

Message #1**Various Texts**

When we were in Florida one Thursday evening we went to a baseball game. We were in about the 4th or 5th inning and the PA announcer said would the owner of a vehicle with the license number please report to the main entrance, you forgot to turn off your car and it has been running the whole game. Now you would think it would be impossible to forget to turn off your car, but it did happen. Someone got out of their car, locked the door and went to the game, and forgot to turn their car off. We forget things. In fact, the older we get, the more we forget. I was frantically searching for my keys one day and had them in my hand as I was looking for them. It is easy to forget.

Now some of the things we forget don't matter too much. **But one thing God's people never want to forget at any time is the word of God.** It is critical that we always focus on the word of God and remember it. You would think that it would be impossible for God's people to forget about the word of God after all they have seen God do. You would think this would be no threat. But that was not the case for Israel and it is not the case for us. **Deuteronomy is specifically designed to communicate this to God's people - do not ever forget God and do not ever forget His word. God's people should always focus on God's written word because that leads to victory and blessing.**

Deuteronomy is a book that is designed to get God's people to remember the word of God when they were on the verge of entering the Promised Land and on the verge of experiencing many new blessings of God. Israel was on the verge of great victory and in these kinds of moments, God's own people can forget about God and His word.

God does not want His people ever forgetting His word no matter what the circumstances. This is especially true when on the verge of great blessing. Our focus always needs to be on the written Scriptures. God wants His people focused on His word at all times, and in the next weeks we would like to take you through the book of the Bible that communicates that - **Deuteronomy**. Today, we would like to introduce you to this book that has far reaching ramifications and applications for living life no matter where we are. Now to introduce the book we would like to do so by asking and answering a series of six introductory questions:

QUESTION #1 – Why study Deuteronomy?

We could present many reasons for studying this book, but we will present seven:

Reason #1 - Because Deuteronomy is one of only sixty-six books inspired by God.

Deuteronomy is one of the rare, inspired books of God and there are only 66 of them in existence. Now when some people approach Deuteronomy, their idea is it is just another O.T. repeat book of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. In fact, the name Deuteronomy in Greek means “second law.” That is a shame, because some people think this is just a repeat book. But those who think that are making a major mistake.

God does not ever give repeat inspired books. Every book He has inspired is vital and critical to the whole truth of God. Every word in the Bible is inspired (verbal inspiration) and it is all equally inspired (plenary inspiration). Therefore God is behind every word, clause, sentence and paragraph. **This book of Deuteronomy is very special and sacred and necessary for the people of God.**

This was the last book Moses gave to the people as they were on the verge of entering the Promised Land. They had never been here before and this was the book God's people needed to be successful as they entered a new dimension of life. They would face new challenges and new hostilities in a world that did not want them, and this book would strengthen them and lead them to blessing. As Doug McIntosh said, "Deuteronomy is a book for believers who are living on the edge of a hostile culture" (*Deuteronomy*, p. 5).

The most remarkable manuscript discovery occurred in 11 caves located one mile off the NW coast of the Dead Sea. The caves were called the Qumran caves and what they found in the caves were manuscripts and scrolls in pottery jars. This discovery was famously called the Dead Sea Scrolls. The scrolls were written on parchment paper, vellum-animal skins, and some on papyrus reed.

Literally hundreds of passages of the book of Deuteronomy were found in Hebrew.

Cave 1 - 26 fragments of Deuteronomy in Hebrew- fragment refers to multiple verses/passages.

Cave 2 - 3 fragments of Deuteronomy in Hebrew.

Cave 4 - well over a hundred fragments covering the whole book of Deuteronomy in Hebrew.

Cave 5 - 2 fragments of Deuteronomy in Hebrew.

Cave 6 - 1 fragment of Deuteronomy in Hebrew.

These manuscript fragments of Deuteronomy found in the Qumran caves are dated from 200 BC to AD 100. Deuteronomy has multiple preserved manuscripts in Hebrew clearly indicating that the book is inspired by God and showing that the Jews cherished this book.

The Samaritan Pentateuch that was probably copied in the 5th - 4th century BC contains Deuteronomy in Hebrew. The Samaritans and Jews parted ways in the 5th to 4th century BC and obviously they took a copy of Deuteronomy with them.

The oldest papyrus manuscript we have of Deuteronomy is the Nash papyrus that contains Deuteronomy 5:6-6:5. This is dated at 100 BC.

From AD 500-950, the Masorites copied and vowel pointed the Hebrew text, including Deuteronomy. There is a complete Hebrew text of Deuteronomy from the early 11th century.

The oldest complete Hebrew Bible is the Leningrad Codex completed in AD 1000. It is housed in Russia today and it contains the entire book of Deuteronomy.

The Aleppo Codex is another complete Hebrew Bible written in AD 1100. It too contains Deuteronomy. This is kept in Israel today.

