

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
4-13-22

Overview Book of Deuteronomy

Family reunions, photo albums, familiar songs, and old neighborhoods—like long-time friends they awaken our memories and stir our emotions. The past is a large collection of promises, failures, victories, and embarrassments. Sometimes we want to forget memories that are too painful. As the years pass, however, remembrances of unpleasant events usually fade away. But there is a time to remember: Mistakes should not be repeated; commitments made must be fulfilled; and the memory of special events can encourage us and move us to action.

The book of Deuteronomy is written in the form of a treaty between a king and his vassal state typical of the second millennium B.C. It calls Israel to remember who God is and what he has done. Lacking faith, the old generation had wandered for 40 years and had died in the wilderness. They left Egypt behind, but never knew the Promised Land. Then on the east bank of the Jordan River, Moses prepared the sons and daughters of that faithless generation to possess the land. After a brief history lesson emphasizing God's great acts on behalf of his people, Moses reviewed the law. Then he restated the covenant—God's contract with his people.

Deuteronomy is the last book of the Pentateuch. Its name means second law. As it is actually repetition of the law already given there in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. It is a sermon Moses gave to the Israelites before they entered into the promised land. Moses recalls the events of their history and the law. And mostly delivered this sermon on the plains of Moab just prior to their entrance into the Promised Land. Other than Moses there were only two men left from the Israelites generation that escaped Egypt therefore, the repetition of the law was highly important to the well-being of the new generation.

The lessons are clear. Because of what God has done, Israel should have hope and follow him; because of what he expects, they should listen and obey; because of who he is, they should love him completely. Learning these lessons will prepare them to possess the Promised Land.

As you hear the message of Deuteronomy, remember how God has expressed his kindness in your life, and then commit yourself anew to trust, love, and obey him.

VITAL STATISTICS

PURPOSE: To remind the people of what God had done and encourage them to rededicate their lives to him

AUTHOR: Moses (except for the final summary, which was probably written by Joshua after Moses' death)

ORIGINAL AUDIENCE: Israel (the new generation entering the Promised Land)

DATE WRITTEN: About 1407 B.C.

SETTING: The east side of the Jordan River, in view of Canaan

KEY VERSE: "Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments" (7:9).

KEY PEOPLE: Moses, Joshua

KEY PLACE: The Arabah in Moab

Chapter Wise Summary:

Chapter #1 – Moses recalls past incidents, leaving Mount Horeb, defeat of Amorites. Chiefs and judges appointed. Twelve spies, afraid to enter promised land. Unsuccessful conquest of Canaan.

Chapter #2 – Moses recalls past incidents, Thirty-eight years in wilderness, defeat Sihon king of Heshbon.

Chapter #3 – Moses recalls past incidents, Og king of Bashan defeated, Joshua told not to be afraid. Moses not to enter the promised land.

Chapter #4 – God made Israel a great nation, Ten Commandments, avoid idolatry, obey God, cities of refuge.

Chapter #5 – Moses recalls past: God speaks to & makes covenant with Israel. Have no other gods; Keep the Sabbath; Honour your parents.

Chapter #6 – Moses said love Go with all your heart. Do not forget God. Do not put God to the test. Teach your children these commandments.

Chapter #7 – Do not make agreements with other nations. Seven nations to be destroyed. God chose Israel. God will drive out the nations before you.

Chapter #8 – Remember God's commands. Do not forget the LORD or you shall perish.

Chapter #9 – Why Israel was given the land. Other nation were wrong. Israelites provoked God times. Golden Calf. Tablets broken.

Chapter #10 – God wrote on new tablets. Israel's journeys. What God requires? Fear and love God.

Chapter #11 – You have seen God's greatness. Keep these commandments so that you may live long in the land.

Chapter #12 – Worship at the place God chooses. Destroy other nation's gods. Do not follow and get entrapped by other gods.

Chapter #13 – How to treat apostates. False gods worship, false prophets, miracles and dreams.

Chapter #14 – You may eat animals with cloven hooves. Clean and unclean foods. Bring a tithe from your fields.

Chapter #15 – Debt cancellation & release of slaves after 7 years, Assisting the poor. Set apart every firstborn male animal.

Chapter #16 – Passover celebration in the month of Abib. Festival of Weeks and of Booths. Appoint judges.

Chapter #17 – Sacrifices should be without defects. Appoint the king that God chooses.

Chapter #18 – Laws regarding share of priests and Levites. Witches & false prophets. Promise of a true Prophet.

Chapter #19 – Bloodguilt and 3 cities of refuge. An affair or dispute must be established by two or three witnesses.

