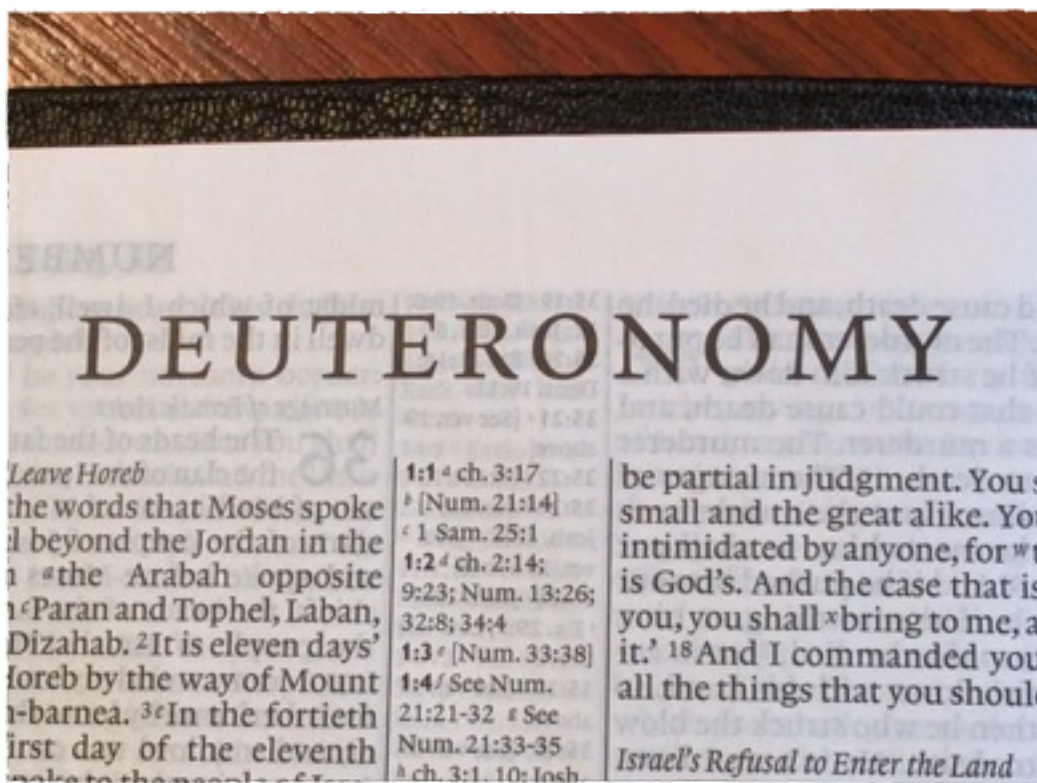


Deuteronomy



By Nathan Combs

Introduction to Deuteronomy

If you were given the opportunity to teach a series of lessons right before you died to a group of family and friends, what would you say? If your group of family and friends had a history of stubbornness, rebellion, and a short memory for kindnesses, what would you say? If you knew that after your death, they would spiritually struggle with idols and inattention to God's word, what would you say? The contents of Deuteronomy are what the inspired prophet Moses said and wrote to the nation he had led for 80 years, shortly before his death on Mount Nebo.

I. What does the name “Deuteronomy” mean? What is the book’s name in the Hebrew Bible?

II. What evidence do we have that Moses wrote this book?

III. In what time period does this book take place? Where are the Israelites when the book opens?

IV. What is the main point (or purpose) of this book?

V. What is a suzerain-vassal treaty? Try looking it up in a Bible dictionary.

VI. Key Themes in the Book

- A. God is faithful to keep his covenant promises (1.8, 19-46; 7.1-26; 8.1-20; 9.1-10.11)
- B. Warnings against idolatry (4.9-31; 5.6-10; 7.1-5; 8.19-20; 12.1-32; 13.1-18)
- C. “Purge the evil from your midst” (13.5; 17.7, 12; 19.13, 19; 21.9, 21; 22.21-22, 24; 24.7)
- D. Israel was specially chosen by God (4.5-9; 7.6; 10.14-15; 14.1-2, 21)
- E. The imminent death of Moses (1.37; 3.26; 4.21; 32.51; 34.1-12)