Dr. C. F. Keil, in the 1800's, said of Deuteronomy, "The text of the Bible was faithfully and carefully handed down by the Masoretes" (cited from Earl S. Kalland, *Deuteronomy*, p. 9).

So the manuscript evidence is strong for the fact that God's inspired book of Deuteronomy was carefully preserved and copied. So we will study it.

Reason #2 - Because Deuteronomy is a book that is very important to Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ loved the book of Deuteronomy. When we track Christ's use of Deuteronomy through the Gospels, He thought about it and quoted it both privately and publicly (Matt. 15:4; 5:33; 19:18-19; Mark 12:29; Matt. 22:27; Luke 10:27; Matt. 18:16; Matt. 5:38; Matt. 5:31; Matt. 19:7; Mark 10:4; Matt. 22:24). He knew much of this book by memory.

When Jesus was alone in the wilderness and being tempted by Satan, He quoted this one book three times (Matt. 4:1-13; Luke 4:1-13). So a key to His victory over Satan was that He remembered and quoted and applied verses from the book of Deuteronomy (Deut. 6:13; 8:3; 10:20).

When He was publicly challenged concerning the greatest mandate of the O.T. law, He quoted Deuteronomy 10:12—fear God, love God and serve God with all your heart and soul.

One of the most touching pictures of what would happen to Jesus Christ on the cross comes straight out of this book of Deuteronomy (21:23). He would hang on that cross and become an actual curse for us and be buried the same day He died.

One of the greatest pictures of the judicial nature of the doctrine of justification comes from Deuteronomy 25:1. A judge must make a judicial decision of justification and condemnation. Justification is something Jesus would accomplish on the cross (Rom. 3:24).

One of the great predictions of Him being the Messiah/Prophet came out of this book (Deut. 18:15-18). This very prophecy was clearly referenced in the N.T. as being completely fulfilled by Jesus Christ (John 1:21-45; 6:14; Acts 32-23; 7:37).

Raymond Brown, in his commentary on Deuteronomy, said the Lord Jesus Christ "treasured" Deuteronomy (*The Message of Deuteronomy*, p. 13).

So if a book in the Bible is so special and important to Jesus Christ, it should be to us.

Reason #3 - Because Deuteronomy is a book very important to Israel.

In this book of Deuteronomy, God promises Israel a land (Deut. 3:18-22), and He promises that He will fight for Israel and restore Israel to that land and fulfill every one of the promises (Deut. 30:1-10). When we check the land boundaries promised to her, she has never had that much land, which means this is still in the future for Israel.

This is a book that shows Israel that during her history she will have ups and downs, blessings and cursings. However, God will Personally see to it that she ends up fully restored to her land and she will be a nation esteemed by the world and her King will reign in total righteousness. Deuteronomy is a very important book for Israel.

Reason #4 - Because Deuteronomy is not a book most of God's people actually study.

Many of God's people have read through Deuteronomy and most people perhaps know a few verses from Deuteronomy, but that is about it. How many of us have been through a complete study of every verse of Deuteronomy? You will be hard pressed to find people and churches that thoroughly expound this book.

This is so sad because this is a book that clearly is supposed to be remembered and can lead to the great blessings of God while God's people are living in a hostile world.

As near as we may determine, the Apostle Paul uses Deuteronomy multiple times in Romans and Galatians (Rom. 10:6-8; 10:19; 12:19; Gal. 3:10; 3:13; I Corinthians 9:9; 10:22). Romans and Galatians are the very heart of grace age teaching, and Paul often quotes Deuteronomy.

This book deals with contemporary themes that are just as important to us as they were to Israel. Themes that have to do with poverty, homelessness, response to phony religion, alcoholism, addictions, debt, business ethics, money management, sexual ethics, human rights, child abuse and animal rights. This book warns against Satanism and the occult. **What this shows is if God's people want God's blessings, then they need to allow God's word to affect every area of life.**

Deuteronomy is quoted somewhere around 95 times in the New Testament, proving this is not just some O.T. book that has no meaning to and for New Testament believers.

Eugene Merrill said, "Deuteronomy is one of the greatest books of the Old Testament. Its significance on the domestic and personal religion of all ages has not been surpassed by any other book in the Bible" (*Deuteronomy*, pp. 47-48).

The top four O.T. books quoted in the N.T. in order are Genesis, Deuteronomy, Psalms and Isaiah. Deuteronomy is in the top four. New Testament believers ought to know it.

Truth is, Deuteronomy is referenced in every book of the New Testament with the exception of six books—John, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Timothy, I Peter and II Peter. It is clear that almost every N.T. writer saw the importance of the book and the relevance it had regarding N.T. Christianity.

Yet rarely is this book studied. So we will tackle it.

