

# Deuteronomy

**Purpose:** To guide the nation in covenant renewal under Joshua.

**Outline:** I. Preamble (1:1-4)

II. Historical Prologue (1:5-4:43)

1:5-4:43 First Address

III. Stipulations of the Covenant (4:44-26:19)

4:44-28:68 Second Address

IV. Blessings, Curses, and Ratification (27:1-30:20)

29:1-30:20 Third Address

V. Succession (31:1-34:12)

**Author:** Moses

**Date:** 1446-1406 BC

## Highlights:

Deuteronomy 17:18 “copy of the law” is where the book’s common name (literally “second [repetition of the] law”) comes from. The Hebrew title is “These are the words” from 1:1.

The preamble (1:1-4) and the report of Moses’ death (chapter 34) were, obviously, written by someone else; but the rest is traditionally understood to be written by Moses (cf. 1:5; 31:9,22,24; and 1 Kings 2:3; 8:53; 2 Kings 14:6; 18:12; Matthew 19:7-8; Mark 10:3-5; John 5:46-47; Acts 3:22-23; 7:37-38; Romans 10:19).

Jesus quotes Deuteronomy in Matthew 4:4,7,10

In the New Testament there are almost 100 quotations of, and allusions to, Deuteronomy

Most agree Deuteronomy (either completely or parts of it) was “the Book of the Law” which Hilkiah the High Priest found in the temple during the reign of King Josiah (2 Kings 22:8).

The Israelites are in the territory of Moab (see map) where the Jordan flows into the Dead Sea (1:5). Moses knows that he will die soon, and this whole book is a transferring leadership to Joshua through a formal renewal of the covenant. These are Moses’ last words, and there is a heart-felt form of expression coming from Moses.

The spies who go to Canaan are the spies we read about in Numbers 13:4-15.

We read, again, of the defeat of Kings Sihon and Og.

There is a passionate exchange between God and Moses in 3:21-29 in regards to Moses not being allowed crossing the Jordan into the Promised Land.

The “Decalogue” (10 commandments) is repeated in chapter 5

The “Shema” (Hebrew for “Hear”) “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Deuteronomy 6:4). The full “Shema” is 6:4-9.

Does this sound familiar – “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Dt 6:5) – the summary of the law.

*The Decalogue and the people’s response – 5:6-33*

*Elaboration of the Decalogue – 6:1-26:19*

*Commandment 1 (chapters 6-11) Commandment 2 (12) Commandment 3 (13:1-14:21)*

*Commandment 4 (14:22-16:17) Commandment 5 (16:18-18:22) Commandment 6 (19-21)*

*Commandment 7 (22:1-23:14) Commandment 8 (23:15-24:7) Commandment 9 (24:8-16)*

*Commandment 10 (24:17-26:19)*

When the Israelites enter the Land they are to drive out the other nations (7:1-6).

The account of Israel’s disobedience seen in the Golden Calf is repeated in chapter 9

Compare Micah 6:8 with Deuteronomy 10:12-13

Covenant through the Torah: *Genesis* – Preamble; *Exodus* – Historical Prologue; *Leviticus* – Stipulations; *Numbers* – Blessings, Curses, Ratification; *Deuteronomy* – Succession  
**Reading Deuteronomy (March 11-22):**

***Chapter 1:1-4 – Preamble***

-The structure of Deuteronomy reflects that of an ancient suzerain-vassal treaty, a conditional covenant regulating the relationship between a great king and one of his subject kings.

-“In the fortieth year” (v.3) after leaving Egypt.

***Chapter 1:5 – 4:43 – Historical Prologue (First Address)***

-“Moses began to expound *this law*” (v.5), the 10 Commandments and the rest of the laws given at Mount Sinai (Exodus 20-24; Leviticus & Numbers). The laws are summarized and interpreted for the situation they will face in the Canaan. Therefore, the Book of Deuteronomy is a covenant renewal document. Lord’s Day worship is, in many ways, a weekly covenant renewal ceremony.

-1:9-18: *Church Growth & Presbyterian Leadership*. The covenant community grew, as the Lord promised, from Abraham’s small family to a two million member nation. Elders of the tribes were appointed and given roles of authority and oversight.

