

Old Testament Survey
Lesson 6 – Deuteronomy
Valley Bible Church Adult Sunday School
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Introduction

The Book of Deuteronomy consists of a series of addresses by Moses just before he died. Moses gave these discourses on the east of the Jordan just before the people entered the Promised Land. He warned the Israelites of the danger of forgetting. Moses **KNOWS** God. He talked to God face-to-face. He was the friend of God. The nation saw the acts of God, but never seemed get to know Him. Moses **KNEW** Him!

The word Deuteronomy means "second law." Not a rote repetition of the laws of Mt. Sinai, but the law interpreted in the light of 38 years of experience gained while wandering in the wilderness and also a reflection of Moses' personal walk with God. It is considered by many to be a commentary on the Mosaic Law. Moses said again and again, "Be careful that you do not forget. Be sure that you remember."

Examples of "remember" in Deuteronomy:

- 4:23 Remember the covenant
- 5:15 Remember when you were slaves
- 6:12 Don't forget when God brought you out of Egypt and slavery
- 8:2 Remember all the ways the Lord led you in the wilderness
- 8:11 Don't forget God, keep His commandments
- 8:18 Remember the Lord who gave you power and wealth
- 9:7 Remember how you provoked God to wrath
- 24:9 Remember what God did to Miriam

The structure of Deuteronomy takes on the form of a suzerain-vassal treaty. This type of treaty was common in the ancient near east when a king or political leader made a covenant with his vassals or slaves.

1. a preamble (1:1-5);
2. the historical prologue where the king reviewed his past dealings with his people(1:6-4:49);
3. the main provisions of the covenant where the actual terms are given (5:1-26:19);
4. the curses and blessings (27:1-30:20); and
5. the arrangements for carrying on the treaty after the leader died (31:1-33:29).

Another way to outline Deuteronomy is according to a three-fold division of: 1) retrospective, 2) introspective, and 3) prospective.

Remember, the adult generation that experienced the redemption from Egypt is now dead. Only Joshua, Caleb, and Moses are left. The nation now stands on the border of the Promised Land where they had made the wrong decision 40 years earlier and now faced the same obstacles. This time Moses would prepare his people to successfully enter, take it, and live in it.

Deuteronomy stands at the end of the Pentateuch. The leading books give us a historical account (facts), and the capstone book, Deuteronomy, brings everything together and expounds on them. When first Israel stood at Kadesh-Barnea they heard reports of giants, walled cities, powerful armies, and they were terrified. Now, in the shadows of those same obstacles Moses wants to make sure history does not repeat itself so he points back to their failures and God's faithfulness and ultimate purpose.

I. The Preamble (1:1-5)

Here we see the setting for the rest of the book. Moses is going to speak to the people on the East side of the Jordan. This 11 day journey has taken them 40 years to accomplish due the people forgetting what God had done. Moses is going to “expound” or explain the law.

II. Historical (Retrospective) (1:6-4:49)

Haven't we been here before? Why is Moses going over this ground (no pun intended) again? Many of the new generation were unfamiliar with the experiences at Mt. Sinai. The new generation, now adults, needs to review the Law as it is interpreted by Moses in light of 38 years of trial and experience. They must not repeat the previous mistakes.

A. The Journey Reviewed (1:6-3:29)

Mt. Sinai is in Horeb just eleven days from Kadesh-Barnea and the Promised Land. Before they start again, Moses will review their former trip so they will not make the same mistake when they get there. Moses emphasizes two major failings from that first trip, one of his and one of the entire nation:

1. Moses' Failure (1:6-18)

This was first accounted in Exodus 18 when Moses became burdened and frustrated with the settling of disputes among the people. He thought he was carrying all the burden of his people alone. The Lord permitted him to appoint elders and a committee of seventy was appointed (foundation for the Sanhedrin). It was wise from a human standpoint, but **he didn't remember** that God was carrying the burden.

2. The People's Failure (1:19-45)

The second failure was the refusal to follow Moses into the Promised Land because of their fear and unbelief based on the negative report of ten of the twelve spies. **They didn't remember** that God had already spied out the land and promised it to them.

