

Deuteronomy 1-4

Introduction to Deuteronomy | REMEMBER—LEST YOU FORGET [ch 4.9, 23] | Yahweh renews His covenant with the new generation as He prepares them to enter and live in the Promised Land

BACKGROUND, CONTEXT, AND MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

1. This present course we're in has been surveying and hitting only some of the highlights of **Numbers & Deuteronomy**. We have only sketched our way through the Book of **Numbers**; and now we will attempt to do the same in **Deuteronomy**.
2. I will confess that one of my primary goals of these few and brief lessons is: I want us all to learn and come away loving the Book of Deuteronomy as much as Jesus Himself did...**keeping in mind that Jesus is the Prophet whom Moses foretold [ch 18.15-22]**.
 - a. Not only did Jesus include all the first five books of Moses [*Pentateuch*] when He referred numerous times to “Moses” in His many sayings in the Gospels [**especially Luke 24.27, 32, 44-45; John 5.45-47**],
 - b. but He also specifically quoted **Deuteronomy 8.3 & 6.16** when He rebutted the devil's solicitations in His own wilderness temptations.
 - c. And, we have to see in that very testing experience that what Jesus was doing was coming to earth to fulfill in Himself [as only He could] the requirements for obedience that Yahweh commanded of Israel in Deuteronomy...after they so miserably failed!
3. **What is the meaning and significance of the name ‘Deuteronomy’?**
 - a. As with all the five books of Moses, the Hebrew people did not call or know this book by that name. They simply called it ‘these are the words’ from the first two words in the Hebrew Scriptures [*’elle haddebarim* / or *Devarim*=*scroll of words*].
 - b. Then when the Scriptures were translated into Greek in the Septuagint version [c. 300 BC], they named this book ‘*deuteronomion*,’ which means ‘second law.’ Actually, this is a somewhat confusing translation of **Deuteronomy 17.18-19** where Moses is giving instructions to future kings of Israel: “**...he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law [deuteronomion] ... And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear The LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them.**” Deuteronomy is NOT a second giving of the law, but rather a repetition, recounting, rehearsal, and re-affirmation of the covenant law given at Sinai [**see Deuteronomy 5**]**—but renewed with this new generation who are now poised to enter the Promised Land after the Exodus generation had all died in the wilderness. BUT, the name stuck!**
 - c. Then, when the book was translated into the Latin Vulgate around 400 AD, Jerome brought the same name over into Latin ‘*Deuteronomium*.’
 - d. Then, finally, when the English translators wrote their versions, they Anglicized it as ‘*Deuteronomy*.’

4. **How is Deuteronomy laid out?** The broadest divisions of the book can be viewed as three major addresses or sermons Moses delivered to the Promised Land generation:
- a. **chs 1.1—4.43: First Discourse / Sermon**
 - b. **chs 4.44—28.68: Second Discourse / Sermon**
 - c. **chs 29—30: Third Discourse / Sermon**
 - d. **chs 31—34: Some last words of Moses**
5. But for our purposes for this lesson, we want to briefly survey the first four chapters of Deuteronomy [the First Sermon], accentuating the main theme of this lesson ... and also one of the primary themes and purpose for the giving of the whole book: REMEMBER!
6. AND, what you will discover as you read Deuteronomy is that much of this book is a resume' of the Books of Exodus and Numbers. Moses repeatedly 'flashes back' to remind them of the events that have transpired in their community history:
- a. going all the way back to the covenants that Yahweh made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob [**ch 1.8; Genesis 12.4-8**];
 - b. how He delivered them from bondage and slavery in Egypt [**1.27, 30; 4.20, 37**];
 - c. how He delivered His Law at Sinai [**ch 5**];
 - d. and how He sustained and provided for them in their wilderness sojourn and wanderings [**ch 2.7; 8.1-4**];
 - e. **and ALL for the specific purpose that He might bring them to Himself—to be their exclusive God and they to be His distinctive treasured possession; and deliver them from all their enemies and into His promised inheritance; to dwell with and among them there; to form them into His chosen nation of people to prepare the way for CHRIST to come into the world; and receive from them the love and worship that He deserves!**

I | ch 1.1-18 | REMEMBER who you are, where you are, where you have come from, and how you got from there to here...

1. You can get a concise synopsis of the contents and purpose of Deuteronomy just from this opening preamble of the whole book:
- a. WHAT? These are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel [v 1] ... Moses spoke to the people of Israel according to all that The LORD had given him in commandment to them [v 3] ... Moses undertook to explain this law (torah) [v 5]
 - b. WHO? Moses ... that The LORD had given him ... The LORD our God said to us...
 - c. WHERE? ...beyond the Jordan in the wilderness [v 1] ... Beyond the Jordan, in the land of Moab [v 5]
 - d. WHEN? In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month [11/1/40] ... after he had defeated Sihon the king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth and in Edrei [ch 1.3-4].