VII. Brief Outline of Book

- A. Prologue to Book (1.1-5)
- B. Moses’ First Speech: Historical Prologue (1.6-4.43)
- C. Moses’ Second Speech: General Stipulations (4.44-11.32), Specific Stipulations (12.1-26.19)
- D. Moses’ Third Speech: Blessings and Curses (27.1-28.68), Final Exhortation (29.1-30.20)
- E. Succession of Leadership (31.1-34.12)

Ancient Treaty Structure	Deuteronomy
Preamble	1.1-5
Historical Prologue	1.6-4.49
General Stipulations	5.1-11.32
Specific Stipulations	12.1-26.19
Blessings and Curses	27.1-28.68
Document Clause	31.9-29
Witnesses	32.1-47

Israel's Timeline: Dates From Egypt to Canaan

Date	Event & Location	Scripture Reference
1st year, 1st month, 14th day	First Passover (in Egypt)	Exodus 12.18
1st year, 1st month, 15th day	Exodus from Egypt	Exodus 12.2, 18 Numbers 33.3
1st year, 3rd month, 15th day	Arrival at Mount Sinai	Exodus 19.1
2nd year, 1st month, 1st day	Tabernacle erected	Exodus 40.2
2nd year, 1st month, 8th day	Ordination of priests completed	Leviticus 9.1
2nd year, 1st month, 12th day	Dedication offerings for altar end	Numbers 7.78
2nd year, 1st month, 14th day	Second Passover since Exodus	Numbers 9.5
2nd year, 2nd month, 1st day	First census taken	Numbers 1.1
2nd year, 2nd month, 14th day	Delayed Passover	Numbers 9.11
2nd year, 2nd month, 20th day	Departure from Mount Sinai	Numbers 10.11
2nd year, 5th month	First generation arrives at Kadesh* Spies sent out to Canaan	Numbers 13.20, 26
40th year, 1st month	Second generation arrives at Kadesh	Numbers 20.1
40th year, 5th month, 1st day	Aaron dies on Mount Hor	Numbers 33.38
40th year, 11th month, 1st day	Moses speaks at plains of Moab†	Deuteronomy 1.1-3
41st year, 1st month, 10th day	Israelites enter Canaan	Joshua 4.19

* Israel wandered in the wilderness for 38 years from the time they first left Kadesh until the men of war died and Israel crossed the Zered brook (Deut. 2.14). 40 years in total (Deut. 2.7).

† It's an 11 day journey from Mt. Sinai to Kadesh (Deut. 1.2). A short journey turned into 40 years!

Hebrew Calendar Compared to Modern Calendar

Month	Hebrew Calendar	Gregorian Calendar	Hebrew Festivals
First Month	Abib* Nisan†	March-April	14th Passover Leviticus 23.5 15th-21st Unleavened Bread Exodus 12.14-20 16th Feast of First Fruits Leviticus 23.9-11
Second Month	Ziv* Iyyar†	April-May	14th Delayed Passover Numbers 9.10-11
Third Month	Sivan	May-June	4th Pentecost (Feast of Weeks) Leviticus 23.15-16
Fourth Month	Tammuz	June-July	
Fifth Month	Ab	July-August	
Sixth Month	Elul	August-September	
Seventh Month	Ethanim* Tishri†	September-October	1st Feast of Trumpets Leviticus 23.24 10th Day of Atonement Leviticus 16.29-34 15th-21st Feast of Booths Leviticus 23.34-40 22nd Solemn Assembly Leviticus 23.36
Eighth Month	Bul* Marchesvan†	October-November	
Ninth Month	Chislev	November-December	25th Feast of Dedication John 10.22
Tenth Month	Tebeth	December-January	
Eleventh Month	Shebat	January-February	
Twelfth Month	Adar	February-March	