³⁰"The LORD your God who goes before you will Himself fight on your behalf, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, ³¹and in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, just as a man carries his son, in all the way which you have walked until you came to this place.' ³²"But for all this, you did not trust the LORD your God, ³³who goes before you on your way, to seek out a place for you to encamp, in fire by night and cloud by day, to show you the way in which you should go. Deut 1:30-33

3. Holding at Kadesh-Barnea (1:46)

When God refused to let them enter they repented but God said it was too late. Still they armed themselves and went to battle against the Amorites even though God said He would not go with them. They were routed and ended up stuck in Kadesh-Barnea for "many days."

4. Conquest of Eastern Lands (East of Jordan) (2:1-3:17)

- a. Giants are still there (2:1-23)
- b. Giants are nothing against God (2:24-3:17)

5. Contemplation of Western Land (West of Jordan) (3:18-29)

- a. Tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh ask to have the land on the East of the Jordan.
- b. Moses divides the land but makes them promise to worship God and to fight to help Israel possess all the western lands before settling in the east.

6. Moses Speaks of the Law (4)

This is an incredible section detailing God's wonders and how the nation could be a great witness to His majesty. As the nation prepares to cross the Jordan and take the land, Moses is concerned with their holiness. He clarifies in simple words what the law is and how they shall keep it.

¹"Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you to perform, so that you may live and go in and take possession of the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you. ²"You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. Deut 4:1-2

a. They are to "observe the laws carefully" --v 6 Why?

⁶"So keep and do them, for that 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.' ⁷"For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the LORD our God whenever we call on Him? ⁸"Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today? Deut 4:6

1. So they will be blessed
2. To serve as an example to the world

b. They are to avoid idolatry

c. The Lord is God, proven

³⁴"Or has a god tried to go to take for himself a nation from within another nation **by trials, by signs and wonders and by war and by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm and by great terrors**, as 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, He is God; there is no other besides Him.** Deut 4:34-35

III. Legislative (Introspective) (5-26)

This book really tries to teach the nation how to love and obey God. Moses says, "Observe what He says, to do it!" He is rather like James (1:22) in the NT when he says, "Be doers of the Word, and not only hearers." True obedience comes from love. "If you love me, keep my commandments." Deut. 6:4 and 5 --The Schema - "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord He is one! And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."

Jesus realized the importance of this teaching on obedience to God and His Word and quoted from Deuteronomy a number of times, i.e. Luke 4:4, 8, 12. This is the Scripture He used to thwart Satan in the wilderness temptation.

The generation which experienced redemption from Egypt is dead. Joshua, Caleb and Moses are all that remain from that people. They stand with the new generation on the threshold of the Promised Land. New land, New leader, New challenges, New danger, New prospects, and New opportunities to live out their faith. Moses warns Israel to look into their hearts and pledge, not only to not forget the law, but to determine to obey it. Few books of the Bible point out so graphically the blessing of a proper relationship to God and the curses brought by forgetting Him.

A. Moses presents the Ten Commandments (5)

Comparison of the Ten Commandments from Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5

Exodus 20	Deuteronomy 5
<p>²"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³"You shall have no other gods before Me.</p>	<p>⁶"I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ⁷"You shall have no other gods before Me.</p>
<p>⁴"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. ⁵"You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, ⁶but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.</p>	<p>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. ⁹"You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, ¹⁰but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.</p>
<p>⁷"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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>⁸"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹"Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. ¹¹"For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.</p>	<p>¹²Observe the sabbath day to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. ¹³Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁴but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant or your ox or your donkey or any of your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you, so that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. ¹⁵You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to observe the sabbath day.</p>
<p>¹²"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.</p>	<p>¹⁶"Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land which the LORD your God gives you.</p>
<p>¹³"You shall not murder.</p>	<p>¹⁷"You shall not murder.</p>
<p>¹⁴"You shall not commit adultery.</p>	<p>¹⁸"You shall not commit adultery.</p>
<p>¹⁵"You shall not steal.</p>	<p>¹⁹"You shall not steal.</p>
<p>¹⁶"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.</p>	<p>²⁰"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.</p>
<p>¹⁷"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor."</p>	<p>²¹"You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field or his male servant or his female servant, his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.'</p>

B. Moses Gives the Means of Communicating the Truth (6)

Here the great Shema is given:

⁴"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! ⁵"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. Deut 6:4-5

The means to communicate these truths was through the family to successive generations.

