

Challenge 2014: Bible in a Year

Week 8: Deuteronomy 4 — 27 (February 16 — 22)

Summary:

As I mentioned last week in these notes, Deuteronomy is structured much like a constitution for Ancient Israel and its layout is not that different than many of the contemporary near-eastern constitutional documents. Thus, as we move from a retelling of how they arrived there in the valley opposite of Beth-Peor, we now enter into a what seems like a series of random laws, yet if you look closely, the laws are grouped by themes.

Chapter 4 focuses on God's call to closely obey his word -- "you shall not add to it or take away from it" (Deut. 4:2), God says. God commands that the testimonies of Scripture be taught to the generations who will follow. In addition, we find God also reminding the Israelites that he is a "jealous God" and a "consuming fire." These are both blessings of those who will cling to God and a judgment upon those who seek to walk their own path. Both Law and Grace is presented before the people...a blessing and a warning. And following that in Chapter 5 is the reading of the Ten Commandments for the second time in scripture.

Chapter 6 begins to change gears a bit and deal with the covenant itself. In principle, Chapters 6-11 is Moses' explanation of the First Commandment not to have any Gods other than him. Deuteronomy 6:4 is considered to be one of the most significant passages in all of the Old Testament and it is still used today by Orthodox Jews as part of their prayer life. This verse is called "The Shema," which means, "to hear." In summary, if we love God with all our heart, soul and strength then indeed we are obeying the first commandment. Included in this section are repeated commands to teach the mighty works of God to your children so that all remember and do not forget.

Chapter 12 has at the forefront the second commandment with instructions about sacrifice to the Lord and not to idols with once again a command not to add to or take from the Word of God. Chapters 13 and 14 focus then on the third commandment about not taking God's name in vain — not using His name for personal gain. Thus it includes language about false prophets, people who lead others from God, not being a holy witness by eating unholy food, and even a passage about those who might be tempted to keep the tithe for themselves.

Chapters 15 and 16 focus on the Sabbath and other holy days of worship (4th Commandment) as well closing with a reference to forbidden worship. Chapters 17-18 deal with the hierarchy of society (commandment 5), including the legal decisions made by the Levites and laws concerning the Kings of Israel. Similarly it speaks of those, like sorcerers, who have no standing in the people of Israel and closes with the promise that the Messiah will also have a prophetic office greater than that of Moses.

Chapters 19-21 deal with murder as well as how to

handle war and capital punishment, chapter 22-23 deals with theft, chapter 23-24 deal with adultery and lying and chapter 24-26 deals with covetousness. Note that in most other ancient societies, covetousness is not condemned...amongst God's people.

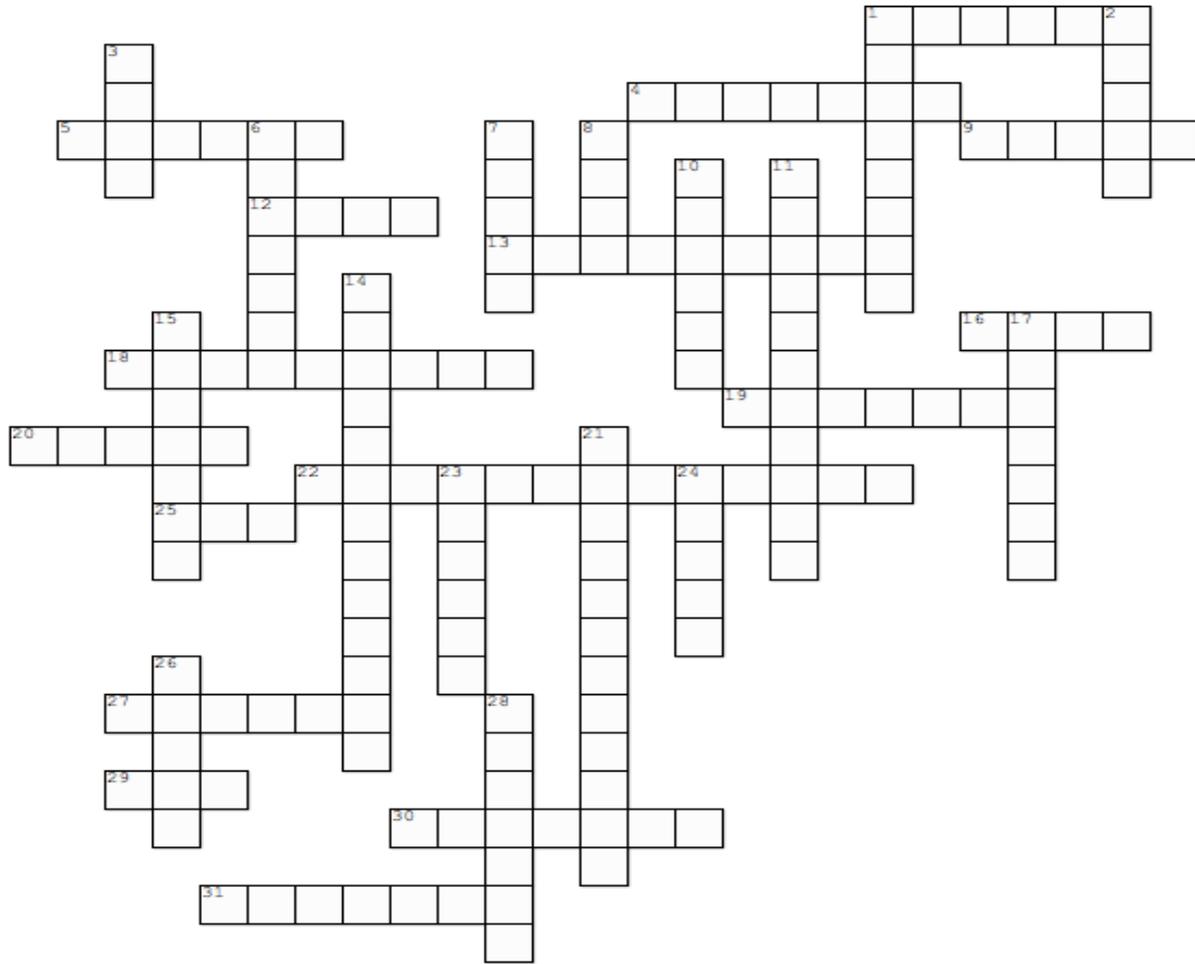
Chapter 27 enters into a series of blessings and cursings for obedience and disobedience respectively. In particular, Chapter 27 begins with the cursings...and cursings they are indeed. The final probably being the most profound for us today: "Cursed be anyone who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them." Action must accompany belief.

