

# Deuteronomy

## 1. Introduction to Deuteronomy

- 1) Title – The Greek name, “second law,” poorly translates Deuteronomy 17:18. This book is not “second” in the sense of *another* law; rather, Moses *restates the same Law*, adjusting emphasis and order for Israel’s present circumstances.
  - 2) Purpose and Theme
    - a. The **purpose** of Deuteronomy is Israel’s renewal of the covenant, their **commitment** to the Lord. This was necessary before Israel entered the Promised Land (over 200 references to “land” in Deuteronomy).
    - b. Theme: **Love** and **Obedience**
    - c. Key text: **30:11–20**
  - 3) Content and Message
    - a. Relationship to the rest of the Pentateuch
      - (1) Genesis – Israel **chosen** by God
      - (2) Exodus – Israel **redeemed** by God
      - (3) Leviticus – Israel’s **life and worship** before a holy God
      - (4) Numbers – Israel’s **organization** by and **sin** against God
      - (5) Deuteronomy – Israel’s **final preparation** as God’s elect nation
    - b. Summary of Deuteronomy
      - (1) With Israel standing at the edge of the Promised Land, Moses outlines to Israel God’s plan and expectations of them
      - (2) God’s plan and expectations centers on His **covenant** relationship with Israel
      - (3) The heart of the covenant involves **both** parties wholeheartedly and faithfully loving each other
      - (4) Israel must demonstrate their love for God through complete obedience to all of God’s obligations
      - (5) Obedience will bring the **blessings** of material prosperity and national security
      - (6) Disobedience will bring **curse**s, consummating in expulsion from the Promised Land
      - (7) Concluding exhortation (*not* an invitation): choose to love and obey God—“life and death, the blessing and the curse” (30:19–20)
- ☞ Deuteronomy **renews** Israel’s covenant with the Lord (mutual love and obedience) before entering the Promised Land.

## 2. Outline of Deuteronomy

*Basic Outline*—Deuteronomy is a book of Moses' sermons

*Introduction:* The Historical Setting of Moses' Sermons, 1:1–5

- 1) First Sermon: Israel's History, 1:6–4:43
- 2) Second Sermon: Obligations of the Covenant, 4:44–26:19
- 3) Third Sermon: Renewing the Covenant, Declaring its Blessings and Curses, 27:1–29:1
- 4) Fourth Sermon: A Summary of the Covenant, 29:2–30:20

*Conclusion:* The Continuity of the Covenant from Moses to Joshua, 31:1–34:12

*More Detailed Outline*—

### 1) Introduction: The Historical Setting of Moses' Sermons, 1:1–5

### 2) First Sermon: Israel's History, 1:6–4:43

- a. The Experience of God in History, 1:6–3:29
- b. An Exhortation to Obey the Law, 4:1–43

The relationship between the Lord and Israel is to be based on the twin pillars of **love** and **loyalty**. Moses emphasizes that they are to love the Lord with their whole being (5:10; 6:5; 7:9; 10:12; 11:1, 13, 22; 13:3; 19:9; 30:6, 16, 20).

To appreciate this, consider the relationship between a husband and a wife. A wedding ceremony *formalizes* the relationship, but that alone will not *sustain* the relationship. There must be mutual love and loyalty. If that disappears the partners may seek to dissolve their relationship by another formal procedure, divorce. The strength of the relationship does not depend solely on the covenant ceremony but on the love and loyalty each has for the other. Without this the covenant relationship is meaningless (Alexander, *From Paradise to Promised Land*, p. 257).

### 3) Second Sermon: Obligations of the Covenant, 4:44–26:19

- a. Review of the Law at Horeb (Mt. Sinai), 4:44–5:33
- b. General Commands and Warnings, 6:1–11:32

- (1) The principle commandment to love God, 6:1–9

All Israel must love the Lord and have His teaching “on their hearts” (6:6; cf. 11:18–27) so that their obedience was not merely going through the motions but the response of a **heart** that loved God. Such love and obedience was necessary to endure the temptations and trials they would face in Canaan.

