

Deuteronomy

Title & Purpose

The title, *Deuteronomy*, comes from the Greek and means “*Second Law*.” While it is not a new or second law that is given, it is a second *giving* of the law, as the LORD, through Moses, expands on the Law given at Sinai. The Hebrew title means literally, “*These the Words*,” taken from 1:1, “*These are the words*.” The words referred to are, essentially, Moses’ farewell speech to Israel.

Deuteronomy takes place on the plains of Moab, east of Jericho and the Jordan River. The opening verse says, “*These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel on this side of the Jordan in the wilderness*” (1:1; cf. 29:1 and Joshua 1:2). The events recorded in the book of Deuteronomy occurs over the space of about one month, about 1405 BC, following Israel’s forty year journey in the wilderness.

Moses gives this record to prepare the new generation for entrance into the Promised Land and to encourage them to believe on and obey the LORD. Moses reminds the people to “*take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren, especially concerning the day you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me, ‘Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children’*” (4:9-10).

This final book of Moses also shows how God’s laws, which had been given at Mt. Sinai and used in the wilderness would be put to use in the Promised Land as well. In general it is repetitious of what is recorded in the previous four books.

In this book Moses opens his heart as he gives this dying exhortation to his beloved people in spite of their rebellious and

stubborn nature. There are three separate sermons given in this book, dealing with Encouragement, Exhortation, and Warning. A lesser theme found in the book might be “*Remember*” because of the many times Moses calls upon the people to remember the past mercies of God and what He had done for them.

- “*Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm*” (5:15).
- “*Remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt*” (7:18).
- “*Remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness*” (8:2).
- “*Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on the way when you came out of Egypt*” (24:9).
- “*Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt*” (25:17).
- “*Remember the days of old, Consider the years of many generations*” (32:7).

Note that Moses only includes those things which were for the benefit of the people, and not all the Levitical codes which were included in Leviticus. These are the expressions of Moses’ heart but more importantly the words of the LORD.

It also serves as a code of conquest, as Moses tells the people how God wanted them to deal with the people of this land (cf. Deut. 13:12-17 & Joshua 6:17-18, 8:28; Deut. 21:23 & Joshua 8:29, 10:26-27; and Deut. 27:4-7 & Joshua 8:30-31).

Holy Writer

Moses (See previous notes on the holy writer in our studies on Genesis through Numbers). The Old Testament attributes Deuteronomy to Moses: Joshua 1:7; Judges 3:4; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 14:6; Ezekiel 3:2; Nehemiah 1:7; Psalm 103:7; Daniel 3:11; Malachi 4:4.

Authenticity

When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness by Satan, He quotes Deuteronomy as God's Word (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10) and later attributes the book to Moses as the holy writer (Matthew 19:7-9; Mark 7:10; Luke 20:28; John 5:45ff). Deuteronomy is also quoted in the New Testament and attributed to Moses (cf. Acts 3:22; Romans 10:19). In addition, Deuteronomy contains some forty claims to Mosaic authorship (cf. 1:1-5; 4:44-46; 29:1; 31:9; esp 31:24-26).

Moses does die before the end of the book, so critics have charged that Moses could not have recorded the words there. But Moses' obituary in chapter 34 could have been recorded by Joshua or the inspired writer of the book of Joshua, where it was fittingly appended to what Moses had already written. Of course it is entirely possible that Moses, the inspired writer of the rest of the book of Deuteronomy, could have been given special revelation from the LORD regarding his death and recorded it himself. Luther writes in this regard, "*Moses did not write this chapter, but Joshua, or Eleazar [Joshua 24:33], unless you would choose to say that Moses, knowing his death before, did actually describe it in this manner.*"

Christ In Deuteronomy

Moses himself is shown in Deuteronomy to be a *type* of Christ, the Prophet whom God would raise up in Israel "*The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear*" (Deuteronomy 18:15). We have here a proof passage for the humanity of Jesus Christ, for He would be a prophet "*like*" Moses (cf. Acts 3:22-26; 7:37).

Outline

- I. Moses First Sermon: "What God Has Done For Israel" (1:1-4:43)
- II. Moses' Second Sermon: "What God Expects of Israel" (4:44-26:19)
- III. Moses' Third Sermon: "What God Will Do For Israel" (27:1-30)
- IV. Moses Delivers The Book Of The Law (31)

V. Three Historical Supplements (32-34)

- A. Song of Moses (32)
- B. Blessing of Moses (33)
- C. Death of Moses (34)