- e. **WHY?** And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that The LORD , the God of your fathers, is giving you. You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of The LORD your God that I command you ... See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as The LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them... [ch 4.1-2, 4-6].

2. vv 9-18 refers back to Exodus 18.

II | ch 1.19-46 | REMEMBER how your parent generation rebelled against Yahweh at Kadesh-barnea and were sentenced to wander and die in the wildernesses over the past 38 years...

1. Moses writes in the form of a travelogue: see “It is eleven days’ journey from Horeb [Sinai] by the way of Mount Seir to Kadesh-barnea [v 1]... Then we set out from Horeb and went through all that great and terrifying wilderness that you saw, on the way to the hill country of the Amorites, as The LORD our God commanded us. And we came to Kadesh-barnea [v 19].”
2. This is a re-telling of the narrative from Numbers 13-14. The reference to the 38 years of wandering is in ch 2.14.

III | chs 2—3 | REMEMBER how The LORD not only accompanied you during all your wanderings, but sustained and provided for you [see ch 2.7; 8.2-4], and soundly defeated all your enemies along the way... [ch 4.31 Yahweh will not forget you...!]

1. The travelogue style continues in ch 2.1: Then we turned and journeyed into the wilderness in the direction of the Red Sea, as The LORD told me. And for many days [38 years, in fact] we traveled around Mount Seir. Then The LORD said to me, “You have been traveling around this mountain country long enough. Turn northward...” [ch 2.1-3].
2. King Sihon the Amorite of Heshbon is defeated [see Numbers 21.21-30]
3. King Og of Bashan is defeated [see Numbers 21.31-35]
4. ch 3.23-29 | Moses himself is banned and forbidden to enter the Promised Land because of his own insubordination to Yahweh—when he struck the rock to give water instead of speaking to it as The LORD had commanded him [see Numbers 20.2-13].

IV | ch 4.1-14 | REMEMBER...“lest you forget”— all of the words and commands of this Law that I am now repeating back to you—that you keep and live by them all...

1. ch 4.1: “And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that The LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you!” At least three distinctive observations about this portion of this First Discourse:
 - a. After delivering the prologue that recounts a historical summary of their travels and interactions with Yahweh from Egypt, to Sinai, and through their wilderness

sojourns ... Moses now returns to their present moment and the messages from Yahweh to that present Promised Land generation.

- b. Moses introduces the direct and intense ‘preaching part’ of this First Discourse and also for the rest of his Deuteronomy sermons...
 - c. The Book of Deuteronomy is richly and intensely theological in its content. This book is a distillation and summary of the Old Testament covenant Law and teachings: Doctrine of God; Doctrine of Scripture; Doctrine of Covenant; Doctrine of Salvation; Doctrine of Discipleship—personal / family / home; Doctrine of Worship—to name just a few found in this passage alone. **E.g., ch 4.6-8: NOTE this probing question Moses poses to provoke their conviction and commitment re: the uniqueness of our God and His Words. ALSO, these truths establish early on the Divine Authorship, authority, inerrancy, and sufficiency of Scripture for all things pertaining to human life and our relationship with God**
2. With this opening charge, Moses stresses our imperative responsibility and response to God’s covenant Law [Torah/instructions/teachings]: OBEDIENCE! For my own personal remembrance and edification, I have constructed a circular chart with arrows pointing back and forth between all four points:
- a. GOD’S WORD[s] is prominently and preeminently at the top \leftrightarrow ATTENTION \leftrightarrow AFFECTIONS \leftrightarrow ACTIVITIES $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ back to WORD(s) OF GOD.
 - b. Everything about life starts with THE WORD(S) OF GOD; to which we give ATTENTION; as we engage all our AFFECTIONS; which works in us all the ACTIVITIES of obedience.

V | ch 4.15-31 | REMEMBER that you must not go after any of the gods of the peoples of the land nor give your attention or affection to the forms of their gods...
This again is a reiteration of **Numbers 33.50-56** and many other such stern admonitions and warnings...

VI | ch 4.32-40 | REMEMBER that there is ONLY ONE GOD—THE LORD OUR GOD! There is no other besides Him!

1. Certainly one of the most prominent themes of Deuteronomy [and of ALL the Scriptures] is that Yahweh, our God, reveals Himself through the special revelation of His Word—that Yahweh, our God, is the ONLY ONE GOD among all the fake gods of the world; that He is the ONLY ONE TRUE GOD; that He is GOD IN EVERY SENSE OF THE WORD & NAME; and that WE MUST KNOW HIM, RECOGNIZE HIM, WORSHIP HIM, AND SERVE HIM AS SUCH—AS HE REVEALS HIMSELF TO BE! **NOTE: this whole section, again, is a series of self-evident, self-proving questions whose answers declare His sovereignty, supremacy, glory, uniqueness, solitariness, and worthiness to be known, loved, worshiped, and obeyed!**
2. This is the only way we can live, the only way we must live, and that we will live and thrive only as we KNOW, LOVE, AND OBEY HIM!