-1:19-46: *12 Men went to Spy on Canaan*. Cf. Numbers 13-14 with the subsequent rebellion, which resulted in God’s declaration that they would wander in the wilderness for 40 years.

-2:1-23: *Wilderness Wanderings*. Cf. Numbers 20-21

-2:24 – 3:11: *Defeat of Kings Sihon & Og*. Cf. Numbers 21:21-35

-3:12-20: *Division of the Land*. Cf. Numbers 32; 34:13-15

-3:21-29: *Moses Forbidden to Cross the Jordan*. Moses pleads with the Lord to go into the Land, but the Lord has determined Joshua, not Moses, will lead the nation into Canaan.

-4:1-14: *Obedience Commanded*. “Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it” (4:2, Cf. Revelation 22:18-19). God’s people are called to obey what God has commanded, and neither add to, nor subtract from, God’s commands. We still struggle with this today.

-4:15-32: *Idolatry Forbidden*. This is an ongoing stumbling block for the Israelites (and Christians today). They/You can’t say that you weren’t warned.

-4:33-43: *The Unique Covenant Relationship with the Lord*. Exalt God, and realize (with humility) the great grace by which you are in relationship with the Lord of all.

***Chapter 4:44 – 26:19 – Stipulations of the Covenant (Second Address)***

-4:44-49: *Intro to the Law*. The major portion of Deuteronomy is introduced in these verses.

-Chapter 5: *The Ten Commandments*. Repeated from Exodus 20

-Chapter 6: *The Shema*. “Hear O Israel...” (6:4-9). Hear, and teach, these to your children.

-Chapter 7: *Drive Out and Be Set Apart from the Nations*. This is NOT a racial/ethnic distinction, but a spiritual/holiness distinction. As similar New Testament is 2 Corinthians 6:14ff – “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers...”

-Chapter 8: *Do Not Forget*. The time in the wilderness taught “man does not live by bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord” (8:3; Cf. Matthew 4:4). Note also the miraculous provision of clothes that did not wear out, and feet that did not swell (8:4). Do not forget the Lord in his times of blessing or in times of trial (smiling and frowning providence). It has been said that the greatest enemy of faith is forgetfulness.

-Chapter 9: *Not Because of Our Righteousness*. A key theological truth in all of redemptive history is repeated/restated three times in 9:4-6 – we do not take possession of the Lord’s promises (Land, Salvation) because of our righteousness; rather by the righteousness of Christ

credited/imputed to us. The Lord is driving out wickedness. A similar NT sentiment is Ephesians 2:8-10. In fact, Israel is also a “stiff-necked people” evidenced by their Golden Calf idolatry.

-*Chapter 10: Second Tablets Like the First Ones.* Cf. Exodus 31:18; 32:19. The two great commands to Love God and Neighbor are seen in 10:12-16 and 10:17-19.

-*Chapter 11: Love and Obey.* This chapter is mostly repetition of statements and themes already seen; because they are important!

-*Chapter 12: The Right Place of Worship.* The “high places” are forbidden for worship, not only because it means worshiping apart from the tabernacle (God’s presence among his people); but also worshiping the false gods associated with those places (Baal and Asherah). The “Regulative Principle” of worship means that we worship according to how God has revealed, by his Word, how he is to be worshiped; and “do not add to it or take away from it” (12:32).

-*Chapters 13: Worship Only God.* There is continual temptation to worship other gods, especially those suggested to us by friends, family, and our culture.

-*Chapter 14: Worship in Giving Tithes.* Following a summary statement about clean and unclean foods (14:1-21; cf. Leviticus 11), is a summary about tithing (cf. Numbers 18:21-29). Between Dt. 14 & Num. 18 we learn (1) a tenth of all Israelite produce was to be given to the Levites annually; (2) at an initial festival all Israelites ate part of this tithe; (3) the rest [the major portion] belonged to the Levites; (4) every 3<sup>rd</sup> year the tithe was stored for distribution to the Levites and the poor; (5) the Levites were to tithe on their tithe. All of this is a regular reminder that all comes from God.

