

Old Testament Survey—Deuteronomy

I love the Psalms. I'm so encouraged by the freshness of the Psalms, at how the psalmist expresses His deep love for God and desperate need for Him. There's a key theme in the Psalms that explains where these men of God found their strength. See if you can identify the common theme in the following...

Psalm 1:2 "But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night."

Psalm 19:7 "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul."

Psalm 37:31 "The law of his God is in his heart; his feet do not slip."

Psalm 40:8 "I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."

Psalm 119:1 "Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD."

Psalm 119:18 "Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law."

Psalm 119:72 "The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold."

Psalm 119:92 "If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction."

Psalm 119:97 "Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long."

What's the common theme? What was it that the psalmist loved and said was the sustaining force that kept him from perishing in affliction? *The Law of God* was. The Torah. The first five books of our Bible.

How many of you turn to the Pentateuch when you're hurting? How many would say, "Oh, how I love the first five books of the Bible. I think about them night and day!"? What was it about these books that thrilled David and others? We're finding out as we take a close look at the Pentateuch one book at a time.

Discuss: What comes to your mind when you hear about the book of Deuteronomy?

### **Who wrote the book?**

Moses--see 1:1 (Jesus attributed the Law to him).

Note: Deut 31:9 says, "Moses wrote this law." (he also wrote a song--31:19)

The Hebrew name of the book is "these are the words" taken from the opening line. The LXX uses the descriptive name meaning "second law giving" (deutero = second; nomos = law).

### **When was the book written?**

The book was written by Moses as the Israelites prepared to enter the Promised Land. See: 1:1-3; 4:44-46; see also map

Q: Where were the Israelites when these words were given? V 1 Trans-jordan

Q: How long should it have taken to travel from Horeb (Sinai) to Kadesh Barnea? V 2 Eleven days

Q: How long did it take the Israelites? V 3 Forty years

Note: Critical scholarship tends to date this book in the time of Josiah.

### **Why was the book written?**

In Deuteronomy, the Lord renewed the Mosaic covenant with the second generation Israelites, just prior to their entrance into the Promised Land. The older, disobedient generation had died off during the 38 years of wilderness wandering.

When encamped at Moab, awaiting entrance into the Land, the people received three farewell addresses from Moses. Moses challenges this new generation of Israelites to love and obey their covenant God.

Note: It is wrong to deduce that the God of the Old Testament is merely a God of holiness and wrath while the God of the New Testament is a God of love. It's also wrong to assume that what God expected from His people in the Old Testament was cold, routine keeping of His commands. We see great emphasis on *love* in Deuteronomy.

### Use of "Love" in Deuteronomy:

(Deu 5:10) "And showing mercy unto thousands of them that **love** me and keep my commandments."

(Deu 6:5) "And thou shalt **love** the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

(Deu 7:7) "The LORD did not set his **love** upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:"

(Deu 7:9) "Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that **love** him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;"

(Deu 7:13) "And he will **love** thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee."

(Deu 10:12) "And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to **love** him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,"

(Deu 10:15) "Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to **love** them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day."

(Deu 11:1) "Therefore thou shalt **love** the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, alway."

(Deu 11:13) "And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to **love** the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul,"

(Deu 11:22) "For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to **love** the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him;"

(Deu 13:3) "Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye **love** the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

(Deu 19:9) "If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to **love** the LORD thy God, and to walk ever in his ways; then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, beside these three:"

(Deu 30:6) "And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to **love** the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live."

(Deu 30:16) "In that I command thee this day to **love** the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it."

(Deu 30:20) "That thou mayest **love** the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

Love is not a mere feeling or emotion. Love operates within boundaries. In Deuteronomy God gives His people the boundaries--His commandments (the word appears 43 times; "statutes" is used 29 times; "judgments" 20 times). As Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep my commandments."

### **What is the outline of the book?**

Deuteronomy is a renewal of the Mosaic covenant God made some 40 years earlier at Sinai (Horeb). The word "covenant" is key in the book, appearing 27 times. From our study of Exodus, we learned that a covenant was a common legal document used in the Near East. In a Suzrain treaty (or covenant), a king would spell out the stipulations of his relationship with his people. That's what God did at Sinai, and what He renewed at Moab as recorded in Deuteronomy.

See: Transparencies showing various types of treaties

See Deut 5:1-3; 29:1

Q: What did Moses say God did at Horeb? 5:2 "Made a covenant with us"

Q: What happened at Moab ? 29:1 Another covenant with the next generation

note: Ten Commandments are repeated in ch 5

Q: What did God require of Israel in this covenant relationship?

See: Deut 10:12-13 The verbs are key: Fear, walk, love, serve, keep.

### Outline: A Renewal of the Suzrain Treaty established at Sinai

(see *Baker Encyclopedia*, 617)

I. The Preamble -- 1:1-5 (Ex 20:1)

II. Historical Prologue -- 1:6-4:49 (Ex 20:2)

III. Stipulations -- 5:1-26:19 (Ex 20:3-17)

- A. Basic Requirement: Exclusive love for God (5-11)
- B. Love for God as seen in ceremonial consecration (12-16)
- C. Love for God as seen in government justice (16-21)
- D. Love for God as seen in sanctity (22-26)

IV. Blessings and Curses -- 27:1-28:68

V. Renewal of the Covenant -- 29:1-30:20

VI. Deposit and Reading -- 31:1-34:12

Trace the record of the times Israel made the Lord angry:

1:34 God angry at Israelites because of their rebellion at Kadesh

1:37 God angry at Moses

3:26 God angry at Moses at his request to enter and see the Land

4:21 God angry with Moses because of the Israelites

9:8 God angry with stiff-necked Israelites at Horeb

9:19-20 God angry enough to destroy the Israelites

11:16-17 A warning that God's anger will burn if they turn after other gods

**What is the message of the book in one sentence?**

In Deuteronomy, God prepares the Israelites for life in the Promised Land by renewing the covenant He made at Sinai.

Note: God was preparing a new generation and a new leadership for a new life in a new land.

**What contribution does the book make to biblical theology (that is, how does this book relate to the rest of the Bible)?**

*1. The God of the Bible is a God who enters into a "covenant" relationship with His people.*

Key: There is both continuity and discontinuity in the relationships between these covenants. We live in a covenant relationship with God under the New Covenant.

See: Jer 31:31-34; Heb 8:6-10; 10:16

Discuss: What are the benefits of knowing that we are in a *covenant* relationship with God? What happens to those who ignore this concept of *covenant*?

2. *The God of the Bible has chosen a people for Himself. His election is based, not on human merit or choice, but on His grace.*

See: Deut 7:6-8; 10:15; 14:2; 26:18-19

Other texts: Jn 15:16; Eph 1:4; Rom 8:29ff; 1 Pet 1:1-2

Discuss: Why does God talk about the subject of His election in His Word?

3. *The essence of godly living is to love God and love people.*

See: The Ten Commandments (Deut 5)

Other texts: Mk 12:29-31

God does not want mere, sterile, cold-hearted ritual. He wants His people to love Him wholeheartedly, and to demonstrate that by obeying His commands.

Discuss: What is a practical implication of this truth?