

OLD TESTAMENT 1

UNIT TEN

MAJOR IDEAS IN DEUTERONOMY

REMEMBERING

- Frequent exhortation to ‘remember’ or ‘be careful that you do not forget’.
- Remembering links the past and present.
- The Israelites do not just remember distant events, but a history in which they are said to have been involved.
- Obedience to the law must take place in the context of remembering.
- The commandments are part of God’s gracious activity towards Israel.

LAW

- Not law in a judicial sense, but rather ‘instruction’ or ‘guidance for life’.
- Its main task is to preserve the exclusive relationship between Yahweh and Israel.
- The law expounds the nature of the relationship but does not initiate it.

LOVE

- The whole law can be understood in the command to love the Lord with all the heart, soul and strength.
- Love is always associated with some sort of activity.
- Love demands engaging in the activities which are pleasing to God.
- ‘Love’ of God is associated with ‘fear’.
- Fear includes elements of dread, awe and respect for God’s holiness.
- Fear marks a proper attitude to God, love marks the appropriate response to what has been done.

PROMISED LAND

- Deuteronomy draws together the covenants made with Israel and at Sinai.
- The united people established at Sinai are placed in the land promised to Abraham.
- 'Holy war' – the land is Yahweh's by right of conquest, the conquest is Yahweh's and not Israel's.



HOLY WAR

- The atmosphere of war permeates Deuteronomy, but it is war of a very particular character – ‘Holy War’.
- A war which is fought by God for his people.
- The reality of the Holy War is that ‘Yahweh your God is with you’.
- Faith in God is more important than arms or skill or numbers.
- Other considerations are placed above the need for numbers in the army.
- The New Testament takes up the idea of Holy War, but it is against spiritual forces of evil, not flesh and blood.

DOCTRINE OF GOD

- Deuteronomy 6:4
- A statement about the way in which Yahweh is to be worshipped exclusively.
- Deuteronomy is careful on the question of ‘right worship’.
- The whole of the promised land was Yahweh’s sanctuary.

THE HUMANITARIAN NATURE OF THE APPLICATION OF LAW IN DEUTERONOMY

- Human welfare and the laws that affect human life and personal happiness are underlined.
- Property laws are few and civil action suits, featured in Exodus 21-23, are hardly mentioned.