Reason #5 - Deuteronomy is a book that motivates God's people to obedience.

Let's make this simple—if you want God's blessings on your life, then obey His word. Dr. Thomas Constable said if he could sum up the theme of Deuteronomy in one word it would be obedience (*Notes on Deuteronomy*, p. 4). This book makes you want to obey God to experience God's blessings. **It does not force obedience; it creates a desire for obedience.**

There are passages in this book that are so wonderful; they make you want to obey the word of God. For example, Deuteronomy 28:8-14 clearly motivates God's people to want to obey God. Look what He promises to do for those who obey in Deuteronomy—bless your work; make you a powerful statement to the world; make you prosper; make you the head of everything and everyone. Who doesn't want that?

Whether you are reading this in the O.T. economy or the N.T. economy, this text motivates God's people to want to obey God. When you read it, you say, "I want to obey God and be the recipient of what God says here." We need this book right here and right now because this obedience that would bring these blessings could be achieved by the people of God in a heathen world.

God's people have the potential of tapping into blessings others cannot.

Reason #6 - Deuteronomy is a book of O.T. law but it stresses God's faithfulness and love and grace.

You would naturally think that since this is one of the O.T. law books, it would be a book of "legalized religion." You do "A" and God will do "B." But that is not the message of this book. This book shows that God is a compassionate and loving and forgiving God who deeply cares about His elect people. This book says, "we love God because He first loved us."

It is true that this is a book of O.T. law and it will show we are guilty before God. There are some very strange laws in this book regarding a variety of subjects, and we will certainly run across some that will prove us guilty. There are laws about the Sanctuary; Idolatry; Clean and Unclean Animals; Sabbatical Year; Various feasts; Homicide; War; Morality just to name a few. It is true that Deuteronomy is a book of O.T. law, but Moses emphasizes the spirit of the law and he does not just teach the rigid law, but he preaches loving application.

God does not present Himself to be a rigid, legalistic, religious ogre. Deuteronomy shows that God loves His people. Even Moses himself addresses God's people as a loving, aged father. There are many references to love in this book. It was God's love for His people that motivated Him to bless His people.

God loves His people (4:37; 10:15). God blesses His people because He loves His people (23:5). It was God's love that actually prompted Him to give His people His word (33:3). The fact that God's people see that God loves them, should be that which motivates us to love God and obey God (5:9-10; 6:4-5; 7:9; 10:12-13; 11:1, 13-14, 22-23). **Deuteronomy is a book that will prompt people to fall deeper in love with the God who loves them.**

Thomas Constable said there are four major sections of Deuteronomy that stress love:

- 1) Remember God's past faithfulness and love. 1:6-4:40
- 2) Remember God's laws are an expression of His love. 5-26
- 3) Remember that only a love for God will motivate a person to obedience to His word. 27-28
- 4) Remember our obedience to God demonstrates to God that we love God. 29-30

Reason #7 - Deuteronomy is the last book Moses wrote.

God Himself says that "no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses." There was never another man God used at the level He used Moses (34:10-12). So when this great man of God writes his final series of addresses to God's people for the last time, it is one book that demands careful study. So for these seven reasons we are going to study Deuteronomy.

QUESTION #2 – Who wrote Deuteronomy?

We may dogmatically state that Deuteronomy was written by Moses. Moses spoke it and wrote it and preached it!!!

G. T. Manley, of Christ's College in Cambridge, said that the name Moses is used some 99 times in the New Testament and every reference throws light on Deuteronomy (J. Lawrence Eason, *The New Bible Survey*, pp. 106-107). The fact Moses wrote Deuteronomy is easy to prove:

- 1) Deuteronomy claims that it contains the words of Moses (1:1, 5, 9; 4:44; 5:1; 27:1, 8; 29:1-2; 31:1, 30; 33:1, 30).
- 2) Deuteronomy actually states Moses wrote it (31:9, 22, 24).
- 3) Old Testament books say Moses wrote Deuteronomy (I Kings 2:3; 8:53; II Kings 14:6; 18:6,12; Ez. 3:2; Neh. 1:7; Ps. 103:7; Dan. 9:14; Mal. 4:4).
- 4) Joshua who was the immediate successor to Moses said Moses wrote it (Joshua 1:7).
- 5) Jesus Christ agreed and said Moses wrote Deuteronomy (Matt. 19:7-8; Mark 10:3-5; 12:19; John 5:46-47).
- 6) Peter the Apostle said Moses wrote Deuteronomy (Acts 3:22).
- 7) Stephen who laid down his own life believed Moses wrote Deuteronomy (Acts 7:37-38).
- 8) Paul the Apostle said Moses wrote Deuteronomy (Romans 10:19; I Cor. 9:9).
- 9) Author of Hebrews said Moses wrote Deuteronomy (Heb. 10:28).

