

7. Laws for Israel, Part B (Answers) Deuteronomy

Introduction: This is the fifth lesson in a series on an overview of the Bible.

Review:

The word testament (as in Old Testament) means covenant. Which covenant is the “the” old covenant? The old covenant is the covenant between God and the nation of Israel made at Mount Sinai. Since it was made at Sinai it is sometimes also called the Sinai covenant.

About how many years after the covenant with Abraham was the old covenant made? It was made about 500 years later.

What was the name of the man who mediated the old covenant? Moses was the mediator of the covenant. Thus, it is sometimes also called the Mosaic covenant.

Was the old covenant conditional or unconditional? Why? It was quite conditional because it was based on performance. The old covenant contained some 600 laws that had to be obeyed. This is in contrast to God’s covenant with Abraham, which was unconditional and based on promise rather than law.

What was the sign of the old covenant? The sign was observance of a Saturday Sabbath.

The Law: The first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures were written (or edited) by Moses. Because they mostly contain the rules of the old covenant, these five books are sometimes called “the Law.” The Jews call them the Torah (teachings). The Greek speaking Jews called them the Pentateuch (the five scrolls). The last of the five books is Deuteronomy. *Deuteros* means in Greek second and *nomos* means law. Deuteronomy contains the second giving of the Law by Moses. It was written a full generation after the first giving of the law (in Exodus). No longer were they at Mt. Sinai, but rather on the plains of Moab (an area along the eastern shore of the Dead Sea). The Israelis were poised to enter the Promised Land and Deuteronomy was given a reminder to the nation of its covenant obligations.

1. **Based on 2 Corinthians 3:7-18, where did the old covenant get its name?**

(Teacher’s note: In class read aloud only 3:14). The Sinai covenant was made old in comparison to the glory of Christ and the new covenant.

ESV 2 Corinthians 3:14 ... their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away.

******2. According to Deuteronomy 28:1-14, what types of blessings did God guarantee as a result of obedience to the terms of the Sinai covenant?** *See also Deuteronomy 4:12, 40, 5:32-33, 14:2.* They were promised **possession** of the Promised Land, **protection** in the land, **prosperity** in land, a populous **posterity** in land. We saw last week that a major purpose was to establish a God-people relationship (Ex 19:1-6), making them a **peculiar people**.

KJV **Deuteronomy 14:2** ... thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.

Confirmation: Notice the “if” in the passage (28:1); this is very much a **conditional** covenant.

******3. According to Deuteronomy 28:15-20, what kinds of penalties did God promise for disobedience?** Instead of blessings would be the exact opposite curses.

4. Related to national independence, what penalty did disobedience carry (De 28:45-51)?

5. Related to health, what penalty did disobedience carry (28:58-63)? Instead of Obamacare, they would get *Obamacurse!*

6. Related to living in the Promised Land, what did God guarantee for disobedience (De 28:64-68)? *See also Deuteronomy 29:22-29.*

Israel’s Constitution: The old covenant was to the nation of Israel what the Constitution is to the United States. It was a legal document, the “law of the land.” This law is recorded in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. It is like the Torah is the rule book to a game, and the rest of the Old Testament scriptures are real life example of what happened when people played the game. When the Israelis were obedient to the Law, they were blessed and possessed the Land. When they were disobedient, God raised up a foreign nation to oppress them and eventually drive them from the Promised Land. Then when they repented, God brought them back into the Promised Land and the cycle started all over again.

******7. What prediction did God make in Deuteronomy 31:16-18?** God predicted that after Moses died and Israel entered the land, they would break the covenant and worship foreign gods.

8. What did Stephen declare in Acts 7:51-53 that got him stoned to death? See Romans 9:6. Stephen declared that the Hebrew people were, on the whole, not a God-fearing group of people and that *they never had been*. Only a remnant had even been truly right with God. Spiritual Israel was a tiny fraction of overall physical Israel.

ESV **Romans 9:6** ... not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel ...

Such negative statements regarding physical Israel are not anti-Semitic; the same spiritual condition exists among the Gentiles as well. Only God's grace can break through our stiff-necked hard heartedness.

Covenant Synthesis

The following questions concern the relationship between the covenant with Abraham and the covenant with Israel.

****In Exodus 32:1-6, what sin did the Israelis commit?

9. Why was the sin of Exodus 32:1-6 so serious? See Exodus 20:3, 22:20.

ESV **Exodus 20:3** You shall have no other gods before me.

ESV **Exodus 22:20** Whoever sacrifices to any god, other than the LORD alone, shall be devoted to destruction.

****What, in Exodus 32:7-10, was God's penalty for Israel's actions?

10. How was God's penalty (Ex 32:7-10) not in violation of God's promises to Abraham (Genesis 12:2, 15:5)? God promised Abraham a multitude of descendants. Moses was directly descended from Abraham. God could have started all over with Moses, just as he had with Noah. All it would change is that it would set God's timetable back about 500 years.

Moses heard God's decision (31:7-10), didn't like it, and decided to try to change God's mind (32:11-14). (You mean you can change God's mind? Moses thought so!).

******11. What arguments did Moses give to deter God's judgment (Ex 32:11-14)?** Moses appealed to God on the basis of God's reputation (that it would be ruined) and on the basis of God's earlier promises to Abraham.