Chromatic Notes:

- Note the similar language of not adding to or taking away from God's word not only here but in Revelation 22:18-19 ... another covenantally structured book.
- In the Hebrew text of the Shema, the last letter of the first and last word are written larger than any of the other letters. This is the only place in the Hebrew Bible where such a thing is done, too, which causes it to stand out all the more. If you take those two letters and put them together, it spells the Hebrew word "witness." The Shema is the witness of the Hebrew people.
- The third portion of Deuteronomy 6:5 is notoriously confusing for translators. Literally, the term that is used there is the adverb, "very." You shall love the lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your "veryness." Translators render this in a variety of ways, but the closest idea to what is being expressed is our abundance."
- It should be noted that when Jesus quotes this passage, he says "Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, your soul, your mind, and your strength." He surely doesn't make a mistake, he is simply clarifying that both mind and passions are included in the way we are to love God.
- Notice that the Ten Commandments are described as God writing with his finger on stone; can you recall a point in the New Testament where Jesus is described as bending down and writing with his finger? (check out John 8)
- Notice in Deuteronomy 17:14-20, God gives Israel instructions on how kings are to behave. Sometimes people suggest that God never wanted Kings over Israel and that Samuel's anointing of Saul was purely God giving in to his sinful people. This is also the passage here that tells us of the King being instructed to make a hand-written copy of the Law for his own reference as soon as he takes office.
- Leviticus 22:1-4 contains an example of what we would today call "Good Samaritan" Laws.

Week 8: Deuteronomy 4-27

Complete the crossword below



Created on TheTeachersCorner.net Crossword Maker

Across

1. A man who is hanged on a tree is considered _____.
4. From upon this mountain, the tribes were commanded to pronounce blessings on the people for obedience.
5. This is one of the spots where the Israelites provoked God to wrath.
9. An Ammonite or Moabite is not allowed to enter the Assembly of the Lord until this generation.
12. In this month, Passover is to be kept (another name for the month of Nisan).
13. You shall not take this from a person in pledge if you have loaned them money.
16. A person's excrement must be buried outside of this.
18. The Law shall be bound as this between your eyes.
19. This is the name given to the day of rest.
20. Every _____ years the people were to forgive all debts and release one another from financial obligation — even slavery.
22. 'For the Lord your God is a _____, a jealous God. (2 words)
25. This minimum number of witnesses is required to convict someone of a capital crime.
27. What part of anatomy is it said that God used to write on the tablets of stone?
29. Who is the great warrior of Israel who brings victory.
30. Egypt is referred to as the 'House of _____.'
31. A woman guilty of a crime that is not adultery but damages the marriage bed is to be given a certificate of _____ that protects her from being accused of adultery.

Down

1. To whom are the Israelites instructed to teach the Law.
2. This is the penalty for the visionary or dreamer who leads people away from the Lord.
3. 'And what does the Lord your God require of you, but to _____ the Lord your God...'
6. 'A wandering _____ was my father.'
7. This is the Hebrew name given to Deuteronomy 6:4.
8. From upon this mountain, the Tribes were commanded to pronounce curses on the people for disobedience.
10. In Deuteronomy 4, Moses instructs the people that keeping and doing the Law of God will be _____ and understanding.
11. Sacrificing your children, fortune telling, sorcery, and necromancy are considered an _____ in the eyes of God.
14. You are a people _____ (4 words).
15. When a king takes his throne, he is to transcribe a copy of the Law to be approved by whom.
17. When the Israelites come into the land, they are to burn these pagan idols.
21. Canaan is a land flowing with this.
23. If a brother will not provide for his brother's wife, she shall take this off his foot and spit in his face.
24. This is the name of the city of Refuge located in Bashan.
26. If you forget a sheaf in the field when harvesting you are not allowed to go back and get it — the sheaf is for the traveler, the orphan, and the _____.
28. If you build a house with a flat roof, you must build one of these on the roof to prevent falling.