

## The Book of Deuteronomy

### I. Review of the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)

#### A. "Pentateuch" - "Five Scrolls."

#### B. Known variously as "the Law," the Law of Moses," "the Torah."

#### C. Broad purpose of the Pentateuch.

- The broad purpose of the Pentateuch is that the second generation of Israelites who came out of the exodus would know both who Yahweh is and who they were as a nation in unique relationship to Him. Yahweh is the Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, Lord, and Judge of the descendants of Abraham (Israel). Israel is just as sinful as the rest of the nations, but they have become the object of Yahweh's covenant love by grace.
- Seeing Israel as they truly are in the Pentateuch, we gain insight into ourselves as sinners who are equally in need of God's mercy and promises.
- In the Pentateuch we quickly gain foundational understandings of God, creation, man, sin, why the earth looks the way it does, judgment, the origins of the nations, languages, and cultures, and God's hope for sinful man through the shed blood of an innocent substitute.

#### D. Clear continuity throughout.

- From one book to the next in the Pentateuch there is clear continuity of content, theme, purpose, and style. Each book is the sequel to the prior book. There is an inseparable, interdependent relationship that all five books have with one another.

#### E. Author and date of Pentateuch.

- The Pentateuch was written between 1445-1405 BC. Numbers and Deuteronomy were written in 1405 BC because both contain information in Moses' last year of his life (1405 BC).

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## F. The Pentateuch's important place at the beginning of the Bible.

- The Pentateuch (and especially Deuteronomy) lays the foundation not just for the next section of the Old Testament (the twelve historical books - Joshua through Esther), but also for the rest of the Old Testament and even the New Testament. There are "roots" in the Pentateuch which support the "fruits" that are further developed in the rest of the Bible (see "Roots in Deuteronomy. . ." below).

## II. Deuteronomy

### A. The author of Deuteronomy.

- Moses. Moses is 120 years old at the time of writing, Deuteronomy 31:1-2. He was born in 1525 BC, Exodus 2:2. Exodus through Leviticus cover the first eighty years of Moses' life. Numbers covers almost all of the last forty years of his life in the wilderness. Deuteronomy covers about the last month of Moses' 120<sup>th</sup> year.

### B. The date of Deuteronomy.

- 1405 BC. Genesis, Exodus, and Leviticus were written sometime between 1445-1405 BC. But Numbers and Deuteronomy were written in the last year (even in the last month of Moses' life).
- Deuteronomy 32:48-34:12 was most likely written by Joshua after Moses died.

### C. The setting of Deuteronomy.

- God's judgment of the first generation of Israelites who came out of Egypt in the exodus is now over. That first generation has died in the wilderness (except Moses, Joshua, and Caleb). The second generation of Israelites (who are now all grown up) are encamped on the east side of the Jordan River on the plains of Moab, Deuteronomy 1:1-5. The east side of the Jordan has already been conquered. Jericho and the land of Canaan lay open to invasion.

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## D. The recipients of Deuteronomy.

- The second generation of Israelites. Their rebellious parents refused to believe Yahweh and enter into the land, Numbers 13:25-14:4. But God promised to care for their children and lead that second generation successfully into the land of promise, Numbers 14:31-35. They indeed will enter and conquer Canaan and receive the land promised by Yahweh to Abraham and his descendants.

## E. The purpose of Deuteronomy.

- Purpose: Moses' farewell sermons that explain the Law of Yahweh and provide the standard of faith and living, calling Israel to be loyal to Yahweh so they can live to the fullest under His blessing in the land forever.
- Deuteronomy 1:5 - "Moses undertook to expound this law." "Expound" - to make clear, distinct, plain. This second generation needed the clearest exposition of the Law so they could have the fullest understanding of it, which would then position them best to live faithfully under it.
- The Law is not for law's sake. These regulations were given so that Israel could experience the deepest enjoyment of God's blessings in the Abrahamic Covenant in the land, Deuteronomy 7:12-15.

## F. The outline of Deuteronomy.

### 1. *The Setting, Deuteronomy 1:1-4.*

- Details of where they currently were when Moses preached the Law to them are provided.

### 2. *Sermon 1, Deuteronomy 1:5-4:43.*

- This sermon mostly expounds their history from Mt Horeb (Sinai) on.

### 3. *Sermon 2, Deuteronomy 4:44-28:68.*

- The Law given at Sinai is unpacked to the second generation.

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## **4. Sermon 3, Deuteronomy 29:1-30:20.**

- The covenant with Yahweh is renewed with the second generation of Israelites on the plains of Moab.

## **5. The Conclusion, Deuteronomy 31:1-34:12.**

- The conclusion includes Joshua's commissioning, Moses' song, his blessing of the tribes, and his death.

## **G. Reading Deuteronomy.**

- To read Deuteronomy in one sitting, it will take you about two hours and twenty-four minutes. These popular movies run the same length - "Shawshank Redemption," "Forrest Gump," "Castaway!"