-*Chapter 15: There Shall Be No Poor Among You.* Fellow Israelites were to be generous (NIV: openhanded) to those in the community who were poor, and every 7 years there was to be a canceling of any outstanding debts. Every seven years there should also be a freeing of any servants (slaves). If this was practiced there would be no “haves vs. have nots.”

-*Chapter 16: Happy Holi-Days.* The Three annual pilgrimage festivals are summarized: The Passover, Feast of Weeks (Pentecost/Harvest); and Feast of Tabernacles (Booths). Cf. Exodus 12, 16; Leviticus 23-25; Numbers 28-29

-*Chapter 17: Justice in Legal Matters.* 16:18 – 17:13 address concerns and practices for maintaining justice in legal matters. 17:14-20 rightly anticipate, and speak directly to, the very things that future Israel (and future kings) were guilty of doing.

-*Chapters 18-19: Offerings, Practices, Refuge.* This continues a section on governmental leaders and living as a righteous nation. Note the standard that testimony must come from two or more witnesses (17:6; 19:15; cf. Matthew 18:20).

-*Chapters 20-21: Protecting Life.* Note how this chapter does not describe war through narrative, but legislates what ought to happen in warfare. There are limits in warfare, and this shows the difference between war and murder. War is a moral dilemma, into which chapter 20 speaks. Chapter 21 describes atonement for “unsolved murders” which shows the value of life.

-*Chapters 22-23: Protecting Sexual Morality.* Beginning at 21:10, and going through chapter 23, are various laws that correspond to the 7<sup>th</sup> commandment, “You shall not commit adultery” just as the previous chapters corresponded to the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment, “You shall not murder.” Note that polygamy is “described, but not prescribed” in Scripture.

-*Chapter 24: Protecting Property.* Beginning at 23:15, and going through chapter 24, are various laws that correspond to the 8<sup>th</sup> commandment, “You shall not steal.” These laws include very practical concerns.

-*Chapter 25: Justice, Marriage, Business.* This chapter includes various laws that correspond to the 9<sup>th</sup> commandment, “You shall not bear false witness” with honesty in business, and administration of justice, and provision for widows. We must not take advantage of those who are easiest to take advantage of.

-*Chapter 26: Firstfruits & Tithes.* This chapter positively corresponds to the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment, “You shall not covet” but rather should recognize that all comes from God, which is reflected in the giving of firstfruit tithes.

### ***Chapters 27-30 – Blessings, Curses, and Ratification (Third Address)***

-A statement of intended blessings and curses in covenant treaties is standard practice.

-*Chapter 27: Preparing for Covenant Renewal Ceremony.* The law is inscribed on stone, and a “curse litany” given for use in a covenant renewal ceremony.

-*Chapter 28: Blessings & Curses.* Blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. Note the parallels between vv.3-14 & 16-68 (i.e. You will be blessed for doing this...You will be cursed for doing this...).

-*Chapters 29-30: Exhortations.* Moses encourages Israel to accept the covenant. There is no better offer than the one given to us by God. And yet, we still struggle to accept God’s gracious offer.

### ***Chapters 31-34 – Succession***

-How often do we think about the logistics of succession, and adequately prepare for it?!

-*Chapter 31: The Commissioning of Joshua.* Moses acknowledges that he is no longer able to lead, and that Joshua has been called to lead. Moses gives a charge to Joshua, “Be strong and courageous.” And he gives a charge to the people “fear the Lord.” The Lord gives a similar charge to Joshua, while also predicting the troubles to come. This is not a commissioning into an easy job.

-*Chapter 32: The Song of Moses.* Note the song of Moses in Exodus 15, and Revelation 15:3. Note also the Psalm of Moses – Psalms 90-91.

-*Chapter 33: The Blessing of Moses.* As a patriarch father blessed his sons, so Moses blesses Israel before his death. A blessing is spoken for each of the tribes.

-*Chapter 34: The Death of Moses.* Moses is buried on Mount Nebo, overlooking the Promised Land. The text seems to indicate that Moses was buried by God himself.