*Name of Month Pre-exile

†Name of Month Post-exile

Chapters 5-7

- 1) The 10 Commandments
 - a) What do the first two commandments have in common?
 - b) What were the reasons God gave for the Sabbath day commandment?
 - c) What was God's method for communicating the commandments? What was the reaction?
- 2) A dominant theme in these chapters is God's frequent emphasis on past and future generations - "fathers," "children," "sons," "daughters," "descendants." Why?
- 3) Deuteronomy 6.4 became so important to Israel that they eventually ascribed a name to the passage. What was that name? Please elaborate on the meaning of that verse.
- 4) In our modern culture, the idea of God condone and even commanding his people to obliterate entire nations is utterly repulsive (Deut. 2.34, 3.3, 7.1-2, 16). How could it be just for God to approve the killing of "men, women, and children"?*
- 5) God reveals that his plan for driving out the Canaanites would be a process, not immediate. Describe how that process would work. What was the reason for this process?
- 6) What are your own thoughts or questions from these chapters?

*To supplement our scriptural study of this question, I encourage you to look at two online articles written by the apologist Dr. William Lane Craig. Although I do not agree with every point, Dr. Craig provides the most cogent explanation I've found of this difficult issue. Go to Reasonablefaith.org. Search for "the slaughter of the Caananites." The articles are found by clicking on the top two links.

Chapters 8-10

- 1) How did God test the Israelites and humble them? Why did he do it? Are these events suggestive of how God leads the New Covenant people today?

- 2) Which NT story utilizes Deuteronomy 8.3, 6.13, and 6.16? Significance?

- 3) How did God take care of the Israelites through that period of testing and humbling?

- 4) What happened at Taberah, Massah, and Kibroth-hattaavah?

- 5) Not only did the people rebel, but Aaron (God's future high priest) rebelled in the golden calf incident. Despite a time gap of 40 years, Deuteronomy seems to connect Aaron's death (Deut. 10.6) with Aaron's sin and God's profound anger with him (Deut. 9.20). Why? Lesson?

- 6) Moses recounts his intercession for the people in 9.25-29. What are the main arguments he uses?

- 7) Why were the Levites chosen as the special tribe of priests and ministers? (Deut. 10.8, Ex. 32.26-29)

- 8) What are your own thoughts and questions from these chapters?

Chapters 11-13

- 1) What are the contrasts that God makes between the land of Egypt and the promised land?

- 2) If the Israelites ever turned aside to serve other gods, God promised to “shut up the heavens,” stopping the rain supply. Do we have an indication that this happened later in their history?

- 3) God makes it very clear to the Israelites that they are to only bring their sacrifices “to the place that the Lord your God will choose, to make his name dwell there.” Which places did God later choose?

- 4) Why would God restrict sacrifices and worship to one specific location? Was this command followed by the Israelites?

- 5) How were the Israelites supposed to know if a prophet or “dreamer of dreams” was from God or not?

- 6) What does the discussion of prophets (13.1-5), the religious views of friends and family (13.6-11), and the religious views of cities (13.12-18) all have in common?

- 7) What are your own thoughts and questions from these chapters?

Chapters 14-16

- 1) What did an animal need to have in order to be considered clean? What about seafood? What about insects? Is there a reason given for these strange commands?
- 2) Where were the Israelites supposed to go to present their tithes? What was the contingency plan? Who benefited from tithing?
- 3) What was supposed to happen every seventh year for the Israelites?
 - a) For Hebrew creditors and borrowers?
 - b) For Hebrew slaves?
- 4) God had no desire for polluted sacrifices (Deut. 15.21, Malachi 1.7-8). According to the New Testament, how might our sacrifices become polluted today?
- 5) Three feasts are discussed in chapter 16. Which ones are discussed, when did they occur, and why are these particular feasts grouped together like this?
- 6) What can we learn from the attitude the Israelites were supposed to display during tithing, offering, and feasting? (Deut. 12.7, 12, 18; 14.26; 16.11, 14; 26.11; 27.7)
- 7) God expressly commanded the Israelites to not put an Asherah by the altar of the Lord. What is an Asherah? Did the Israelites ever disobey this command?
- 8) What are your own thoughts and questions from these chapters?