## **H. Themes in Deuteronomy.**

### **1. The exalted Word introduced to the world.**

- Up to that point on earth, there had been no written revelation or record of Yahweh anywhere. The only place on earth to find that revelation of Yahweh was in the land of promise (Israel was "entrusted" with it, Romans 3:2). How should this nation in covenant relationship view His written Word to them? What are they to believe about this written Word and revelation of Yahweh?
- The Word is unalterable, Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32.
- The Word is sufficient (enough), Deuteronomy 8:3.
- The Word is available and accessible, Deuteronomy 30:11-14.
- The Word is life-promoting, Deuteronomy 32:46-47.

### **2. "Be careful" - regarding their loyalty and faithfulness to Yahweh.**

- Deuteronomy 2:4; 4:9, 15; 5:1; 6:3, 25; 8:1; 11:22, 32; 12:13, 19, 28, 32; 15:5; 16:12; 17:10, 19; 19:9; 23:23; 24:8; 26:16; 28:1; 31:12; 32:46.

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### 3. ***“Obey and live (in the land).”***

- This exhortation ties the Law (the Mosaic Covenant) inseparably to Israel’s enjoyment of the Abrahamic promises in the land. The Mosaic Covenant becomes an assistant to the Abrahamic Covenant, so to speak (not a replacement of it, nor an authority over it). What will give Israel the fullest capacity to enjoy the promises and blessings of Yahweh to Abraham’s descendants in the land? Their obedience to the Law.
- Leviticus 18:5; Deuteronomy 4:1, 4, 40; 5:16, 33; 6:2-3, 24-25; 7:12-15; 8:1; 11:8-9; 12:28; 16:20; 17:20; 25:15; 30:16, 20; 32:47.

### 4. ***“Blessings/curses.”***

- These opposite themes occur about seventy-four times in Deuteronomy (too many to list!).
- The unity of the Pentateuch calls the reader to make a connection between the blessings within the Pentateuch (to not drive a hard wedge between them). The blessing of Yahweh on creation (Genesis 1:22, 28; 2:3) has a relationship to the blessings Yahweh promises to Israel in the land when they are loyal to Him.
- And the unity of the Pentateuch call the reader to make a connection between the curses within the Pentateuch (to not drive a hard wedge between them, either). The curse Yahweh pronounced at the entrance of sin in the human race (Genesis 3:14; 5:29) has a relationship to the curses Yahweh promises to Israel in the land when they disobey Him.
- Deuteronomy picks up these opposite themes extensively and continues the development of them. If Israel is careful to obey Yahweh in the land, they will experience there blessing unseen in the world since the Fall. If they do not obey Yahweh in the land, they will experience a cursing that seems to even surpass the curse that came at the Fall.
- It is possible that the land of promise could become a piece of real estate in the world where the curse would be pushed back to its borders, and that a pre-Fall blessing could be restored there. The nations could leave their cursed lands and find the blessing

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of Yahweh alive and well on Abraham's descendants in the land of promise.

- Deuteronomy 11:26-29; 23:5; 26:15; 27:12-26 (thirteen curses); 28:2-14 (about ten blessings); 28:15-68 (horrible curses!); 30:19; 33:1-29 (Moses' blessing on the twelve tribes).
- What is tragic, is that the blessing never was fully realized when Israel entered the land (Joshua) and not even when they re-entered the land at the end of the historical section. Ultimate fulfillment of this blessing of Yahweh will come when the New Covenant takes over corporate Israel, Deuteronomy 30:1-10. When God restores Israel in the land with His Law, with a new heart, and with their Messiah, one thousand years of blessing will be experienced unlike since before the Fall (the curse will be pushed back extensively).

### 5. ***"Be glad/rejoice."***

- The lie of sin is that gladness of heart can be found on my own terms or conditions being met. But true gladness of heart and rejoicing has only ever been found in submission to Yahweh's terms and conditions. There was to be a nation on earth (Israel) who was to experience that true gladness and rejoicing unlike anything the nations around them could know. How was this to be? Israel's gladness and rejoicing was to be rooted in Yahweh, in His blessing, and on His terms for gladness, not their own terms.
- Deuteronomy 12:7, 12, 18; 14:26; 16:11, 14, 15; 26:11; 27:7; 28:47; 30:9; 32:43; 33:18.

### 6. ***"Love" (Yahweh's love for Israel, Israel's love for Yahweh)***

- Yahweh's love for Israel - Deuteronomy 5:9-10; 7:8-9, 12; 23:5; 33:3, 12.
- Israel's love for Yahweh - Deuteronomy 5:10; 6:5; 7:9; 10:12; 11:1, 13, 22; 13:3; 19:9; 30:6, 16, 20.

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### 7. "Heart" (51 times!)

