This section contains the actual covenant document, the Decalogue, and an exposition of its principal terms, particularly the call to exclusive devotion to the divine suzerain.
<i>Specific Stipulations.</i> (12:1-26:19)	These chapters outline in detail how the general principles are to be applied in the Israelite community. Note especially the concluding statement of principle (26:16-19), with the stated objective.
<i>Document Clause.</i> (4:13 and 5:22; 10:1-4) (31:9-13)	According to 4:13 and 5:22, Yahweh provides Israel with a written copy of the Decalogue—the fundamental covenant document (“stipulations of the covenant”; “the ten words”), and when the original is broken, he provides an exact duplicate, which is deposited in the Ark of the Covenant (10:1-5).
<i>Blessings and Curses.</i> (28:1-29:1)	A detailed outline of the consequences for Israel of their response to the covenant terms. Vv. 1-14 summarize the blessings; vv. 15-68 the curses.
<i>Recapitulation</i> (29:2-30:14)	A general restatement of principles and objectives of the covenant.
<i>Covenant Witnesses.</i> (4:26; 30:15-20; 31:28)	For the first time there are references to external witnesses, but in a monotheistic context there cannot be an appeal to other gods. Instead Yahweh calls on heaven and earth to witness the renewal of the covenant. This is a public event.
The Poetic Challenge (31:1-32:47)	Israel’s National Anthem.
Epilogue (32:48-34:12)	The Account of Moses’ Departure and Benediction.

b. Its Homiletical Style

3. Guiding Principles for a Christian Reading of Deuteronomy

- a. Read the book as an ancient Near Eastern document that addresses issues current 3000 years ago.
- b. Read it as a written deposit of eternal truth.
- c. Reflect on its significance in the light of Christ.

E. The Way Forward:

- “The Grace of Salvation: The Essence of the Gospel” (focus on 4:32-40; 7:6-9)
- “The Grace of Covenant: The Demands of the Gospel” (focus on 4:9-31; 10:12-11:1)
- “The Grace of Revelation: The Proclamation of the Gospel” (focus on 4:1-8, 6:20-25)
- The Grace of Fellowship: The Benefit of the Gospel (focus on 12:1-14 and 14:1-21)

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MOSES: REDISCOVERING GRACE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Daniel I. Block
Steinbach Bible College
April 4-5, 2014

The Gospel according to Moses 101

The Grace of Salvation: The Essence of the Gospel (Deuteronomy 4:32-40)

Synopsis: God's people are a privileged people; they have been graciously redeemed, and set apart as his special treasure, his holy covenant people.

A. The Vocabulary of Israel's Salvation

- *yaša*^ς, "to save"
- *pādā*, *gā*^{al}, "to redeem"
- *he*^ς *ēlā*, "to bring up"
- *hōšī*^ς, "to bring out"

B. The Commemoration of Israel's Salvation

1. Israel's "Family Catechism (6:20-25)

We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt. And Yahweh brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. ²²And Yahweh showed signs and wonders, great and grievous, against Egypt and against Pharaoh and his whole household, before our eyes. ²³And he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in and give us the land that he swore to give to our fathers.

2. Israel's "National Creed" (26:2-10)

'A wandering Aramaean was my father. And he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number, and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. ⁶And the Egyptians treated us harshly and humiliated us and laid on us hard labor. ⁷Then we cried to Yahweh, the God of our fathers, and Yahweh heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. ⁸And Yahweh brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great deeds of terror, with signs and wonders. ⁹And he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰And see, now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which you, O Yahweh, have given me.'

C. The History Lesson: The Celebration of Israel's Salvation (4:32-40)

1. The Structure of 4:32-40

A	The Historical Lesson Part I (vv. 32-34)
B	The Theology Lesson Part I (v. 35)
A'	The Historical Lesson Part II (vv. 37-38)
B'	The Theology Lesson Part II (v. 39)
C	The Practical Lesson (v. 40)

2. The Nature of YHWH's Salvation: The History Lesson

a. The Research Questions (vv. 32-33)

- (1) Has any great event like this ever happened before?
- (2) Has anybody ever heard about anything like this?
- (3) Has any people ever heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire and survived?
- (4) Has any God dared to do what Israel's God has done?

