

Bible Reading Notes
DEUTERONOMY

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Deuteronomy 1

1:2-3 – It is only an eleven-day journey from Horeb (Sinai) to Moab but it has taken forty years for Israel. The rest of the chapter will review why it took so long.

1:5 – Explain = to make clear. The book of Deuteronomy is Moses' final "sermon" to Israel in which he explains God's covenant law to them in preparation for their entering the land of promise.

1:9-18 – Moses is reflecting on the events of Exodus 18 and his father-in-law's advice.

1:32 – Israel's great sin was unbelief.

1:34-35 – This is recorded in Numbers 14:20-24.

Deuteronomy 2

2:30 – The Lord hardened Sihon's heart. We were not told this in Numbers 21. This was to provide land for the 2 ½ tribes that settled east of the Jordan.

2:26-37 – The defeat of Sihon is recorded in Numbers 21:21ff.

Deuteronomy 3

In today's reading Moses concludes his summary of the previous 40 years. He is doing this to set the context for the call to Israel to keep the Lord's covenant.

The victory over King Og is found in Numbers 21:31ff.

3:6 – devoted to destruction – All the people of the land were to be set apart to the Lord. So, the death of all the people of the land was an act of devotion and obedience to the Lord.

3:21-22 – Part of the purpose of this review is to encourage Israel as they go in to conquer the land of Canaan.

3:23-29 – Deuteronomy will complete Moses' service to the Lord and Israel. Joshua will take over leadership for the conquest of the land.

Deuteronomy 4

4:3 – This idolatry with Baal was instigated by Balaam and is recorded in Numbers 25.

4:13 – The covenant with Israel was summarized in the ten commandments in that the ten commandments outlined Israel's response to God's covenant love and grace.

4:15ff – Since Israel saw no form of God, they were commanded to not worship with any images in the second commandment. This sin is so serious it will result in Israel's expulsion from the land (vv. 25ff).

4:21 – The Lord's anger was due to Moses striking the rock (Numbers 20:10-14).

4:23-28 – The Lord takes the sin of idolatry seriously. Israel will suffer serious consequences for that sin.

4:29-31 – But repentance will bring restoration because the Lord is merciful.

4:32-40 – Idolatry is to be rejected because there is only one true God.

Deuteronomy 5

5:6 – The law is given to a redeemed people. The law is not the means by which we become redeemed but outlines how redeemed people are to live.

5:7-21 – The 10 commandments are the summary of the covenant outlining Israel's covenant obligations to the Lord.

5:9-10 – Not that innocent children will be punished for their parent's sin, but the consequences of disobedience may extend for generations.

5:15 – In Exodus the reason given is the creation pattern. Here Israel was told to keep the Sabbath because of their redemption from Egypt. Both are true.

The bulk of Deuteronomy is a commentary on the 10 commandments.

5:22 – **two tablets of stone** – In a covenant treaty there would be two copies of the covenant. The two tablets each had the 10 commandments on them. One copy for Israel and one copy for the covenant Lord. Both would be stored in the tabernacle.

5:23-27 – Israel was terrified at Mt. Sinai (Horeb). These verses recount their response to that terrifying experience.

Deuteronomy 6

Dt. 6-11 = Commentary and application of the first commandment.

6:4 – This is the Shema (to hear) that faithful Jews would quote every day.

6:4 – **one** – This should be understood in the sense of "alone." The Lord alone is God.

6:10-12 – Times of blessing and prosperity provide great temptations to forget the Lord (Proverbs 30:9).

6:16 – **Massah** – Massah means "testing." At Massah Israel tested the Lord (Exodus 17). The Lord provided them with water from the rock.

6:20-25 – Parents are called to give a Christian interpretation to history and life for their children.

Deuteronomy 7

7:2 – The total destruction of the nations was the Lord’s judgment on them for their sin – Genesis 15:16, Israel was going to act as God’s agent.

7:4 – The destruction of the nations was so they would not lead Israel into idolatry.

