

Deuteronomy

Vineland Park Baptist Church

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Study # 03

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This is the third lesson in our study of Deuteronomy; the fifth book of Moses writings called the Pentateuch, which means five-fold.

The word Deuteronomy means “second law” which implies another law after the first law. The title according to the Hebrews is “The Words” taken from the first sentence of the book, “These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel on this side of the Jordan in the wilderness,”

Correctly translated the Hebrew word should be “a copy of the law.” Much of the content is Moses’ commentary on the Law given on Mt. Sinai forty years before.

Moses knows that God will not allow him to enter the Promised Land on the other side of Jordan because of his rashness in taking to himself the power to bring water out of the rock.

Numbers 20:

¹⁰ And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, “Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?”

¹¹ Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.

¹² Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.”

An entire generation of Israelites, who escaped from Egypt, with the exception of Moses, Joshua, and Caleb, have wandered in the wilderness and have died. After a short eleven-day march from the Red Sea they came to Kadesh-Barnea where Moses sent twelve men into Canaan to spy out the land. When ten of the spies gave a bad report the people refused to cross over Jordan and this is referred to in the Bible as the “Provocation” or the “Rebellion.”

The NT book of Hebrews quotes Psalm 95 referring to the rebellion:

Heb 3:8-15

*⁸ Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,
In the day of trial in the wilderness,*

*⁹ Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me,
And saw My works forty years.*

*¹⁰ Therefore I was angry with that generation,
And said, 'They always go astray in their heart,
And they have not known My ways.'*

*¹¹ So I swore in My wrath,
'They shall not enter My rest.'*

Moses gives three sermons intended to prepare the people to go in and take the land given to them by God.

In the last lesson Moses reminded them of the failure of their parents to obey God and gives them words of encouragement. One way to encourage people is to remind them of times when they were successful.

This generation would either have been very young at the time of the exodus from Egypt and most of them would have been born in the wilderness. They would have little or no recollection of the mighty acts of God.

Another thing that Moses understands is that life will be very different when they begin to live in settlements instead of in tents; staying in one place instead of packing up and moving from time to time.

Perhaps what Moses was most concerned about was how easily these people could be seduced by foreign religions and lapsing into idolatry.

While Moses was on Mt. Sinai, receiving the law from God, the people had coerced Aaron into making a golden calf to represent God. [Exodus 32]

Then there was the episode with Balaam who was hired by King Balak to curse Israel. [Numbers 22-24]

God would not allow Balaam to curse the people but Balaam did show Balak how easy it would be to snare the Israelites.

Rev 2:12-15

¹² "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write,

'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: ¹³"I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. ¹⁴ But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.

Num 25:1-3

Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. ² They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. ³ So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel.

Moses knew that the best way to protect the people from falling into error was to preach the truth.

The key to understanding Deuteronomy and the entire Bible is to see that God keeps His covenant with His people.

Without going into eschatology at this time just know that God's people, as far as justification is concerned, were never Israel after the flesh. There is the Israel of God within Israel after the flesh. God never justified anyone based on their birth certificate {Charles Alexander}.

That said, Moses is going to restate the covenant and that is seen in:

Deut 11:26-32

²⁶ "Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: ²⁷ the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; ²⁸ and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known. ²⁹ Now it shall be, when the LORD your God has brought you into the land which you go to possess, that you shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. ³⁰ Are they not on the other side of the Jordan, toward the setting sun, in the land of the Canaanites who dwell in the plain opposite Gilgal, beside the terebinth trees of Moreh? ³¹ For you will cross over the Jordan and go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and you will possess it and dwell in it. ³² And you shall be careful to observe all the statutes and judgments which I set before you today.

Over in Canaan Joshua records the fulfillment of Moses' intention.

Josh 8:30-35

³⁰ Now Joshua built an altar to the LORD God of Israel in Mount Ebal, ³¹ as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses: "an altar of whole stones over which no man has wielded an iron *tool*." And they offered on it burnt offerings to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. ³² And there, in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written. ³³ Then all Israel, with their elders and officers and judges, stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, the stranger as well as he who was born among them. Half of them *were* in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. ³⁴ And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. ³⁵ There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.

We will look at these later but here are other references to the covenant in Deut.

Deut 4:30-31

³⁰ When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice ³¹ (for the LORD your God *is* a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.

Deut 7:12

"Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers.

Deut 29:1

These *are* the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb.

One reason that Deuteronomy is relevant to Christians is that as believers in Jesus Christ we too are included in the covenant.