Application: When you pray, do you ever give God reasons why He should grant your request? Or do you just ask? Based on Moses' example, it is good to reason with God. It appears that he is a divine Person who can be convinced.

12. Why did Moses not appeal to God on the basis of the Sinai Covenant (Ex 32:11-14)?

See *Exodus 22:20*. The Sinai covenant was conditional and the Israelis had broken the conditions. By law they were guilty and liable to the death penalty.

13. What does Exodus 32:11-14 show us about the relationship between the Sinai covenant and the covenant with Abraham? See *Exodus 33:1, Deuteronomy 9:7-29*. It shows that both were in effect simultaneously and that the Abrahamic covenant was more fundamental than the Sinai covenant. They complemented each other.

Teacher's Note: To save time, skip questions 14-16 in class, simply making reference to the truths in the various texts that show the importance of the Abrahamic covenant.

14. **In Leviticus 26:40-45, what did God promise to remember if the Israelis confessed their iniquity?** God promised to remember both the Mosaic and the Abrahamic covenants (26:42, 45).

******What command did God give Israel in Deuteronomy 1:7-8?** The command is found in 1:7 and it is to occupy the Promised Land.

What was the basis for this command (De 1:7-8)? The basis for their right to the land was God's promise to Abraham.

15. What does Deuteronomy 1:7-8 indicate about the effect the Sinai covenant had on the covenant with Abraham? See *Deuteronomy 7:7-8, 9:4-6*. The Abrahamic covenant obviously was still in effect.

16. **In Deuteronomy 9:1-6, what two reasons did God give for driving the Anakites out of the Promised Land?** See *Genesis 15:13 16, Leviticus 18:3 25, Deuteronomy 7:7-8, 9:4-6*. The reason given was the wickedness of the occupying nations (9:4) and to confirm God's oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (9:5).

According to Deuteronomy 9:4-6, what was absolutely *not* a factor in driving out the Anakites? See *Deuteronomy 7:7-8*.

ESV **Deuteronomy 7:7-8** It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

17. Which of the “big three” promises to Abraham (land, seed, blessing) does the Sinai Covenant touch upon? Through the Sinai Covenant the descendants of Abraham were given a vehicle by which to prosper (blessing), multiply (seed) and possess the land (land).

18. What does Galatians 3:15-19 reveal about the differences between God’s covenant with Abraham and God’s covenant with Israel and the impact of one on the other? God’s covenant to Abraham was based on promise and was unconditional. God’s covenant with Israel came 430 years later and was based on law. The covenant with Israel did not invalidate the covenant with Abraham. The purpose of the law was to show the Israelis their sins and make them appreciate the need for promise and the arrival of the promised Seed: Jesus the Messiah.

The Sinai covenant and its law were all about the physical land, the physical seed and the physical blessing. The Abrahamic covenant and its promises weren’t really about those physical things. It was about the coming of Christ, the justification by faith that Christ made possible and a heavenly country.

So What?

19. Where is eternal life promised for obedience to the Sinai covenant? See Galatians 2:21 & 3:21. Eternal life is never offered by Moses for obedience to the laws. Indeed, it is impossible for anyone to be made right with God by keep the Law.

NAS **Galatians 2:21** ... if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.

ESV **Galatians 3:21** ... if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law.

20. What spiritual use did the New Testament identify for the Law of Moses in Romans 3:19-20? See also Galatians 3:24. The spiritual function of the Law of Moses was to show Jewish people their sins and get them ready for a Savior in the Person of Jesus. The Law was like a truant officer escorting a way-ward student back to school (Christ).

ESV **Galatians 3:24** ... the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.

21. The Law helped show Jewish people their sin (Ro 3:19-20). What does God use to show Gentile people their sin? See Romans 2:12-16. Even people who have never heard of the Law of Moses understand basic right from wrong. Thus, the *First London Baptist Confession of 1646* states in article XXV:

“The preaching of the gospel to the conversion of sinners, is absolutely free; no way requiring as absolutely necessary, any qualifications, preparations, or terrors of the law, or preceding ministry of the law ...”

How the 39 books of the Old Testament Are Arranged: Look at your Bible’s Table of Contents. Look at the list of Old Testament Books. There are 39 books in the Old Testament. There is logic to the way they are arranged. It is not hap-hazard or arbitrary.

The first 17 books are history (like Chronicles).

The next 5 books are poetry (like Psalms).

The last 17 books are prophecy (like Isaiah).

The first 17 books can be further subdivided into 2 sections: The first 5 books of the Law and then the remaining 12 books of pure history.

The last 17 books can also be further subdivided into 2 sections: The first 5 are called major prophets and the last 12 are called minor prophets. They are not major in the sense they are more inspired, but simply that their writings are longer.

How the 39 books of the Old Testament relate to one another.

As stated above, the first 5 books (the Law) were like Israel’s constitution. They could be likened to the rules of a game.

The next 12 historical books are real life examples of what happened when people played the game. When obedient, they prospered in the land. When disobedient, they were cursed and eventually ejected from the land.

The 5 poetical books are, generally speaking, wisdom literature that is the result of meditation upon the Law of Moses (Ps 1:1-2).

The last 17 prophetic books are sermons of judgment based on the Law of Moses (Jer 11:1-8).

**** = ask the class this question before having the text read aloud.

Teacher’s Note: These lessons were designed for a 45-minute session.

Stephen E. Atkerson
NTRF.org
12/12/2022