

Notes & Outlines

DEUTERONOMY

Dr. J. Vernon McGee

DEUTERONOMY

“The Book of Experience and Obedience”

WRITER: Moses

Moses talked with God face to face. Moses knew God.

He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. (Psalm 103:7)

The children of Israel saw the acts of God but did not know Him. Moses knew His ways. Deuteronomy is the result of this intimate knowledge plus the experience of 40 years in the wilderness.

Deuteronomy 34:5-12 was probably written by Joshua and belongs to the Book of Joshua. When the Book of Joshua was written, it was placed on the scroll of the Pentateuch, making a Hexateuch.

TITLE: Deuteronomy means “second law.” This is not to infer that it is a repetition of the Law as given to Moses on Mt. Sinai. It is the Law interpreted in the light of 38 years of experience in the wilderness. New situations and problems arose that were not covered by the Law specifically. There needed to be an application of the Law to life situations. (A notable example of this [Numbers 27] is the case of the inheritance of the daughters of Zelophehad, who had left no sons.)

Deuteronomy, therefore, is more than a mere recapitulation of the Law of Sinai; it is another illustration of the law of recurrence (see 29:1). Specific laws that needed emphasis are repeated and enlarged upon (e.g., the Ten Commandments in chapter 5). Deuteronomy is a commentary on the Mosaic Law.

There are 4 Hebrew titles of Deuteronomy:

1. *Debarim* — “The Words” or “These be the Words”
2. The *Kith*, or the Fifth of the Law
3. The Book of Reproofs
4. The Iteration of the Law

KEY: Love and obey

Love *of* God — 4:37; 7:7, 8; 23:5

Obey God — 4:40; 11:26-28; 30:8-20

Love *for* God — 6:4, 5; 30:6, 16, 20

This book teaches man to love and obey God. The word “love” occurs 22 times; “obey” occurs 10 times. The motive for obedience is love. The Lord Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). The true motive for obedience is stated in Deuteronomy 6:4, 5. God’s love for man is the motive for His government and the giving of laws. Man’s love of God is the motive for his obedience. This is not the gospel, but the principle of it is here. This is the pathway of blessing. It is likewise the answer to those who do not find love in the Old Testament. There *is* love in the Old Testament, and there is law in the New Testament. Moses pleads with them to obey.

Why obey? Pleading of Moses:

1. Israel belonged to God (14:1)
2. God loved them (4:37)
3. God wanted to preserve and prosper them (4:1)
4. Their show of gratitude (4:7, 8)

COMMENT: A new generation had arrived on the east bank of the Jordan River (1:5) one month before entering the Promised Land (1:3). Those of the generation which had left Egypt were dead and their bones were bleaching beneath the desert skies because of their unbelief and disobedience.

They had broken God’s law — sins of commission;

They had failed to believe God — sins of omission.

The Law was “weak through the flesh” (Romans 8:3).

Moses gives to this new generation his final instructions from the Lord before he relinquishes leadership of the nation through death. He reviews the desert experiences, reemphasizes certain features of the Law, reveals their future course in light of the Palestinian Covenant, teaches them a new song, blesses the twelve tribes, and then prepares to die. A requiem to Moses concludes the book.

This new generation was unfamiliar with the experiences of Mt. Sinai, and they needed to have the Law called to their attention and interpreted in the light of their experience and future dwelling in the Promised Land.

The Book of Deuteronomy has been the center of attack by the critic. First the authorship of the book was challenged. The original criticism was that Moses could not have written it because there

was no writing in existence in Moses' day. That has subsequently been soundly refuted. Next the critic stated that the purpose of the book was to glorify the priesthood at Jerusalem, but neither the priesthood nor Jerusalem is mentioned in Deuteronomy.

The probable reason for the satanic attack upon the Book of Deuteronomy is that the Lord Jesus Christ quoted exclusively from this book in beating back Satan's temptation. Little wonder Satan hates this book.

1st temptation — Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4
compare Deuteronomy 8:3

2nd temptation — Matthew 4:7; Luke 4:12
compare Deuteronomy 6:16

3rd temptation — Matthew 4:10; Luke 4:8
compare Deuteronomy 6:13 and 10:20

The Old Testament prophets quoted from Deuteronomy frequently. There are also over 80 references to it in the New Testament.

Deuteronomy exalts the Word of God:

And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. (Deuteronomy 6:7)

STRIKING FEATURES:

1. Greatest doctrinal statement in the Old Testament:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.
(Deuteronomy 6:4)

2. First mention of the Great Tribulation:

But if from there thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice (for the LORD thy God is a merciful God), he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them. (Deuteronomy 4:29-31)

3. Promise of a coming Prophet:

The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken, according to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. (Deuteronomy 18:15-18)

4. Test for determining true and false prophets:

But the prophet, who shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him. (Deuteronomy 18:20-22)

(Every prophet had to speak into a local and immediate situation.)