b. The Results: Seven Expressions for YHWH's Acts of Salvation (v. 34)

- Daring acts (*massôt*)
- Miraculous signs (*'ôtôt*)
- Wonders, portents (*môpêtim*)
- War (*milhāmā*)
- A strong hand (*yād ḥăzāqâ*)
- And an outstretched arm (*zērōa' nēṭûyâ*)
- Awesome deeds (*môrā'im*)

c. The Bonus Experience (v. 36)

3. The Grounds of YHWH's Salvation (v. 37)

a. Negatively

- (1)
- (2)
- (3)

b. Positively

(1) The LORD “loved” the ancestors.

(2) The LORD “chose” their descendants.

D. The Theology Lesson (vv. 35, 39)

E. The Ethical Lesson (v. 40)

Application

1. God’s salvation is achieved at tremendous expenditure of divine energy and power.
2. Of his own free choice and by his own power, God delivers captives from their bondage savingly and ushers them into a new life of freedom and celebration.
3. This text provides a paradigm for preaching, not only in its content, but also in its proportion.

A Christian Paraphrase of Deuteronomy 4:32-40

“For ask now of the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether such a great thing as this has ever happened or was ever heard of. [33] Did any people ever encounter their gods directly, as you have encountered him, and still live? [34] Or has any god ever dared to invade the kingdom of darkness and take a people for himself from the midst of that kingdom, by trials, by signs, by wonders, and by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great deeds of terror, all of which Jesus Christ your God has done for you on the cross before your eyes?

[35] To you it was shown, that you might know that Jesus Christ the LORD is God; there is no other besides him. [36] Out of heaven he came as the divine Word, that he might reveal the Father to you, and on earth he revealed his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

[37] And because he loved the ancestors and chose their spiritual offspring after them and brought you out of the kingdom of darkness by his great power, [38] disarming the rulers and authorities and putting them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him (Col 2:15), in order to grant us an inheritance, since we have been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will (Eph 1:11)

[39] Know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that Jesus Christ the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.

[40] Therefore walk in a manner worthy of the Jesus Christ the LORD, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, and [12] giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MOSES: REDISCOVERING GRACE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Daniel I. Block
Steinbach Bible College
April 4-5, 2014

The Gospel according to Moses 102

The Grace of Covenant: The Promise of the Gospel (Deuteronomy 4:9-31)

Synopsis: With the privileges of salvation and covenant relationship come the call for a righteous response, demonstrated in joyful obedience to the Savior and Lord.

Introduction

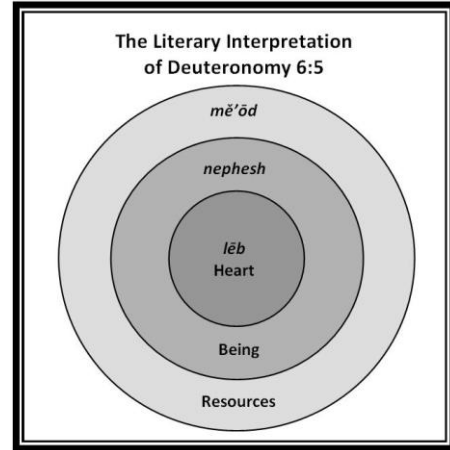
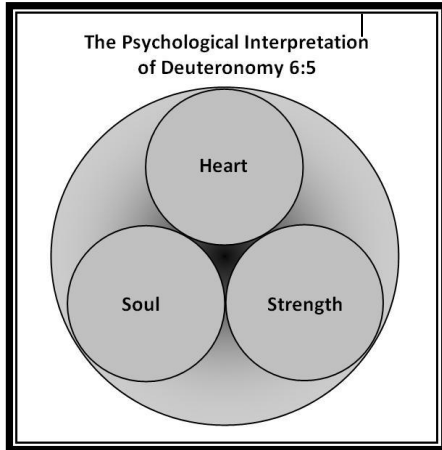
The Background: God's Covenant with Abraham

A. The Importance of the Notion of Covenant in Deuteronomy

1. The Covenantal Structure of Deuteronomy
2. Important Covenant Texts
 - a. Deuteronomy 4:9-31
 - b. Deuteronomy 5:1-33
 - c. Deuteronomy 9:1-10:11
 - d. Deuteronomy 29:2-28[Heb 1-27]
 - e. Deuteronomy 31:1-29.

