



Exploring God's Love Through The Bible: Deuteronomic Statements of Love

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EXHORTATION CONCERNING GOD'S LOVE:

- Today we will quickly survey God's love in one of the most **heartfelt** books in the OT, and quoted books in the NT.
- J. A. Thompson said, "Deuteronomy is one of the greatest books of the Old Testament. Its influence on the domestic and personal religion of all ages has not been surpassed by any other book in the Bible. It is quoted over eighty times in the New Testament and thus it belongs to a small group of four Old Testament books (Genesis, Deuteronomy, Psalms, and Isaiah) to which the early Christians made frequent reference."
- Deuteronomy, in my opinion, is **overflowing** with God's love for His people, especially in the first 11 chapters. Exhortations and warnings to obey, to not forget, to be diligent, to take care, to store up His Words, etc., are ubiquitous.
- One can mistake all the "you shall" and "you shall nots" as a list of rules. They are that, but more. One must read the whole book in context to get a sense of God's Fatherly concern and care and His desire to be **worshipped** properly...and to bless His children as a result!
- Some passages read as if our loving God is pleading with His children for their own good, repeating **precepts** and **promises** again and again...like a Dad talking to a hard-headed child he nevertheless loves with all His heart. :)
- God is awesome and terrible, great and majestic, a consuming fire and a perfect judge. He is also a God who loves His people and wants to be loved by them...

"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. Did any people ever hear the voice of a god speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and still live? Or has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, 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 the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD is God; there is no other besides him. Out of heaven he let you hear his voice, that he might discipline you. And on earth he let you see his great fire, and you heard his words out of the midst of the fire. And because he loved your fathers and chose their offspring after them and brought you out of Egypt with his own presence, by his great power, driving out before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land for an inheritance, as it is this day, know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other. (Deut 4:34-39)

"You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth. For if you will be careful to do all this commandment that I command you to do, loving the LORD

your God, walking in all his ways, and holding fast to him, then the LORD will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you. (Deut 11:18-23)

But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it. "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you today, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. (Deut 30:14-18)

CONTEXT OF DEUTERONOMY

1. Deuteronomy, like the other books of the Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible), was written by Moses (possibly helped by an assistant.)
2. As it begins, Israel is camped on the plains of Moab, preparing to finally enter the Promised Land.
3. God, in love and mercy through Moses, restates much of His holy Law at this critical time, encouraging His people to obey His precepts that He might bless them.
4. Remember, their journey from Egypt took 40 years due to the people's rebellion, long enough for the **rebellious** generation to die out, according to the judgment of the LORD. (Num 14:28-34)
5. William MacDonald writes: *Deuteronomy is a re-statement (not merely a repetition) of the law for the new generation that had arisen during the wilderness journey. They were about to enter the Promised Land. In order to enjoy God's blessing there, they must know the law and obey it. The book is rich in exhortation, which can be summed up in the verbs of Deuteronomy 5:1: "Hear . . . learn . . . keep and do."* (KJV)
6. This should sound familiar to our church:

Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. (Jam 1:21-22)

DEUTERONOMIC STATEMENTS OF LOVE

1. Deut 6:4-5 *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."*
 - The Greatest Commandment...
2. Deut 7:7-9 *"It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations..."*
 - It's because of love...
 - He's a faithful God...

3. Deut 7:12 *“And because you listen to these rules and keep and do them, the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the steadfast love that he swore to your fathers. He will love you, bless you, and multiply you. He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your wine and your oil, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock, in the land that he swore to your fathers to give you.”*
 - He will love, bless, multiply...that’s His holy heart for his people. If His people would only listen...
 - *“Oh that they had such a heart as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever!” (Deut 5:29)*

4. Deut 10:12-15 *“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good? Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. Yet the LORD set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day.”*
 - Despite His power and self-sufficiency, *“Yet the LORD set his heart in love...”*

5. Deut 11:1-3 *“You shall therefore love the LORD your God and keep his charge, his statutes, his rules, and his commandments always. And consider today (since I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen it), consider the discipline of the LORD your God, his greatness, his mighty hand and his outstretched arm, his signs and his deeds that he did in Egypt to Pharaoh the king of Egypt and to all his land...”*
 - *“Consider...”* Oh that He might become greater in our eyes!

6. Deut 13:1-4 *“If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, ‘Let us go after other gods,’ which you have not known, ‘and let us serve them,’ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him.”*
 - Love must be tested... Oh Lord, keep us from lying and deceiving spirits! (1 Kings 22)

7. Deut 30:1-6 *“And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, and return to the LORD your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul, then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there he will take you. And the LORD your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it. And he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.”*
 - A merciful and forgiving God...

PREACHING CHRIST IN THE TEXT

1. First, let me say that our LORD must have loved this book! :)
 - “Our Lord Jesus Christ was tempted by Satan for forty days and nights in the wilderness. Three of these temptations are specifically recounted in the Gospels for our spiritual benefit. Not only did Christ use the OT “sword of the Spirit” three times, but each time He used the same part of the “blade”—Deuteronomy!” -William MacDonald
 - “Man shall not by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matt 4:4, Deut 8:3)
 - “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test” (Matt 4:7, Deut 6:16)
 - “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’” (Matt 4:10, Deut 6:13-14)
2. Secondly, Christ is both the ultimate demonstration of how much God loves His people AND the perfect example of how we are to love God! Let us hear the holy heart of God as He declares both in holy Scripture:
 - *In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* (1 John 4:9-10)
 - *I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.* (John 14:30-31)

FINAL THOUGHTS:

God wants what is best for His people. He called a people for Himself through Abraham, grew that family and eventually delivered them from bondage in Egypt that they might worship Him. He provided for them, loved them, protected them, and forgave them of their many iniquities. He promised them a great land where they would worship Him, and He brought them into that land.

Christ is the perfect fulfillment of God’s affections, provisions, and forgiveness...

...His blood better than water from a rock, His body better than manna, and His Kingdom better than land.

May we see the love of God in this restatement of the Law, and out of love, obey the Lord our God in Christ Jesus.

Amen.