Chapters 17-19

- 1) If the Israelites had a difficult case between themselves, who was supposed to arbitrate the case? Was it important to abide by the decision reached?

- 2) Look at the laws regarding Israelite kings
 - a) What kind of person was prohibited from becoming a king?

 - b) What was a king's only responsibility? What was he not to do?

 - c) In this text, did God imply approval or disapproval of the king idea?

- 3) The Israelites are told to provide for the Levites because that tribe received no inheritance. List the things that the Levites were to receive.

- 4) Moses told the Israelites that "God will raise up for you a prophet like me..."
 - a) Ultimately, who was that prophet?

 - b) How do we know? Which passages support this idea?

 - c) How would he be "like" Moses?

 - d) During what story did God first reveal that this prophet was coming?

- 5) The Israelites were forbidden from moving boundary markers, implying that tribal land inheritances were permanent. Which person in the OT was tempted by others to move (or give up) his rightful inheritance?

- 6) Moses tells the people that a charge against someone can only be established on the evidence of two or three witnesses. Which New Testament passages relate to this verse?

- 7) In 19.21, the law of retaliation (Latin *lex talionis*) is described. What does Jesus say concerning the Jewish application of this law (Matthew 5.38-42)?

- 9) What are your own thoughts and questions from these chapters?

Chapters 20-22

- 1) Before the Israelites engaged in battle, there were certain kinds of speeches that were supposed to be made to the troops by certain Israelite leaders. What were the purposes behind those speeches? Are there larger principles here that we can apply to ourselves?
- 2) Although the Israelites were commanded to destroy the Canaanite nations, they could make peace with cities that were “very far” from them. How does Joshua 9 relate to this passage?
- 3) Describe the rules that regulated an Israelite army when it laid siege to a city.
- 4) Why would God command the Israelites to kill a heifer for an unsolved murder? Who was to take part in this ritual and what were their roles? Where was the ritual performed?
- 5) According to 21.22-23, how would the average 1st century Jew have viewed Jesus? Explain how and why the apostle Paul uses this passage in Galatians 3.13?
- 6) Was there spiritual significance to the commands of not sowing with two different kinds of seed, not plowing with two different kinds of animals, and not wearing two different kinds of material? 22.12 is an allusion back to which passage? Significance?
- 7) Which phrase occurs three times in the second half of chapter 22?
- 8) What are your own thoughts and questions from these chapters?

Chapters 23-24

- 1) Observe the laws concerning entering “the assembly of the Lord”
 - a) Which people were excluded, which were allowed, and why?

 - b) Explain how these assembly laws fit into what God was doing in OT times and God’s overall plan. Make sure you read Isaiah 56.3-5.

- 2) In 24.1-4, God gives one of the only OT laws that regulate divorce
 - a) What does it mean that a man can divorce if “he has found some indecency” (ESV)? What kind of indecency is this talking about?

 - b) Do some research into what an Israelite man gained monetarily by divorcing his wife. How does this law function as protection for the divorced wife?

 - c) How do Jesus aid our understanding of this passage? (Matt. 19.3-9)

- 3) In 24.8-9, Moses advises the people to listen to the priests about leprosy. Why? Which OT chapter deals with leprosy?

- 4) How did a remembrance of Egyptian slavery help the Israelites keep God’s commands? (24.18, 22 - - also 5.15, 6.21, 15.15, 16.12, 28.68)

- 5) The situation described in 24.19-22 strongly relates to which Old Testament story?