⁶"These words, which I am commanding you today, **shall be on your heart.** ⁷"You shall **teach them diligently** to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and 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 frontals on your forehead. ⁹"**You shall write them** on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Deut 6:6-9

As God brings them into the land and blesses His chosen people, there will be the tendency to forget the reason for existence and for the blessing.

¹⁰"Then it shall come about when the LORD your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, ¹¹and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied, ¹²then watch yourself, that you do not forget the LORD who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. Duet 6:10-12

C. Moses Speaks of the Lord (7-8)

Moses explains why God will drive out all the nations and bring them success. God chose them by grace! Here they are commanded to not make alliances or intermarry with the nations that they are to destroy. The people who God chose are admonished to not become proud and forget all of His gracious dealings with them.

⁶"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ⁷"**The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples,** ⁸**but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.** ⁹"Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments; ¹⁰but repays those who hate Him to their faces, to destroy them; He will not delay with him who hates Him, He will repay him to his face. ¹¹"Therefore, you shall keep the commandment and the statutes and the judgments which I am commanding you today, to do them. Deut 7:6-11

C. Moses Speaks of the Land (9-11)

Moses again goes back through important events such as the Golden Calf incidence (9) and the broken and replaced tablets (10) reminding them that the possessing of the new land is the proof of their love and obedience of God.

²²"For if you are careful to keep all this commandment which I am commanding you to do, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and hold fast to Him, ²³then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you. Deut 11:22-23

D. Laws for Settling the New Land (12-18)

These are the principles and precepts for occupying the land. Much technical detail is imparted but also an urgent warning—Do not make connections with pagans, especially the Canaanites, who could lead into idolatry. The annihilation of all these people was based on the insidious cancerous idolatry that intruded into all society.

¹⁴"These are the statutes and the judgments which you shall carefully observe in the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess as long as you live on the earth. Deut 12:1

1. Purity (12-14)

Centralized worship of God (12); avoiding idol worship – dealing with apostasy on the individual and community level (13); clean and unclean food and tithing (welfare) (14).

2. Property (15)

God provides the means to provide for the poor and a reminder of the Jubilee Year.

3. Piety (16:1-17)

Relationship to God and holy living accomplished by the ongoing reminders of the feasts (stay close) and the Offerings (get close).

4. Positions (16:18-18:22)

Appointment of righteous judges; setting up a court system; request for a king predicted and controlled; offerings for priests and Levites; spiritism forbidden; Messiah (18:15-19); false prophets.

E. Laws for Separation in the New Land (19-26)

1. Protection (19-20)

Cities of Refuge commanded for manslayers; death for the murderer; punishment for criminal acts (Thus you shall not show pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot. Deut 19:21); military rules of war and exemptions for service (20).

2. Relationships (21-25)

Personal laws: dealing with unsolved murder; marriage and family life (taking a wife from captives, a rebellious son), capital punishment, clothing, sexual violations, the congregation, divorce and marriage, taking care of the poor (gleaning), protection for the weak.

3. Priorities (26)

First fruits, tithes are to be a response of the heart.

¹⁶"This day the LORD your God commands you to do these statutes and ordinances. You shall therefore be careful to do them with all your heart and with all your soul. ¹⁷"You have today declared the LORD to be your God, and that you would walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments and His ordinances, and listen to His voice. ¹⁸"The LORD has today declared you to be His people, a treasured possession, as He promised you, and that you should keep all His commandments; ¹⁹and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, for praise, fame, and honor; and that you shall be a consecrated people to the LORD your God, as He has spoken." Deut 26:16-19