B. The Amazing Privilege of Covenant Relationship (4:9-31)

1. The Spirit of Covenant Past (vv. 9-14; v. 13)
2. The Spirit of Covenant Present (vv. 15-24, v. 23)



3. The Spirit of Covenant Future (vv. 25-31, v. 31)

C. The Essence of Covenant Relationship (10:12-11:1)

The Question (v. 12a)

1. Moses' First Answer

a. The Fundamental Requirements of God's Covenant People (10:12b-13)

- (1) Fearing God
- (2) Walking in the Ways of God
- (3) Loving God
- (4) Serving God
- (5) Obeying God

b. The Glorious Privilege of Covenant Relationship (10:14-15)

- (1) The Context: The Lord's Sovereignty over the Universe
- (2) The Demonstration: Israel as the Object of the Lord's Love and Election

2. Moses' Second Answer (10:16-18)

a. The Fundamental Requirements of God's Covenant People (10:16)

- (1) Circumcision of the Heart
- (2) Relaxing of the Neck

- b. The Glorious Privilege of Covenant Relationship (10:17-18)
 - (1) The Context: The Lord's Sovereignty over all Authorities
 - (2) The Demonstration
 - (a) The Lord's Transcendent Glory
 - (b) The Lord's Impeccable Justice
 - (c) The Lord's Incredible Mercy

- 3. Moses' Third Answer (10:19-22)
 - a. The Fundamental Requirements of God's Covenant People (10:19-20)
 - (1) Towards Those Created as His Image (cf. Prov 14:31; 17:5)
 - (2) Toward the Lord Himself

 - b. The Glorious Privilege of Covenant Relationship (10:21-22)
 - (1) The Context: The Lord's Right to Praise
 - (2) The Demonstration
 - (a) God's People as the Benefactors of His Saving Acts
 - (b) God's People as the Benefactors of His Blessing

- 4. The Concluding Appeal (11:1)

Application

John 15:1-11

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MOSES: REDISCOVERING GRACE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Daniel I. Block
Steinbach Bible College
April 4-5, 2014

The Gospel according to Moses 103

The Grace of Revelation: The Proclamation of the Gospel (Deuteronomy 4:1-8, 6:20-25)

Synopsis: In contrast to other peoples, whose gods are silent, the LORD has graciously revealed his will. Indeed, knowledge of the will of God is a supreme privilege.

Introduction: The Power of the Word of God

1. The Oral Word of God
 2. The Written Word of God
- A. The Question: What Did these Laws Mean for Ancient Israel?
1. Contemporary Answers to the Question
 - a. They meant nothing.
 - b. They were a heavy burden for the Israelites
 - c. They offer a window into the social world of ancient Israel.
 - d. They provided Israel with a way of salvation.
 2. Moses' Answers
 - a. The First Answer: Knowledge of the will of God is the supreme privilege of the covenant people of God (4:1-8).
 - (1) First, the Torah that he is teaching is normative and canonical by definition (vv. 1-2).
 - (2) Obedience to the Torah that he is teaching is the key to life (vv. 3-4).
 - (3) Knowledge of the Torah that he is teaching is the highest privilege imaginable (vv. 5-8).

Prayer to Every God (*Ancient Near Eastern texts Relating to the Old Testament*, ed. J. B. Pritchard (1969), 391-92.
 - b. The Second Answer: Obedience to the will of God is the supreme delight of the covenant people of God (6:20-25).

(1) The Gospel According to Moses

- Yahweh rescued Israel from the bondage of Egypt with a mighty hand.
- Yahweh performed great and devastating signs and wonders in Egypt while the Israelites watched, thereby declaring them His special people.
- Yahweh brought Israel out of that land, in order to bring them into the land He had promised on oath to the ancestors.
- Yahweh spoke to the Israelites at Sinai, revealing to them His will (v. 24).

