

Assignment Title: **Interpretative Essay # 2**

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OT504 Hebrew Bible in the Eastern Mediterranean World

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Spring 2023

April 11, 2023

What does Edesio Sanchez state about the Book of Deuteronomy?

Edesio Sanchez states that the book of Deuteronomy is the heart of biblical theology with the basic elements of an Old Testament theology. It is the foundation of the Deuteronomistic books, from Joshua to 2 Kings, and evaluates the history, the people, and the Kings of Israel. He claims that this book is not for usage in a court but in the home and it is a desirable example of hermeneutics, explaining the law to a new generation, in a specific historical situation. There is no other book in the Bible that makes an instruction to children and youth so central to the message as Deuteronomy (4:9; 6:7; 20-15; etc.).¹ The parents especially play the main role in teaching.

Three major ideas of Sanchez about Deuteronomy and examine these ideas.

The author states three main ideas about the purpose of Deuteronomy:

First, Deuteronomy intertwined the narrative with the people of each generation of "yesterday", "today", and "tomorrow". The ancestors were on trial, and the future generation depends on today's generation's obedience or not towards the Law of the Lord. The quality of life of future generations will largely depend on the way the present generation lives.

Second, God's Word given to His people through the covenant always speaks to mankind today. Today's generation is largely responsible for the future. We need to take hold of the covenant and of its Lord to be assured of the future.² To forget is to sin against hope and faith.

Thirdly, Deuteronomy is a manual for members of the Kingdom of God. It takes a homiletical approach to explain the law to a new generation in a new context. Both the

¹ Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel Carroll R., *Family in the Bible, Exploring Customs, Culture, and Context* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), p. 41-43.

² *Ibid.*, p.43

homiletical style and suzerainty treaty structure side by side make Deuteronomy always remain relevant for each new generation of Israel.³

In general, Sanchez broadened his idea with the pedagogical viewpoint about the Book of Deuteronomy. He developed his ideas with the generation factor of Israel to today's people and then the future's universal mankind. Each generation's parents are responsible for the future generation's prosperity. Obeying the law and passing it on to the next generation was one of the most valuable requirements of parents.

I agree with him regarding these points but I think that the book of Deuteronomy is a constitution for the people of the new promised Kingdom of God, written in the form of a suzerainty treaty between the suzerain and its vassals. The treaties always are to take vassals' attitudes and responsibilities seriously. Deuteronomy shows all generations this factor so it is relevant all the time timelessly.

Israel, who lived a life of slavery, would have understood this suzerain-vassal relationship better than the free people of today. They were to learn and teach that there is only one God, and that He is to be served with all of one's heart, one's life, and one's strength (Deut 6:4-6). They had to be focused and always remember (Deut 6:8,9), as the author says because forgetting about God is one of the sins leading to the entrance of idolatry.

In the New Testament era, The words of God are written in our heart as it is told in Jeremiah (Jer 31:33) and Deuteronomy, and we serve Jesus as our Lord with a new relationship of grace, offering ourselves as a living sacrifice. (Romans 12:1,2)

“Moreover, the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live. (Deuteronomy 30:6)

³ Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel Carroll R., p. 43-45.

What is the historical and literary context of the Book of Deuteronomy?

historical context

Deuteronomy was written by Moses just before the Israelites entered Canaan, the Promised Land. On November 1, 40 years after the Exodus, Israel was encamped in the plains of Moab, east of the Jordan River (Deut. 1:1-3), in the valley opposite Jericho, where Israel stayed for two months. At this time Egypt was weakening but still ruled the ancient Near East. The Pharaoh had stopped major expeditions into the land of Canaan, which now allowed Israel a providential opportunity to gain a foothold in the land.⁴

Moses was conscious of the fact that almost all of the generations who directly witnessed God's majestic wonders had died and now a completely new generation had formed. He stands out before the people to repeat the law of God once again for the last time in his life. Moses challenged and encouraged this newly formed generation of Israel to devote themselves entirely to the Lord in a new covenant relationship, promising blessings for loyalty and threatening curses for disobedience.

Literary context

Deuteronomy was written as a Suzerainty treaty, the ancient near eastern vassal treaty. It is an official document ratifying a formal relationship between the Lord and Israel, with the Lord as suzerain and author of the covenant and Israel as a vassal. The historical narrative part records how the Lord brought to the land he had promised to their father Abraham. The most likely document clause in Deuteronomy is the command that when the people arrive in the Promised

⁴ Walton, J. H. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Deuteronomy*. (Michigan: Zondervan, 2009), P 419.

Land they are to set up stones there and write the law on them (27:2-3). Chapter 31-32 provides the witness section(31:19-22). Moses instructed to compose a song to serve as a witness (31:19-22), where the song includes an oath by the Lord): the Book Of the Law as well as the heavens and earth are called to witness(31:26-28). Blessings and curses are found in chapter 28.⁵

However, the main content of this book is a selection of Moses' sermons. He presented the people with a review of history, a redistribution of the law, and a prospect and final request in the form of speeches. So Sanchez sees this book as an example of correct hermeneutics, where words and historical context meet each other in the combination of the discourses and legal writings.⁶

Do you agree or disagree with Sanchez's analysis concerning the role of the home? Is the home or the church the locus of Christian nurture? Defend your position.

The author insists that The church building ought not to be the seedbed of the Christian life. He says that the role of Christian education belongs to the home.

I agree that Christian education should take place at home because all religious ceremonies and obedience to God can be imparted through home education. Through family members, even the most academic and abstract doctrines can be learned as a way of life. Standards of interpersonal and interfamily behavior, encoded as traditional sapiential morality on likewise part of the family heritage transmitted didactically across generations and probably reinforced by a framework of religious rites and beliefs.⁷

A once-a-week Sunday school will never adequately provide for the Christian education of children. Parents should carefully handle their role as the subject of education. They should not ignore their children's religious education and pass it on solely to the church school. As the

⁵ Andrew E. Hill & John H. Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Michigan: Zondervan, 2009), p.167.

⁶ Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel Carroll R., p. 42.

⁷ Perdue, L. G., *Families in ancient Israel*. (Westminster John Knox Press,1997), p.32.

author said, the education we conduct here today will determine the faith and life of our descendants in the future.

The author also states that the family unit should be seen as the fundamental focus of mission and diaconate—families serving families, families evangelizing families.⁸ I agree with him at this point.

The early church was a house church. Several passages of the Bible refer specifically to family gatherings, and we see the names of people who have opened their homes for house churches throughout the Bible (Acts 1:13; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Romans 16:3, 5; Colossians 4:15). In particular, the families of Priscilla and Aquila provided great help to Paul's missionary work, and Paul himself did missionary work for three years in the house where he was staying as a sinner (Acts 18:18; 28:30).

However, The author has missed that it is true that there are some other categories of groups in the church. For example, In the early church, through Paul's epistle to Titus, we can see that the church was composed of various peer groups; the older women, the young women, the slaves, and the younger men. Paul advised Titus to give proper instructions to the different groups of the church (Titus 2:2-9).

In the church of today, we see people of different circumstances also such as young adults, singles, divorced, widowed etc. We have to care for people in different situations and need to create the programs at their best.

The concept of family has been influenced by society and is changing differently from the family mentioned in the Bible. Its importance is gradually becoming more blurred than before also. It seems to be the task of our church and leadership to present the right direction toward society for the true meaning of home and its education.

⁸ Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel Carroll R., p.56,57.

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