5. Prewritten history of Israel in the land before they enter the land: Deuteronomy 28 — 30
6. Palestinian Covenant: Deuteronomy 29:1 — 30:10
7. The Song of Moses — Prophetic: Deuteronomy 32
 - a. Call to hear, vv. 1-4
 - b. The nation returns evil for the grace of God, vv. 5, 6
 - c. Jehovah's goodness, vv. 7-14
 - d. Apostasy of the nation, vv. 15-18
 - e. Judgment of God upon them, vv. 19-25
 - f. Longing of God for His people, vv. 26-42

- g. Nations of the world blessed with Israel, vv. 43, 44
8. Lonely and strange death of Moses: Deuteronomy 34:5-8
(One translation has it, "...died by the kiss of God" — God kissed Moses and put him to sleep. What a lovely thought!)

OUTLINE:

- I. Reviewing the journeys, Chapters 1 — 4**
- II. Restating the Law — love and obedience, Chapters 5 — 26**
 - A. Repetition and interpretation of Ten Commandments, 5 — 7**
 - B. Religious and national regulations, 8 — 21**
 1. God's past dealings are assurance for future, 8
 2. God knew Israel — the past was not good, 9
 3. God sent Israel to Egypt; God brought them out of Egypt, 10
 4. Promised Land not like Egypt; principle of occupancy, 11
 5. Israel has only one place to worship in land, 12
 6. Warning against and test of false prophets, false gods, 13
 7. Diet for Israel, 14
 8. God's poverty program; the permanent slave; the perfect sacrifice is Christ, 15
 9. Three main feasts (Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles); all males required to attend, 16
 10. Sundry laws, 17
 11. Priests and prophets; test of true prophet, 18
 12. Cities of Refuge; extent of land and extremity of Law, 19
 13. Laws regulating warfare, 20
 14. Laws regulating murder, marriage and delinquent sons, 21
 - C. Regulations for domestic and personal relations, 22 — 26**
 1. Miscellaneous laws concerning brother relationships, dress, building code, planting seed, and marriage, 22
 2. The world, the flesh, and the devil, 23

3. Divorce, 24
4. Punishment of guilty (40 stripes); law protecting widows; punishment for crimes; judgment of Amalek, 25
5. First fruits — thanksgiving, 26

III. Regarding the future of the land, (blessings and curses),
Chapters 27 — 30

IV. Requiem to Moses, Chapters 31 — 34

One Hebrew division of Deuteronomy is very good and follows the generally accepted pattern:

EIGHT ORATIONS

1st Oration — 1:6 — 4:40

2nd Oration — 4:44 — 26:19

3rd Oration — 27, 28

4th Oration — 29, 30

5th Oration — 31:1-13

6th Oration — 32 (Song of Moses)

7th Oration — 33

8th Oration — 34

RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR FURTHER STUDY

- Epp, Theodore H. *Moses*. Lincoln, Nebraska: Back to the Bible, 1975.
- Gaebelein, Arno C. *Annotated Bible*, Vol. 1. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.
- Grant, F. W. *Numerical Bible*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1891.
- Gray, James M. *Synthetic Bible Studies*. Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1906.
- Jensen, Irving L. *Numbers & Deuteronomy — Self-Study Guide*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1967.
- Kelly, William. *Lectures Introductory to the Pentateuch*. Oak Park, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, 1870.
- Mackintosh, C. H. (C.H.M.). *Notes on the Pentateuch*. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1880. (Excellent devotional.)
- Meyer, F. B. *Moses: The Servant of God*. Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, n.d.
- Ridderbos, J. *Deuteronomy*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984.
- Schneider, Bernard N. *Deuteronomy*. Winona Lake, Indiana: Brethren Missionary Herald Co., n.d.
- Schultz, Samuel J. *Deuteronomy: The Gospel of Love*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1971.
- Thomas, W. H. Griffith. *Through the Pentateuch Chapter by Chapter*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957. (Excellent summary.)
- Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Bible Handbook*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966.
- Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. 1. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1961.

These notes, prepared by J. Vernon McGee, are for the purpose of giving assistance to the listeners of the THRU THE BIBLE RADIO program. They are to be used with the Bible and will be more meaningful as you look up all the Scripture references. Due to the necessary brevity of both notes and broadcasts, a list of recommended books is included for those wanting a more detailed study. These books may be obtained from a Christian library or bookstore or ordered from the publishers.



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