7:6-11 – For – The reason why Israel is to destroy the nations and not worship their gods is because they are a people holy to the LORD.

7:12-16 – The covenant is maintained by mutual love and faithfulness and results in great blessings for God’s people.

7:17-26 – In God’s covenant faithfulness he will destroy Israel’s enemies.

Deuteronomy 8

8:3 – Quoted by Jesus when tempted by Satan (Matthew 4:4).

8:11-16 – This is an expansion of the same warning Moses gave in Deuteronomy 6:10-12.

8:17-20 – But there are also covenant curses that come to those who forsake the covenant and the Lord.

Deuteronomy 9

In this chapter Moses gives a reminder to Israel of the times they did not keep the first commandment and the awful consequences it brought.

9:4ff – God’s gifts to his people are always gracious in nature.

9:7, 24 – Summary statements of Israel’s rebellion against the Lord.

9:17 – the broken tablets were a sign of the covenant Israel had broken with the Lord.

9:18, 19, 25-29 – Another example of Moses acting as the mediator for Israel.

Deuteronomy 10

10:12-13 – This is a summary of what it means that you recognize that the Lord alone is God and love Him with all your heart. Very similar to Micah 6:8.

10:16 – Israel’s real problem is a heart problem – they need a spiritual circumcision that will remove the stubbornness and hardness of their hearts.

Deuteronomy 11

Deuteronomy 11 concludes Moses’ commentary on the first commandment.

Deuteronomy 11 - Because the Lord alone is God, Israel was to love Him with all their being and obey all His covenant word. Most of the chapter is devoted to the blessings that Israel will receive if she is faithful to the covenant. But if she is not, she will receive curses from the Lord.

11:6 – Moses is referring to the Lord’s judgment recorded in Numbers 16.

Deuteronomy 12

Deuteronomy 12 focuses on the second commandment, that God is not to be worshiped through the use of idols.

12:1-4 – Israel is not to worship with idols. In order to protect them from this sin, Israel is to destroy all idols in the land.

12:5 – Instead they are to worship the Lord only in the place the Lord chooses (**vv. 11, 14, 18, 21, 26**). This will prevent family and regional idols (**v. 8**).

Deuteronomy 13

Deuteronomy 13:1-14:21 is a commentary on the third commandment.

One of the ways we take the Lord's name in vain is by claiming to be part of the covenant people but forsaking the Lord and the obligations of the covenant.

For Israel part of keeping the third commandment was to deal with anyone who would seek to lead them away from the Lord, whether it is a false prophet (vv. 1-5), a family member (vv. 6-11), or even an entire city (vv. 12-18).

13:11 – One of the purposes of church discipline is to protect the church so others will not follow their sinful example.

Deuteronomy 14

14:1-21 – Israel's food laws were designed to make Israel distinct from the nations.

14:1 – These actions were practices of the pagans in the land of promise and were not to be part of the life of one devoted to the Lord.

Commandment four, dealing with the Sabbath, is discussed in Deuteronomy 14:22-16:17.

14:22-23 – The giving of the tithe is an action of worship and so should be brought to the place where the Lord determines to be worshiped.

14:24-29 – But if excessive distance makes it difficult to bring the tithe of the field or herd, then the Lord makes a gracious provision which includes a wonderful party!

Deuteronomy 15

The Sabbath principle applies not only to the weekly Sabbath observance but to a Sabbatical year.

This is a review of the commands given in Leviticus 25, which was around 38 years before.

15:1 – every seven years – The Sabbatical year was the year in which debts were to be forgiven and fellow Israelites were to be released from slavery.

15:4 – no poor among you – This will be the case if Israel follows the commands of the Lord relating to the care of the poor.

15:11 – Never cease to be poor in the land - alluded to by Jesus in Matthew 26:11.

Deuteronomy 16

16:1 – Passover - Keeping the Passover was understood to be one of ways the fourth commandment was kept. The Passover was held in March or April.

16:2 – at the place that the LORD will choose – note the repetition of this phrase in the chapter. These feasts were to be celebrated corporately not by families in their homes.