(2) The Required Response According to Moses

(3) The Promise According to Moses

- For Israel's Good
- For Israel's Life
- For Israel's Approval

Conclusion

1. This passage highlights the importance of deliberate strategies for transmitting the faith.
2. This passage teaches clearly the relationship between law and grace within the divine plan of salvation and sanctification.

Question: How shall we reconcile this perspective with Paul's outspoken statements regarding the death-dealing effect of the law in contrast to the life that comes by the Spirit (Rom 2:12-13; 4:13-15; 7:8-9; 8:2-4; 10:4-5; 1 Cor 3:6; Gal 3:12-13,21-24; 5:18)?

- a. First, Moses' statement concerning the life-giving/sustaining effects of the law is consistent with Moses' teaching in 30:15-20, and is of a piece with the teaching of the Old Testament elsewhere.
- b. From a hermeneutical and theological perspective, later revelation cannot correct earlier revelation, as if there were some defect in it.
- c. The consistent witness of all Scripture:
 - Yahweh's gracious [i.e., unmerited] saving actions yields the fruit of a redeemed people.
 - A redeemed people yields the fruit of righteous deeds.
 - Righteous deeds yield the fruit of divine blessing.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MOSES: REDISCOVERING GRACE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Daniel I. Block
Steinbach Bible College
April 4-5, 2014

The Gospel according to Moses 104

The Grace of Fellowship: The Delight of the Gospel (Deuteronomy 12:1-14; 14:1-21)

Synopsis: In contrast to other peoples, whose worship is concerned primarily with satisfying the gods, YHWH, the God of Israel, delights in fellowship with his people, and he invited them to feast and celebrate in his presence.

Introduction

A. How should we interpret this invitation to a banquet?

1. Read it in the light of ancient Near Eastern perceptions.
2. Recognize the center of gravity in the passage.
3. Read it in the light of all the other references to eating in the book of Deuteronomy.

Excursus: What does Deuteronomy have to say about true worship? (Deut 12:1-14)

1. The Motivation for True Worship: True worship is the response of faith to the gracious work of God and his revelation of himself.
2. The Characteristics of True Worship
 - a. Not according to the world's standards
 - b. Not according to one's own whims
 - c. But according to the revealed will of God:

Note the five verbs in vv. 5-7:

- (1) "to the place you may *make a pilgrimage*" (v. 5)
- (2) "there you may *come*" (v. 5)
- (3) "there you may *bring* your offerings" (v. 6)
- (4) "there you may *eat*" (v. 7a)
- (5) "there you may *rejoice* in all activities" (v. 7b).

3. The Actions Involved in True Worship
 - a. They "saw the face of YHWH" (31:11; cf. 16:16).

- b. Heard the reading of the Torah (31:11)
- c. Learned to fear YHWH (14:23; 31:9–13).
- d. Rejoiced before YHWH (12:18; 14:26; 16:11–12, 14; 26:11)
- e. Ate before YHWH (12:7, 18; 14:23, 26, 29; 15:20; 18:6–8)
- f. Presented their sacrifices (12:6, 14)
- g. Celebrated the great annual festivals: Passover (16:1–8), Festival of Weeks (Pentecost, 16:9–12), Festival of Booths (16:13–17; 31:9–13).
- h. Settled legal disputes before the Levitical priest or the judge (17:8–13).
- i. Observed Levites serving in the name of YHWH (18:6–8).
- j. Presented thanksgiving offerings and recall YHWH's providential grace (26:1–11).
- k. Demonstrated covenant commitment to YHWH by gifts of charity to needy people (26:12; cf. 10:12–22).
- l. Demonstrated communal solidarity by celebrating with one's household, the Levites, and aliens (14:27–29; 16:11).

4. Read vv. 3-21 in the light vv. 1-3.

B. Who is invited to this banquet?

1. External Marks of Invitees

- a. Their appearance.
- b. Their diet.
 - (1) They avoid abominable food.
 - (2) They do not eat meat with blood.
 - (3) They do not boil a kid in its mother's milk (v. 21).

2. Internal Marks of Invitees

- a. They are all hand-picked by God.
- b. They are all adopted children of God.
- c. They are all sanctified.
- d. They are all God's special treasure.

Conclusion