Chapter #20 – Laws regarding Warfare. Exemption from military services.

Chapter #21 – Laws regarding mystery deaths, marrying captive women, firstborn inheritance, rebellious sons, hanging.

Chapter #22 – laws regarding lost property, various household rules, virginity, engagement, marriage & sexual laws.

Chapter #23 – laws regarding entering God’s assembly, treaties, uncleanness, sanitation, money, property & promises.

Chapter #24 – laws regarding marriage, divorce, leprosy, loans, oppression, punishment, judging, harvesting & sharing.

Chapter #25 – laws regarding judging, brother-in-law marrying wife of dead brother, fighting men & wife, honesty.

Chapter #26 – laws regarding offerings of first fruits, tithing, worship, & prayers of thanksgiving.

Chapter #27 – command to build altar to God, Levites speak curses to people who disobey God, Israel agrees.

Chapter #28 – If you obey God he will bless you above all nations. Warning against disobedience.

Chapter #29 – Covenant with Israel at Moab. God’s covenant & consequences for disobeying.

Chapter #30 – after Israel disobeys & is scattered, God will bring them back to prosper; Israel chooses life or death.

Chapter #31 – Moses 120 years and about to die. Choosing between life and death. Joshua given charge.

Chapter # 32 – Moses teaches God’s song to Israel & encourages Israel; God asks Moses to up Mount Nebo, view promised land and die there.

Chapter #33 – Moses blesses tribes of Israel. God’s everlasting blessings.

Chapter #34 – God showed Moses the promised land. Moses disappears and dies at Mount Nebo the age of 120 years. Joshua succeeds Moses.

THE BLUEPRINT

A. WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR US: MOSES’ FIRST ADDRESS (1:1–4:43)

Moses reviewed the mighty acts of God for the nation of Israel. Remembering God’s special involvement in our lives gives us hope and encouragement for the future.

B. PRINCIPLES FOR GODLY LIVING: MOSES’ SECOND ADDRESS (4:44–28:68)

1. The Ten Commandments
2. Love the Lord your God
3. Laws for proper worship
4. Laws for ruling the nation
5. Laws for human relationships
6. Consequences of obedience and disobedience

Obeying God’s laws brought blessings to the Israelites and disobeying brought misfortune. This was part of the written agreement God made with his people. Although we are not part of this covenant, the principle holds true: Obedience and disobedience carry inevitable consequences in this life and the next.

C. A CALL FOR COMMITMENT TO GOD: MOSES' THIRD ADDRESS (29:1–30:20)

Moses called the people to commitment. God still calls us to be committed to love him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

D. THE CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP: MOSES' LAST DAYS (31:1–34:12)

Although Moses made some serious mistakes, he had lived uprightly and carried out God's commands. Moses died with integrity. We too may make some serious mistakes, but that should not stop us from living with integrity and godly commitment.

MEGATHEMES

History

EXPLANATION: Moses reviewed the mighty acts of God whereby he liberated Israel from slavery in Egypt. He recounted how God had helped them and how the people had disobeyed.

IMPORTANCE: By reviewing God's promises and mighty acts in history, we can learn about his character. We come to know God more intimately through understanding how he has acted in the past. We can also avoid mistakes in our own lives through learning from Israel's past failures.

Laws

EXPLANATION: God reviewed his laws for the people. The legal contract between God and his people had to be renewed by the new generation about to enter the Promised Land.

IMPORTANCE: Commitment to God and his truth cannot be taken for granted. Each generation and each person must respond afresh to God's call for obedience.

Love

EXPLANATION: God's faithful and patient love is portrayed more often than his punishment. God shows his love by being faithful to his people and his promises. In response, God desires love from the heart, not merely a legalistic keeping of his law.

IMPORTANCE: God's love forms the foundation for our trust in him. We trust him because he loves us. Because God loves us, we should maintain justice and respect.

Choices

EXPLANATION: God reminded his people that in order to ratify his covenant, they must choose the path of obedience. A personal decision to obey would bring benefits to their lives; rebellion would bring severe calamity.

IMPORTANCE: Our choices make a difference. Choosing to follow God benefits us and improves our relationships with others. Choosing to abandon God's ways brings harm to ourselves and others.

Teaching

EXPLANATION: God commanded the Israelites to teach their children his ways. They were to use ritual, instruction, and memorization to make sure their children understood God's principles and passed them on to the next generation.

IMPORTANCE: Quality teaching for our children must be a priority. It is important to pass on God's truth to future generations in our traditions. But God desires that his truth be in our hearts and minds and not merely in our traditions.