- (2) Instructions concerning the Promised Land, 6:10–25

- (3) Israel's policy of war, 7:1–26

- (a) God's choice of Israel – because of God's choice of them (4:37; 7:6–7; 10:15; 14:2) they were God's people (4:20; 7:6; 26:18; 27:9; 28:9–10; 29:13) and must reflect His holiness (7:6; 14:2, 21; 26:19; 28:9)

- (b) Israel and other nations –
  - (i) Canaanite nations were to be **totally** destroyed. This was God’s judgment on the nations and it also protected Israel from idolatry (7:1–6, 25–26; 20:16–18)
  - (ii) Nations outside of Canaan were not to be totally destroyed (20:10–15)
- (4) Lessons from the past: the dangers of prosperity, 8:1–10:11
 

Israel must beware of an independent spirit and a spirit of self-righteousness.
- (5) A call to total commitment to the Lord, 10:12–11:32
- c. Specific legislation, 12:1–26:15
  - (1) Laws regulating the worship of a holy people, 12:1–16:17
    - (a) One place of worship, 12:2–28
    - (b) Repress idolatry, 12:29–13:18
      - (i) Israel must avoid pagan religious practices, 12:29–32
      - (ii) Israel must reject and put to death idolatrous false prophets, 13:1–5
      - (iii) Israel must reject and put to death idolatrous family members or friends, 13:6–11
      - (iv) Israel must not tolerate the worship of any other God, 13:12–18
    - (c) Laws relating to various practices, 14:1–29
    - (d) The year of release, the law regarding firstlings, 15:1–23
    - (e) The three annual pilgrimages, 16:1–17
  - (2) The officials of the theocracy, 16:18–18:22
    - (a) Judges and judicial procedures, 16:18–17:13
    - (b) The king, 17:14–20
    - (c) Priests and Levites, 18:1–8
    - (d) Prophets, 18:9–22
  - (3) Cities of refuge and legal procedure, 19:1–21
  - (4) Regulations for war, 20:1–20
  - (5) Miscellaneous laws, 21:1–25:19
    - (a) Atonement for an unsolved murder, 21:1–9
    - (b) Family laws, 21:10–21
    - (c) Various laws, 21:22–22:12
      - (i) Hanging a corpse on a tree, 21:22–23
      - (ii) Love for neighbor practically expressed, 22:1–4
      - (iii) Remember that the land belongs to the Lord, 22:6–7
      - (iv) Love of neighbor, 22:8
      - (v) Practical, daily reminders of God’s election of Israel to be a holy people, 22:9–11
    - (d) Marriage violations, 22:13–30
    - (e) Exclusion from the assembly, 23:1–8
    - (f) Uncleanliness in the camp, 23:9–14
    - (g) Various laws, 23:15–25:19
      - (i) Escaped slaves, 23:15–16
      - (ii) Prostitution, 23:17–18
      - (iii) Lending and charging interest, 23:19–20
      - (iv) Vows, 23:21–23

- (v) Eating in a neighbor's fields, 23:24–25
- (vi) Divorce and remarriage, 24:1–4
- (vii) A new marriage, 24:5
- (viii) Pledges, 24:6
- (ix) Kidnapping, 24:7
- (x) Skin diseases, 24:8–9
- (xi) Collecting a pledge, 24:10–13
- (xii) Paying workers, 24:14–15
- (xiii) Responsibility for guilt within the family, 24:16
- (xiv) Treatment of the alien, fatherless, and widow, 24:17–22
- (xv) Prosecuting criminals, 25:1–3
- (xvi) Working oxen, 25:4
- (xvii) Levirate marriage, 25:5–10
- (xviii) Stopping a fight, 25:11–12
- (xix) Differing weights, 25:13–16
- (xx) The destruction of the Amalekites, 25:17–19
- (h) First fruits, 26:1–15

d. Concluding exhortation, 26:16–19

#### **4) Third Sermon: Renewing the Covenant, Declaring its Blessings and Curses, 27:1–29:1**

- a. The Command to Renew the Covenant, 27:1–26
- b. The Blessings and Curses Pronounced in Moab, 28:1–29:1
  - (1) The blessings, 28:1–14
  - (2) The curses, 28:15–68

Generally, when Israel **obeyed** the Lord they experienced God's blessing, and when they **disobeyed** they experienced God's curse. This theme permeates the OT (for example, Psalms 1; 32:10; 37:25; Prov 2:21–22; 3:10)

#### **5) Fourth Sermon: A Summary of the Covenant, 29:2–30:20**

- a. An Appeal to be Faithful to the Covenant, 29:2–29
- b. A Call to Decision: Life and Blessing or Death and Curses, 30:1–20
  - (1) Restoration after repentance, 30:1–10
    - (a) Restoration to the Promised Land, 30:1–5
    - (b) The promise of a new heart and abundant prosperity, 30:6–10
  - (2) Concluding exhortation, 30:11–20

#### **6) The Continuity of the Covenant from Moses to Joshua, 31:1–34:12**

- a. Transition from Moses to Joshua, 31:1–29
- b. The Song of Moses, 31:30–32:43
- c. Moses' Approaching Death, 32:44–52
- d. Moses' Blessing, 33:1–29
- e. Moses' Death, 34:1–12