

Text: Dt 13.1-18

THEOLOGICAL OUTLINE OF DEUTERONOMY¹

1. **Consider:** a review of God’s faithfulness (1.6–4.40)
2. **Covenant:** an exposition of the law (5–26)

5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒														

3. **Commence:** preparations for renewing the covenant (27.1–28.68)
4. **Commit:** an exhortation to obedience (29.2–30.20)

Chapter 5 gave us the Ten Commandments, one writer² thinks that the rest of the “Covenant” sermon is a meditation on each of the Commandments in succession:

Major Issues	Godward	Manward
Authority	Commandment 1 Expounded in Dt 6-11	Commandment 5 Expounded in Dt 16.18-18.22
Dignity	Commandment 2 Expounded in Dt 12	Commandments 6, 7, 8 Expounded in Dt 19.1-24.7
Commitment	Commandment 3 Expounded in 13.1-14.21	Commandment 9 Expounded in 24.8-16
Rights and Privileges	Commandment 4 Expounded in 14.22-16.17	Commandment 10 Expounded in 24.19-26.15

Dt 5.7 ¶ ‘You shall have no other gods before Me.

Dt 5.8 ¶ ‘You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.

Dt 5.11 ¶ ‘You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.

¹ Adapted from an outline in Lawrence O Richards, *The Bible Readers Companion*, electronic ed. (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1991), 117.

² John H. Walton, “Deuteronomy: An Exposition of the Spirit of the Law,” *Grace Theological Journal* 8, no. 2 (1987): 214ff.

Following John Walton's theory, we look to Deuteronomy 13 to see whether the chapter turns to taking the Lord's name in vain as its main theme.

Interestingly, Tom Constable (who pointed out Walton's summary) makes 13.1-18 continue the exposition of the second commandment.

Again, let's isolate the paragraph units as suggested by translators along with a brief theme for each one.

1. (1-5) God's law about false prophets and idolatry
2. (6-11) God's law about close acquaintances and idolatry
3. (12-18) God's law about cities that embrace idolatry

We see an overall consistency in this chapter: the whole chapter teaches about a single theme.

Section One

In the first section, what is the element that might entice a believer into idolatry? (1-2) **The apparent fulfillment of a prophecy**

What is the function of that prophecy for the one observing it? (3-4) **It is meant as a test of your loyalty to God**

What is God's judgement against the false prophet? (5) **He is to be put to death for enticing others into idolatry**

Section Two

What element is the attraction to idolatry in the second section? (6-7) **The closeness of the relationship, they are someone you are already intimate with**

What sentence are you required to carry out in these cases, despite the close relationship? (8-10) **You shall not pity, but shall stone such a one to death, your hand being first in executing the sentence**

What is the purpose of such a severe regulation? (11) **To cause all Israel to fear and avoid such evil themselves**

Section Three

What about the case of a city you hear has gone over to idolatry, what are you to do first when you hear such things? (12-14a) **You are to investigate thoroughly, that is, you must follow what we call due process**

If the city is guilty of idolatry, what must be done to it? (14b-15) **Every living thing in the city must be destroyed.**

What is to be done about the booty of the city? (16-17a) **It all must be destroyed, no one is to keep any of it for themselves**

Why are the people to take these extreme measures against their countrymen? (17b-18) **So that the Lord will not abandon his covenant and so you will show yourselves committed to the covenant**

Application Questions:

The modern charismatic movement suggests that “New Testament prophets” are not required to be as exact as OT prophets. Do you think God has changed his requirements for prophets in our day? If a prophet counsels any deviation from orthodoxy, is he a true prophet?

When friends or family members in the church are engaged in grievous public sin, should faithful family members refrain from church discipline when these matters come up?

What sort of relationship should faithful Christians have with churches that widely disobey God’s word?