The Bible is divided into OT and NT and would be better understood as Old Covenant and New Covenant; testament and covenant being synonymous terms.

Heb 8:6-9:1

⁶ But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

⁷ For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. ⁸ Because finding fault with them, He says: "*Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah –* ⁹ *not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD.* ¹⁰ *For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.* ¹¹ *None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.* ¹² *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds* I will remember no more."* (Jer 31:31-3)

¹³ In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Samuel Rutherford, who wrote as his last words, Immanuel's Land, each stanza reads, "And glory-glory dwelleth In Immanuel's Land" said on his death bed, "The covenants are one."

There is an Old Covenant under Moses and the New Covenant in Christ but there is also the sense that there is but one covenant of grace that had its beginning in Christ before the foundation of the world. Those justified in the OT age were justified by grace through faith alone; else you have more than one way to be saved. Deuteronomy is as much about the grace of God as any NT book.

So I repeat: One reason that Deuteronomy is relevant to Christians is that as believers in Jesus Christ we too are included in the covenant.

When we began this study I said my plan was to deal with passages and themes that have relevance to NT believers, as opposed to an exhaustive line upon line exposition.

Most expositors agree that Deuteronomy is mainly three spoken sermons by Moses just before the Lord killed him.

The Lord killed him; does that sound strange to you?

Rev 1:18

I *am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen.
And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

We have already covered the purpose of Deuteronomy; i.e. to prepare a new generation of Israelites to enter the Promised Land; now let's take a look at the way the Book of Deuteronomy is organized.

Moses begins with a brief historical statement:

Look at the map of the wilderness and of Canaan.

Deut 1:1-5

These *are* the words which Moses spoke to all Israel on this side of the Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain opposite Suph, between Paran, Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab. ²*It is eleven days' journey* from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea. ³ Now it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first *day* of the month, *that* Moses spoke to the children of Israel according to all that the LORD had given him as commandments to them, ⁴ after he had killed Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who dwelt at Ashtaroth in Edrei. ⁵ On this side of the Jordan in the land of Moab, Moses began to explain this law, saying, ...

Moses briefly recalls the history of conquests over Sihon and Og.

Apparently the conquests of Sihon and Og are significant because it occurs in several other places in the OT.

Num 32:33

So Moses gave to the children of Gad, to the children of Reuben, and to half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land with its cities within the borders, the cities of the surrounding country.

Deut 1:4

after he had killed Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who dwelt at Ashtaroth in Edrei.

Deut 29:7

And when you came to this place, Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan came out against us to battle, and we conquered them.

Deut 31:4

And the LORD will do to them as He did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites and their land, when He destroyed them.

Josh 2:10

For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who *were* on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed.

1 Kings 4:19

Geber the son of Uri, in the land of Gilead, *in* the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan. *He was* the only governor who *was* in the land.

Neh 9:22

²² "Moreover You gave them kingdoms and nations,
And divided them into districts.
So they took possession of the land of Sihon,
The land of the king of Heshbon,
And the land of Og king of Bashan.

Ps 135:10-11

¹⁰ He defeated many nations
And slew mighty kings —
¹¹ Sihon king of the Amorites,
Og king of Bashan,
And all the kingdoms of Canaan —

The time of Moses' sermons in Deuteronomy is given as forty years after the eleven days' journey from Horeb [Sinai] and they could have been in Canaan all of that time had they not rebelled against God.

Moses began to explain this law saying... The law here is much broader than the Ten Commandments. It includes the TC but also many other aspects of instruction, warnings, and encouragement.

Moses' First Sermon is from 1:6 to 4:43:

This first sermon recalls the events from the day they left Sinai until they arrive in the plains of Moab.

There are three parts to this period of wandering in the wilderness:

From Horeb to Kadesh-Barnea [1:6-46];

From Kadesh-Barnea to Heshbon [2:1-37];

From Heshbon to where they are now camped in the plains of Moab [3:1-29].

Moses exhorted the people to obedience and warned them of transgression and forgetfulness [4:1-40].

Moses' last three statements describe the cities of refuge that will be provided [4:41-43].

Moses' Second Sermon is from 4:44 to 28:68:

This sermon is the longest and covers most of the book. Moses restates some of the first sermon [chapters 5-11] and then gives an exposition of many of the laws [chapters 12-26]. There is the renewal of the covenant [chapters 27-28].