Summary of Old Testament Laws

	EXODUS	LEVITICUS	NUMBERS	DEUTERONOMY
Whom to worship	20:3, 23; 22:20; 23:13, 24; 34:13-17	19:4; 20:2	-	5:7; 13:1-18
How to treat God				
<i>Sacrifices</i>	20:24-26; 22:29-30; 23:18-19; 29:10-41; 34:19-20, 25-26	chs 1-7; 17;19:4-8; 20:21-22; 22:18-30	15:2-31; 28:2-8	12:13-14;17:1
<i>Holy Days</i>	20:8-11; 23:12; 23:14-17; 1:13-17; 34:18, 21-24;	35:2-3 16:1-34; 19:3b, 30; 23:3-34; 26:2	9:10-14; 28:9-29:38	5:13-15;16:1-17
<i>Vows</i>	-	ch 27	6:2-21; 30:2-15	23:18, 21-23
<i>Temple ritual</i>	27:20-21; 30:7-10,19-21	10:9; 24:2-9	-	-
<i>Purity issues and ritual</i>	-	19:19; 21:1-22:16	5:6-31; 15:38-40; 19:1-22	21:1-9; 22:11-12; 23:1-3
<i>Tithes and offerings</i>	30:12-16	-	18:8-32	12:17-19;14:22-29; 15:19-23; 18:1-5; 26:1-15
<i>Sabbatical years</i>	-	25:8-34	-	15:1-18
<i>Idolatry</i>	20:4-6	26:1	-	5:8-10; 7:25-26; 12:2-4; 16:21-22
<i>Blasphemy and Curses</i>	20:7; 22:28	24:14-16	-	5:11
Social Structure and Ethics				
<i>Leaders</i>	-	-	-	17:14-20
<i>Family</i>	20:12,14; 21:15,17; 22:16-17	19:3a, 29, 32; 20:9	27:7-11	5:16,18; 21:10-21; 22:13-30; 23:17; 24:1-4; 25:5-12
<i>Slaves</i>	21:1-11	19:20; 25:39-55	-	23:15-16
<i>Land ownership and use</i>	23:10-11	19:9-10; 25:1-7	36:7-9	19:14; 22:9
<i>Personal property</i>	20:15,17; 21:33-36; 22:1-15	19:11	-	5:19, 21; 22:1-4; 23:24-25
<i>Respect of person</i>	20:13; 21:12-14,16,18-32	19:17-18; 24:17-22	-	5:17; 24:7
<i>Justice</i>	20:16; 22:21-22, 25-26; 23:1-9	19:11-16, 33-36; 25:35-37	35:11-34	5:20;16:18-20;17:2-13; 19:4-13, 15-21; 21:22-23; 22:6-8,10; 23:19-20; 24:6, 10-22; 25:1-4,13-15
Sexual and Bodily Purity	22:19	chs 12-15;18; 20:10-21	5:2-3	22:5; 23:9-14
Warfare	-	-	-	20:1-20; 24:5
Divination	22:18	19:26-28, 31; 20:27	-	18:9-14
Food Laws	22:31	11:1-47; 20:25	-	12:15-16, 20-27; 14:3-21

(Source: *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament* by John H. Walton)

IV. Prophetical (Prospective) (27-34)

This final section describes Israel's future and Moses' farewell to Israel.

A. Near Future (27-30)

On crossing the Jordan and entering the land the people were to erect 1) a monument of stones covered with plaster on which the law was written and 2) an altar to the Lord their God. The people are then broken into two groups: one on Mount Ebal and the other on Mount Gerizim with the Levites between the mountains. The Levites then pronounce curses on those who do not keep the law. Blessings are pronounced from Gerizim for obedience; curses from Ebal for disobedience. The consequences for disobedience is to be removed from the land and scattered among the nations. The ultimate fulfillment will come in the latter days when Israel will return to the land for her kingdom blessings.

¹⁵"See, **I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity**; ¹⁶in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. ¹⁷"But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it. ¹⁹"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, ²⁰by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them." Deut 31:15-20

The last four chapters are Moses' last as he looks over Jordan. The book ends with Joshua standing on the border of the Promised Land.

B. Moses the Statesman (31)

Moses commits the nation to God and presents Joshua, their new leader. Moses wrote down the law and had it read to the people. God predicts future rebellion in Israel. Joshua is commissioned. God charges Joshua to "Be strong and courageous, for you shall bring the sons of Israel into the land which I swore to them, and I will be with you."

C. Moses the Singer (32)

Moses proves to be a poet and songwriter as he presents a long and complex ditty recapping all of Israel's history and God's grace and faithfulness. God commands Moses to ascend Mount Nebo where he will die seeing the Promised Land from a distance.

D. Moses the Seer (33)

Moses, with the insight of God, blesses each tribe telling some of their future.

E. Moses the Saint (34)

Moses climbs Mt. Nebo and God takes him home and buries him (34:6) in the land of Moab. The next time we see Moses he is with Elijah on Mount Hermon as they talked to Jesus about His coming death. Joshua is now God's man to lead His people into the Promised Land (34:9).

Homework

1. Read Joshua
2. Reread the Pentateuch