Almost all Jews and all Christians taught that Deuteronomy was written by Moses until the 1800's when liberals began attacking the book. Most of their attacks were based on their delusional dating of things that say prove it was much later in time than the time of Moses. If it weren't so pathetic, you have to get a kick out of these liberals and their lame arguments.

All the people who were actually there or near the time say Moses wrote it, and then along comes a group of imbeciles some 3,000 years later saying he didn't. Who should we believe? Should we believe the eye witnesses that were there or a bunch of people who weren't there?

Dr. Leon Wood summed it up well when he wrote: “At the very close of Moses’ last days, he orally delivered the great messages of Deuteronomy and then wrote the book” (*A Survey of Israel’s History*, p. 166).

QUESTION #3 – When did Moses write Deuteronomy?

We may actually pinpoint this with more accuracy than perhaps any other book in the Bible.

According to **Deuteronomy 1:3**, Moses spoke the words of Deuteronomy on the **first day of the 11th month in the 40th year (after leaving Egypt)**.

We know from I Kings 6:1 that **Solomon started building the Temple 480 years after Israel came out of Egypt**, and it is well documented that Solomon began construction in 966 B.C.

So by adding 480 BC to 966 BC, we may conclude that the Exodus began in 1446 BC. **If we say Deuteronomy was written in the 40th year after the Exodus, we tabulate the year is 1406 BC.**

We know from Joshua 4:19 that the Israelites crossed the Jordan on the 10th day of the first month, which was 70 days after Moses started speaking Deuteronomy. **What that means is that this book was presented to Israel just two months and ten days before Israel crossed the Jordan River to begin conquering the Promised Land.**

We also know from Deuteronomy 34:8 that when Moses died, the people mourned for 30 days. So if we subtract 30 days from the 70 days we are left with 40 days. **So Moses proclaimed and taught and wrote these words during a 40 day stretch of time in 1406 BC. This book was written at the end of the 40 year wandering and just before Israel entered the Promised Land.**

What Moses does here is to review for this new generation all that God had done for His people since they left Egypt, and then he presented to them the new laws and rules they should use to govern themselves as they entered the Promised Land so God would bless them.

Deuteronomy was written in 1406 BC just 40 days before Moses died at age 120 and just 70 days before Israel would cross the Jordan and enter the Promised Land.

QUESTION #4 – Why did Moses write Deuteronomy?

Moses did not just get up one day and decide I’ll have a series of fireside chats with the people and share some interesting stories about the old days. He did so with a purpose. It is true he will share stories and it is true he will set forth some new data about the law, but he had a reason for it.

Moses had given Israel the law at Mt. Sinai nearly 40 years before he wrote Deuteronomy. According to Deuteronomy 31:1-2, Moses was about to die at age 120 and he would not cross the Jordan and go into the Promised Land with the people.

He was an amazing man of God, but he would not be going with them. But he had experienced many blessings from God and he wanted God's people to experience them too.

So being led by God's Spirit, he decided to give a series of farewell addresses to God's people. **He included key stories and challenges that are designed to encourage Israel to be obedient and faithful so God would bless them.** Moses wanted the people of God to always have a great reverence for God and obedience to God so they could experience the blessings of God.

Moses lived to be 120 years old and he had seen and experienced a lot as a great leader for God. He lived through times when the nation was blessed and when it was cursed. He saw the nation delivered to remarkable blessings, and then he saw that same nation deteriorate to such horrible idolatry that she experienced devastating judgments.

The old guard was gone and the new generation of believers was about to cross the Jordan to take the Land God promised, and **Moses knew a critical key to their success was to reverence God, remember God and obey the word of God.**

God loves His people and is with His people and will bless His people if they continue to remember and obey His word. God's people need to refocus and recommit themselves to carefully understanding and applying God's written word in all contexts of life.

If they would do that, God would love them and bless them.

QUESTION #5 – What is the actual title of the book Deuteronomy?

Our English title Deuteronomy comes from the Greek Septuagint (deuteronoman) and Latin Vulgate (Deuteronomium) that mistranslated Deuteronomy 17:18. The Hebrew text reads “a copy of this law,” but the Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate translated it “the second law” or “a repetition of the law” or “second law giving.”

This has done a great disservice to Deuteronomy because many people think this is just some repeat of the law so we don't need to pay close attention to it.

The actual Hebrew title of the book comes from the first verse—“elleh hadde barim” which means “these are the words.” This is very appropriate for these are the inspired words of God that Moses proclaimed and spoke to all Israel.

QUESTION #6 – What is the theme of Deuteronomy?

No matter what the threat or intimidation, God wants His people knowing and applying and obeying His word to all situations and circumstances of their lives. If they will do that, He will bless them and they will experience one victory after another. If they will not do that, He will not bless them and they will experience one defeat after another.