Moses uses repetition to impress on the minds of the people how important it is that they listen and obey these words. A pastor should take the necessary time to instruct the congregation before leading them into a new undertaking.

As an example here at Vineland Park we spent six months in a study of the doctrine of the church before moving from a single pastor / deacons leadership model to the plurality of elders / deacons model.

Moses' second sermon starts with a review of the Ten Commandments and encouragement to do them....

Deut 6:1-9

"Now this *is* the commandment, *and these are* the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe *them* in the land which you are crossing over to possess, ² that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. ³ Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe *it*, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you – 'a land flowing with milk and honey.'

⁴ "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one!

⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

⁶ "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

The first commandment, "Thou shall have no other gods before Me," is expanded upon in verse 6:5 and it is noteworthy that Jesus did not modify it.

⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

Moses then proceeds to explain various laws that deal with worship, debts, slavery, et al.

As Brother Gables so aptly pointed out you cannot divide the laws into moral and secular because for the Israelite all the law was moral.

In 16:18 to 18:22 Moses describes the three offices of king, priest, and prophet under which the people will live in Canaan. Other laws and relationships are discussed in chapters 17-26 and the sermon concludes with instructions for a renewal of the covenant in chapters 27-28.

Moses' Third Sermon is from 29:1 to 30:20:

Moses final message is for the people to remember how God has dealt with them in the past and as a prophet Moses foresees the apostasy and exile of Israel after the flesh.

Deuteronomy concludes from 31:1 to 34:12

There are final words of exhortation [31:1-6]; a song given to Moses by God [chapter 32]; he commissioned Joshua to be his successor [31:7-8, 23]; Moses blesses the tribes [chapter 33]; and writes about his death [chapter 34].

Many expositors consider 10:12-11:1 to be the heart of the book.

Deut 10:12-11:1

¹² "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ *and* to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good? ¹⁴ Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, *also* the earth with all that *is* in it. ¹⁵ The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as *it is* this day. ¹⁶ Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer. ¹⁷ For the LORD your God *is* God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. ¹⁸ He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. ¹⁹ Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. ²⁰ You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him, and to Him you shall hold fast, and take oaths in His name. ²¹ He *is* your praise, and He *is* your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen. ²² Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons, and now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of heaven in multitude.

11:1 "Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always.

Moses only requested two things for himself. He asked to see God's glory (Exodus 33:18), and to see Canaan (Deuteronomy 3:25).

God let Moses see the land from a distance but he could not enter Canaan.

God gave Moses the privilege of naming Joshua as his successor.

WALKING in GOD'S WAYS

Deuteronomy 4:1-39

After recounting defeats and victories, Moses gives the people a blend of exhortations for holy living.

Do not add to or take away from God's word.

Do not mix idolatry with true worship.

What does Deut 4:6 call wisdom?

Deut 4:6

Therefore be careful to observe *them*; for this *is* your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.'

“Remember” is a key word in Deuteronomy.

Remember Horeb.

Remember Kadesh-Barnea.

Remember the Ten Commandments.

Don't make any images that are supposed to represent God. In addition to being forbidden, the main problem with the supposed pictures of God/Christ is that they are not the truth.

There are two antidotes that tell us a lot about images that represent God.

Years ago a man in Jasper, AL claimed that he saw Jesus' face in the door of his hospital room. When asked what Jesus looked like he answered, “He looked like His picture.”

Then there was a five-year old girl who was drawing a picture and her mother asked her what she was drawing. She answered, "A picture of God." Her mother said, "No one knows what God looks like." "They will when I get through."

Apply 4:32-39 to the Christian life.

Deut 4:32-40

³² "For ask now concerning the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and *ask* from one end of heaven to the other, whether *any* great *thing* like this has happened, or *anything* like it has been heard. ³³ Did *any* people *ever* hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live? ³⁴ Or did God *ever* try to go *and* take for Himself a nation from the midst of *another* nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? ³⁵ To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD Himself *is* God; *there is* none other besides Him. ³⁶ Out of heaven He let you hear His voice, that He might instruct you; on earth He showed you His great fire, and you heard His words out of the midst of the fire. ³⁷ And because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them; and He brought you out of Egypt with His Presence, with His mighty power, ³⁸ driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land *as* an inheritance, *as it is* this day. ³⁹ Therefore know this day, and consider *it* in your heart, that the LORD Himself *is* God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; *there is* no other. ⁴⁰ You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong *your* days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time."

John captures the attitude of the believer:

1 John 3:1-3

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.