16:9-12 – The Feast of Weeks was a celebration of the gathering of the harvest. Pentecost was the culmination of that celebration.

16:13-15 – The Feast of Booths was held in September or October and was a celebration of the gathering of the summer harvest.

16:17 – Tithing is meant to be done in proportion to how the Lord has blessed.

16:18 – Begins application of the fifth commandment with a focus on the authorities the Lord will appoint for his people. This commentary will continue until Deuteronomy 18:22.

Deuteronomy 17

Deuteronomy 17 continues the application of the fifth commandment that started in 16:18. Moses focuses on the authorities that the Lord provides to His people – priests, kings, and prophets.

The presupposition of Deuteronomy 17-18 is that the authorities were ordained by God and so were to be listened to and obeyed (Romans 13:1-2).

17:1-7 – Justice is required when one does not honor the Lord and transgresses the covenant.

17:7 – **purge the evil from your midst** – Paul applies this principle in 1 Corinthians 5:13 when discussing church discipline.

17:18 – Kings and other authorities were not autonomous but were required to submit to the Lord's law, which was to be their governing standard.

Deuteronomy 18

18:8 – **patrimony** – This refers to the personal property that a priest may inherit from his family.

18:12 – **an abomination to the Lord** – For they try to supplant the authority that rightly belongs to the Lord.

18:15 – **prophet** – This prophet was Christ according to Acts 3:22-26.

18:22 – The word of a true prophet always comes true because it is a word that comes from the Lord.

Deuteronomy 19

This chapter begins the application of the sixth commandment. The Lord begins by providing protection for those who have been wrongly accused of murder.

19:1-13 – Cities of Refuge – Three cities on the eastern side of the Jordan have already been named (4:41-43). This envisions three more on the western side. This was fulfilled in Joshua 20:1-9.

19:4ff – This provision reflects God’s earlier directive in Numbers 35:15ff.

19:14 – landmark – Stones placed as boundary markers establishing the boundaries of property.

19:15 – two witnesses – This is the basis for Matthew 18:16 and 1 Timothy 5:19.

19:20 – This is one of the purposes of church discipline.

Deuteronomy 20

Deuteronomy 20 outlines some of the principles that are now part of the concept of “just war.” It should be noted that these apply particularly to Israel as a theocracy.

20:5-9 – The Lord made provision for some to be relieved of military duty.

20:18 gives the reason for the distinction of dealing with people who live outside the promised land and those who do.

Deuteronomy 21

21:1 – land - Moses continues to apply the law of God to the various situations they will face when they are settled in the promised land.

21:1-9 – In the case of an unsolved murder, the heifer would take the place of the guilty murderer.

21:14 – This is actually very progressive for the time to give a captive woman the freedom to go where she wants rather than treat her as a slave.

21:15-17 – God does not approve of but regulates polygamy to protect the women and their children. Reminiscent of Jacob and his two wives.

21:18-21 – stubborn and rebellious son – A situation in which a son has had long term incurable rebellion against his parents, which is really rebellion against the Lord.

21:23 – cursed – This is applied to Jesus in Galatians 3:13.

Deuteronomy 22

22:4 – Jesus refers to this situation in Luke 14:5 in a dispute with the Pharisees over the Sabbath.

22:5 – The concern here is what today is understood as being a transvestite.

22:8 – The sixth commandment requires us to take precautions to protect others.

22:9-30 – Moses begins to deal with different situations related to the application of the seventh commandment.

22:13-21 – A law intended to protect the reputation of a woman by an evil husband.

22:28-29 – In a culture where women had no hope of marriage after being sexually violated, this law was meant to provide protection and security for her. It sounds cruel to us, but otherwise there were no means for such a woman to have provision and protection.

Deuteronomy 23

This chapter continues the application of the sixth commandment though it is difficult to see how some of the commands fit into that command.

23:15 – Slave – Probably refers to a slave from another country who came to Israel to escape a master.

