

Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, and those bitten by the serpent (of sin) looked upon it in faith and were healed, that men now had to look upon Christ on the cross.

God does not love this present evil world, of which the Apostle John also writes when he tells believers, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world . . . For all that is in

the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 Jno. 2:15,16). In like manner, as repentant Israelites looked upon the harmless brazen serpent in faith, and modern believers look upon the Lord Jesus, holy, harmless and undefiled, as their Saviour, so, and only so, does God love the world.

(To be continued)

Deuteronomy— A stepping stone to Christ

4. Deuteronomy and Jesus

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This concluding article considers how Jesus, the prophet like unto Moses, used the teaching in Deuteronomy to enable him to deal with temptation. With this background we are encouraged to use God's Word in our living to develop God-pleasing characters.

The temptations

THE FACT THAT Jesus used Deuteronomy when dealing with the temptations is well known. The parallels are listed below:

Matthew	Deuteronomy	
4:4	8:3	Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word . . .
4:7	6:16	Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God . . .
4:10	6:13	Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.

But why did Jesus turn to this book in particular? Was it just a handy set of quotations? On closer examination we can see just how marvelous this selection of Scripture made by Jesus was, and how it met the particular need of Jesus in his time of temptation. The wider context in which the listed phrases occur is very relevant to his whole circumstance as he began his ministry.

1 In Deuteronomy 8:2 it is stated that the wilderness was a time of 'proving' or trial for Israel, which was surely a foreshadowing of

the wilderness trial of Jesus. All the principles and lessons highlighted regarding Israel's trial would no doubt have been in the mind of Jesus as he faced this early trial (that is, Neh. 9:19-21; Ps. 78:15-19,40,52; 95:8; 106:14,26; 107:4; Jer. 2:2-6, etc.).

2 We are introduced to a Father-Son relationship* in the early chapters of Deuteronomy (1:31; 6:2; 8:5; cf. Mt. 4:6; Lk. 4:1-3). Perhaps Jesus identified himself with these passages

in particular, as they draw out the necessary 'chastening' aspect of such a relationship, something that would play a part in Jesus' spiritual development, as he had to "[learn] obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:8).

* Relationship with God is a focus of Deuteronomy. See *Deuteronomy for Disciples*, Brother Alfred Nicholls, p. 10. A review of this book appears on [p. 222](#) of this issue.—E.D.M.

3 The context in which all the specific quotations occur is very much to do with the Word being the prime resource of the follower of God (6:6; 8:1,2) and how it is 'powerful' to help in time of temptation and need. The frequent reference to obeying the commandments of God (6:1,2,17,25) was completely appropriate when combating the tempter's challenge to command that the stones be made bread. Jesus would recall the *command* of God, and put down the first and obey Him.

It is not surprising to find such additional points of contact between Deuteronomy and Jesus' situation, but the way in which these ideas converge in Deuteronomy helps us to understand better the relevance of Jesus' turning here above other scriptures during this particular time of temptation. This example is useful for us as his followers, as it gives us a 'worked example' of how to combat the many pressures and temptations that we encounter in our lives. Equipping ourselves with God's Word and, particularly perhaps, those passages that address our own known weaknesses will help us to withstand temptations as they arise in our lives, and thus allow us to develop characters that are more like His.

Perhaps the overarching lesson here is that Jesus did not refer to these references in Deuteronomy just so that we might wonder at his acute Scriptural knowledge (though we do!) but rather to help influence his own actions and responses. Thus he 'lived' the Word, and that so perfectly that he could be termed "the Word . . . made flesh" (Jno. 1:14; or simply "the Word" in Revelation 19:13).

The true Prophet

The first and only occurrence in the Pentateuch of the phrase "in My name" occurs in Deuteronomy 18:19,20. It was used in connection with identifying the true prophet who had been sent by God. When we turn to the New Testament we find this phrase used exclusively in the context of Jesus, whether illustrating that he had come in the Name of his Father (Jno. 5:43; 10:25), or whether used of those who preach in his name (Acts 2:38; 3:6; 4:18; 5:40), or by Jesus of himself (Mt. 18:5; Jno. 15:16, etc.). So this small phrase looks forward to the true prophet for whom the people were waiting (6:14; 7:40). It reminds us forcefully that the only words that we can speak with any authority in our preaching are those given to us by God in the Scriptures, and not words of our own devising, or words spoken in our own name.

It means preaching the whole counsel of God, and not adding to or diminishing from it (Deut. 4:2)—which sadly we see happening all too often around us. This link with Jesus is consolidated through Deuteronomy 18:18:

"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him".

The quotation of this passage in Acts 3:20-26 makes it absolutely clear that these words refer to Jesus. We do not have to look far to see how he personally spoke in the Name of the Father, and how God's words were upon his lips (Jno. 8:28; 12:50; 14:31; 15:15; 16:32; 17:8).

Coming nigh

Certain aspects of the Law served only to distance people from God (Ex. 24:2; 34:30-32; Num. 1:50,51; 3:38). People could only come nigh through the prescribed offering (and rightly so). This connection is seen through the original Hebrew root word (*kereb*), which is translated both by 'offering' and 'nigh' (and other words also). The interesting point to note for our present study is that, though this word *kereb* occurs many times throughout the Law and Deuteronomy when describing the requirement of animal offerings, it is only in the latter that we find the word used to describe how God Himself, the 'Prophet like unto Moses', and the Word, could and should be nigh to people. These passages provide an insight as to how it is possible to come nigh to God 'outside' the Law, and offer spiritual sacrifices.

1 **Deuteronomy 4:7.** In this first occurrence we see God describing Himself as the One 'nigh', and also One That can be 'called upon', which would indicate the idea of prayer (*cf.* Ps. 4:1; 55:16,17; 86:5-7; 102:1,2).

2 **Deuteronomy 18:18.** The word here is translated "among", and clearly refers to Jesus as the prophet from 'among' his brethren, as already seen (Acts 3:20-26). It looks forward to the means by which we can come nigh to God through Jesus. This is corroborated in the New Testament in such places as Ephesians 2:13.

3 **Deuteronomy 30:14.** There was to be no excuse for the people, as here we are taught that the Word of God is "nigh unto thee". Reading, meditating and acting upon that Word would bring people near to God.

Deuteronomy, then, highlights the three principal elements by which true worshipers can come nigh

to God: through prayer, the Word, and His Son. This, with the eye of faith, has been the case for true believers of all ages.

Summary

The areas discussed in these articles are not exhaustive, but merely indicative of how Deuteronomy enhances and develops the spiritual dimension of what may without the eye of faith have seemed to the people of Israel a dry and sometimes remote Law, full of drudgery and adherence. It encourages us to put a correct emphasis on the Word of God, allowing it to work effectually within us to develop a character that

will bring glory to God. It is a book that brings us to the Son of God in a variety of ways, and the present writer believes that many more remain to be discovered. Deuteronomy distils from the Law principles and lessons that are relevant in our lives as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ in these last and evil times. It helps to promote a true perspective in our service to God and each other, challenging us to worship Him with 'all our heart, all our soul and all our might' as we wait on the 'banks of Jordan'. What a joy it will be to enter the Kingdom of God by His grace, and be able to worship Him for ever, unhindered by the flesh!
(Concluded)