- For each usage of heart in Deuteronomy (in EVERY book of the Bible!) write a simple, one sentence summary about what is said regarding the heart. This will give you biblical and tangible categories for your own daily heart shepherding.
- A fearful/faint heart - Deuteronomy 1:28; 20:3, 8; 28:65.
- An obstinate or hard heart - Deuteronomy 2:30; 15:7; 29:19.
- All your heart:
  - Search for Yahweh - Deuteronomy 4:29.
  - Love Yahweh - Deuteronomy 6:5; 13:3; 30:6.
  - Serve Yahweh - Deuteronomy 10:12; 11:13.
  - Listen to/obey/do Yahweh's commands - Deuteronomy 26:16; 30:2.
  - Return to Yahweh - Deuteronomy 30:10.
- Take Yahweh's uniqueness to heart - Deuteronomy 4:39.
- God's expectation for a better/new heart - Deuteronomy 5:29; 10:16; 29:4; 30:6.
- God's Words on your heart - Deuteronomy 4:9; 6:6; 11:18; 30:1, 14; 32:46.
- Internal dialog within your heart - Deuteronomy 7:17; 8:17; 9:4; 15:9; 18:21; 29:19.
- God tests the heart - Deuteronomy 8:2.
- Know God's ways in your heart - Deuteronomy 8:5.
- The heart lifted up in pride - Deuteronomy 8:14; 17:20.
- Uprightness of heart - Deuteronomy 9:5.
- The heart deceived - Deuteronomy 11:16.
- Desires of the heart and worship - Deuteronomy 14:26.
- A grieved heart - Deuteronomy 15:10.

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- A heart turned away (from Yahweh) - Deuteronomy 17:17; 29:18; 30:17.
- Anger in the heart - Deuteronomy 19:6.
- Bewilderment of heart - Deuteronomy 28:28.
- Gladness of/merry heart - Deuteronomy 28:47.
- Dread in the heart - Deuteronomy 28:67.
- And with that, you are well positioned for the Historical Books (the next twelve books of the Old Testament: Joshua to Esther). Just how will Israel do in the land of promise with Yahweh's Law??

### **I. Roots in Deuteronomy (and the Pentateuch) that become fruits beyond Deuteronomy.**

- When you read about any of these subjects anywhere in the Bible beyond the Pentateuch and/or Deuteronomy, the subject has its roots back in the Pentateuch and/or Deuteronomy. To have the fullest understanding of biblical subjects like these, the Pentateuch cannot be passed over or ignored.
- It is difficult to understand a movie if you begin watching it at the halfway point when crucial facts and themes occurred in the first ten minutes. This is why we don't start reading any other book at the one-third or one-half point! But it seems so easy to do that with the Bible! Again, to have the fullest understanding of the Bible's interdependent, progressive revelation, the Pentateuch cannot be neglected.

#### **1. A future "king" in Israel.**

- Genesis 17:16; 35:11; 49:9-12; Numbers 24:7, 17; Deuteronomy 17:14-20; 28:36; 33:5.

#### **2. "The place" Yahweh chooses for worship in the land.**

- Deuteronomy 12:5, 11, 14, 18, 21, 26; 14:23-25; 15:20; 16:2, 6-7, 11, 15-16; 17:8, 10; 18:6; 26:2; 31:11.



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### 3. ***“Two or three witnesses” to confirm facts.***

- Numbers 35:30; Deuteronomy 17:6-7; 19:15 (Matthew 18:16).

### 4. ***The promise of a coming “Prophet like Moses.”***

- Exodus 19:9; 20:19-21; 24:1-2, 9-18; 25:22; 32:10; 33:9-11, 17-23; 34:29-35; Numbers 11:16-30; 12:1-9; 16:28; Deuteronomy 5:5, 27; 18:15-22; 34:10-12; John 5:45-47.

### 5. ***Israel’s future “captivity,” “dispersion/exile,” and “return” to the land of promise.***

- Deuteronomy 4:25-31; 8:19; 11:17; 28:20, 36, 41, 45-68; 29:28; 30:1.

### 6. ***The “last days.”***

- Genesis 49:1 (8-12); Numbers 24:14-24; Deuteronomy 4:30; 32:35.

### 7. ***The New Covenant’s “new heart” (“heart circumcision”) given to corporate Israel.***

- Deuteronomy 5:29; 10:16; 29:4; 30:6.

## J. Application.

- What Yahweh called Israel to (love, obedience, gladness or rejoicing), Jesus calls His disciples to.

### 1. ***Meditate on and marvel at God’s love for you in Christ, John 15:9a.***

### 2. ***Never allow yourself to drift out from under His love (keep His commandments), John 15:9b-10.***

### 3. ***Proclaim to yourself the truth about where gladness and rejoicing are found (never on my own terms, but only on Christ’s terms), 15:11.***