- 6) What are your own thoughts and questions from these chapters?

Chapters 25-26

- 1) 25.1-3 discuss the punishment of beating with 40 stripes. Which Biblical characters underwent this punishment and which scriptures attest to it?
- 2) Where is 25.4 quoted in the New Testament? What principle(s) does the apostle Paul pull out of this verse? How did Paul arrive at that principle from a verse about oxen treading grain?
- 3) In 25.5-10, the interesting law of the levirate (from a latin word meaning “brother-in-law”) marriage is given. How can the law be reconciled with Leviticus 18.16 and Leviticus 20.21? Which Biblical stories mention relatives marrying widows they were related to?
- 4) In 25.17-19, God marks the Amalekites for utter destruction. Read and be prepared to summarize Exodus 17.8-16. What does Psalm 83.3-8 suggest about the intentions of the Amalekites? Was the command to “blot out the memory of Amalek” ever fully carried out?
- 5) The ceremony of offering firstfruits consisted of two parts, vs. 3-4, 5-10. Summarize what would happen during that two-step process. When would this ceremony take place? What was the point of the ceremony?
- 6) 26.16-19 ends Moses’ second major speech to the Israelites. Where do we find similar (if not identical) words in Deuteronomy? What does this section teach about the importance and implications of holiness?
- 7) What are your own thoughts and questions from these chapters?

Chapters 27-28

- 1) The blessings and cursings were supposed to be uttered while the Israelites stood on Mount Ebal and Mount Gerazim. As seen on the map, the city of Shechem lies between the two mountains. Is there any significance to this event happening in the area of Shechem?

- 2) Has anything been discovered in the area which might be evidence of this event? If so, what?

- 3) Who joined with Moses in delivering this speech?

- 4) In what sense did Israel “become the people of the Lord” on the day when Moses spoke to them (27.9)?

- 5) What do many of the 12 curses have in common with each other? (2.15-26)

- 6) What are some major themes running through the blessings and cursings section? What are some applications for us?

- 7) What are your own thoughts and questions from these chapters?

Chapters 29-30

- 1) What did Moses mean in 29.4 when he said that God had not given the Israelites a “heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear” (ESV)? How do we learn from the example of the Israelites?

- 2) Moses mentions that the “secret things” belong to God (29.29). What is he referring to? What applications can we draw from this?

- 3) What is the specific “root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit” that Moses warns against? How does the Hebrew writer apply 29.12 to his audience?

- 4) In 30.1, Moses says “When all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse...” What does this imply about Israel’s future and whether they would keep the law or not?

- 5) In 30.1-10, God promised to someday circumcise the hearts of his people and restore their fortunes after the time of the blessings and cursings - forecasting the New Covenant relationship between people and God (Jeremiah 31.31-34, Ezekiel 36.26-27).
 - a) How does this section help us in our understanding of (30.11-14), about the law not being too hard for them?

 - b) How is this scripture used in Paul’s letter to the Romans? (Rom. 10.5-8)

Chapters 31-32

- 1) How old was Moses when he died? According to 34.7, what was the condition of his health when he died?

- 2) What instructions did Moses give the priests about what to do with the book of Deuteronomy?

- 3) When the Lord brought Moses and Joshua to the tent of meeting for a private conference, what did he tell Moses? What did he tell Joshua? How was this private meeting different from the public commission that Joshua received in the sight of all the people (earlier in the chapter)?

- 4) Chapter 32 involves Moses teaching a song to the Israelites. What was the purpose of this song? What other Biblical passages indicate the teaching power of songs?

- 5) What are some key words or concepts in this song? Look for words and ideas that repeat themselves.

- 6) God said in the song that since Israel made him jealous with their idolatry, he would make them jealous (32.21). What does that mean? How would God do that?

- 7) What are your own thoughts and questions from these chapters?