23:19 – This begins the application of the eighth commandment.

23:19 – interest – It was unlawful to charge a fellow Israelite with interest in their time of need.

Deuteronomy 24

24:1-5 – This section regulates divorce and remarriage to show the seriousness of divorce. Jesus says that this was an accommodation because of the hardness of their heart (Matthew 19:7-8).

24:10-22 – More examples of God’s concern and care for the poor and defenseless.

Deuteronomy 25

25:4 – Paul applies this to pastors and their wages in 1 Corinthians 9:9 and 1 Timothy. 5:18.

25:17-19 – This judgment against the Amalekites was accomplished by David (1 Samuel 30).

Deuteronomy 26

26:1-11 – This is an expansion of the directions for the First fruits Offering in Leviticus 23:9-14.

26:14 – offered any of it to the dead – This was a common practice among the pagans.

26:17-18 – See the two sides of the covenant – the obligations of both the Lord and his covenant people.

Deuteronomy 27

Now that Moses has completed his commentary on the 10 commandments, he moves to the curses and blessings of the covenant.

27:11-14 – This was fulfilled by Israel in Joshua 8.

27:15 – **Amen** = So be it.

2:26 – Paul quotes this verse in Galatians 3:10 in the context of the curse that falls on the one who attempts to achieve salvation by law keeping.

Deuteronomy 28

Moses has laid out the covenant obligations. Now he shows both the blessings that come from faithfulness and the curses that come from being covenant breakers. This is similar to Leviticus 26.

28:1-14 – The blessings that will come to covenant keepers.

28:15-68 – The curses that will come to covenant breakers.

28:26 – When you forsake the Lord there will be no one to help you (vv. 29, 31, 32).

28:36-42, 52-68 – Seen in the two exiles that Israel will experience for their covenant breaking.

28:47 – Covenant faithfulness is not merely external but comes from the heart.

Deuteronomy 29

29:15 – **whoever is not here with us today** is a reference to future generations. The LORD is a God to us and to our children and grandchildren after us.

29:18-20 – There is no safety in being a member of the covenant unless you are faithful to the Lord. Covenant breakers will be cursed by the Lord.

29:29 – The Lord has revealed his will to us in his Word and so we are accountable.

Deuteronomy 30

30:1-10 – Even if Israel breaks covenant and experiences the covenant curses, the Lord stands ready to forgive and restore if they repent.

30:12-14 – Paul alludes to these verses in Romans 10:6-8.

30:19-20 – A life of faithfulness to the Lord is the life of blessing.

Deuteronomy 31

31:3-6 – Israel's only leader is not going forward with them. But the LORD will go before them assuring them of success.

31:6-7, 23 – **Be strong and courageous** – This will be the theme for Israel and Joshua during the conquest.

31:9 – **law** – a reference to the contents of Deuteronomy

31:16-21 – God knew the nature of His people and their inclination to sin, yet He loved them. “But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

Deuteronomy 32

Deuteronomy 32 is the song the Lord wanted Israel to learn as a witness against them when they forsake the Lord in the future (31:19-22).

32:13-15 – Times of prosperity produce some of the greatest temptations to turn from the Lord.

32:27 – God will save Israel for the sake of His glory.

32:47 – **empty word** - The Word of God is never empty (of no value) but is the word that brings life for those who follow it.

32:51 – **broke faith with me** – This is when Moses hit the rock (Numbers 20:11-12).

Deuteronomy 33

In this chapter Moses blesses Israel just as Jacob blessed his twelve sons prior to his death (Genesis 49).

33:8-9 – Levi is commended for loving the Lord even more than his family, a reference to the events of the golden calf in Exodus 32.

Deuteronomy 34

This chapter was clearly not written by Moses but perhaps by the author of Joshua.

34:1 – **Mt. Nebo** – is 2,680 feet above sea level, giving a clear view of the promised land.

34:7 – Moses did not die of old age or health related problems.

34:10 – Moses was a greatest prophet and only Christ would be a greater prophet.