

## THE BIG READ (29)

### Jesus in Deuteronomy

#### A. Introduction

1. Every book of the Bible has one dominating theme – Jesus is the Christ.

“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’”  
(Luke 24:45-47)

Jesus is the Christ who will suffer and die.

Jesus is the Christ who will rise from the dead on the third day.

Jesus is the Christ who will forgive the sins of all who repent.

Jesus is the Christ who will be preached to the nations.

2. The Old Testament that Jesus read contained the same 39 books as our English Bibles but was arranged in a different order.

It had three sections – the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.

“Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” (Luke 24:44)

The Law (of Moses) contains the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

3. The final book of the Law part of the Old Testament written by Moses is Deuteronomy.

The Hebrews gave this book the title ‘These are the words’ taken from the opening words of this book.

It is a good title because essentially Deuteronomy is a collection of three sermons that Moses preached to the Israelites as they prepared to enter the Promised Land.

The title ‘Deuteronomy’ combines two Greek words, which together mean ‘second law’ or ‘repetition of the law’ taken from the instruction given to the king of Israel in Deuteronomy 17:18.

“When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites.” (Deuteronomy 17:18)

It turns out that this is also a good title for the book, because in Deuteronomy, Moses repeats the Law to a new generation of God’s people after the previous generation had died.

#### B. Getting Started with Deuteronomy

1. At the end of the book of Numbers, the old generation of God’s people that had left Egypt under the leadership of Moses (apart from Joshua and Caleb) have died during the 40 years of wandering in the desert.

The new generation of God’s people is now camped on the plains of Moab just across the Jordan River from the Promised Land and are ready to enter and conquer it.

Moses because of his disobedience will not go with them.

“The LORD said to Moses, “Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so that they and their livestock can drink.” So Moses took the staff from the LORD’s presence, just as he commanded him. He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, “Listen, you rebels, must we bring



1. Deuteronomy breaks down into 3 sections, with each consisting of a sermon Moses preached to the people of Israel before they entered the Promised Land.<sup>i</sup>

Chapters 1-4: What God has done

Chapters 5-26: How Israel should live

Chapters 27-34: What God will do

2. In Deuteronomy 1-4 Moses reminds the people of Israel what God has done.

God's promise to give them the Promised Land.

"See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land that the LORD swore he would give to your fathers – to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – and to their descendants after them." (Deuteronomy 1:8)

God's persistence with them in spite of their rebellion.

"Because of you the LORD became angry with me also and said, "You shall not enter it, either. But your assistant, Joshua son of Nun, will enter it. Encourage him, because he will lead Israel to inherit it. And the little ones that you said would be taken captive, your children who do not yet know good from bad – they will enter the land. I will give it to them and they will take possession of it." (Deuteronomy 1:37-39)

God's protection of them in the desert.

"When Sihon and all his army came out to meet us in battle at Jahaz, the LORD our God delivered him over to us and we struck him down, together with his sons and his whole army. At that time we took all his towns and completely destroyed them – men, women and children. We left no survivors." (Deuteronomy 2:32-34)

"So the LORD our God also gave into our hands Og king of Bashan and all his army. We struck them down, leaving no survivors." (Deuteronomy 3:3)

God's provision of land for the tribe of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

"Of the land that we took over at that time, I gave the Reubenites and the Gadites the territory north of Aroer by the Arnon Gorge, including half the hill country of Gilead, together with its towns. The rest of Gilead and also all of Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I gave to the half-tribe of Manasseh." (Deuteronomy 3:12-13)

Moses wants them to remember all that God has done in order to encourage them to trust and obey God in the future.

"Hear now, O Israel, the decrees and laws I am about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you. Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you." (Deuteronomy 4:1-2)

3. In Deuteronomy 5-26 Moses tells the people of Israel how they should live.

He begins by restating the Ten Commandments.

"The LORD spoke to you face to face out of the fire on the mountain. And he said: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me." (Deuteronomy 5:4-7)

Israel was to show their love for God by obeying these commands.

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts." (Deuteronomy 6:4-6)

He then applies the Ten Commandments to different areas of Israel's civil and ceremonial life once they have entered the Promised Land.

4. In Deuteronomy 27-34 Moses explains to the people that how they live will determine what God will do.

God will bless His people if they obey His commands.

"If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands that I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God." (Deuteronomy 28:1-2)

God will curse His people if they disobey His commands.

"However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you." (Deuteronomy 28:15)

The people of Israel are called to decide what their future will be.

"See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." (Deuteronomy 30:15-20)

As the leadership of Israel transfers from Moses to Joshua, Moses predicts that in the future Israel will rebel.

"For I know that after my death you are sure to become utterly corrupt and to turn from the way I have commanded you. In days to come, disaster will fall upon you because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD and provoke him to anger by what your hands have made." (Deuteronomy 31:29)

Deuteronomy closes with the death of Moses.

"Then the LORD said to him, "This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when I said, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have let you see it with your eyes, but you will not cross over into it." And Moses the servant of the LORD died there in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no-one knows where his grave is. Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone. The Israelites grieved for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days, until the time of weeping and mourning was over." (Deuteronomy 34:4-8)

## **D. Jesus in Deuteronomy**

1. Jesus is the Prophet who speaks the covenant

"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him." (Deuteronomy 18:15)

There has not been a prophet like Moses.

"Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, who did all those miraculous signs and wonders the LORD sent him to do in Egypt – to Pharaoh and to all of his officials and to his whole land. For no-one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel." (Deuteronomy 34:10-12)

We must keep looking for this prophet?

"After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." (John 6:14)

"Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" (Mark 9:7)

## 2. Jesus is the One whose life is displayed in the covenant

The Law gives us a description of what Jesus' life was like.

## 3. Jesus is the Son who keeps the covenant

The Jewish leaders thought that Jesus was a rebellious son of Israel.

"The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and "sinners."' (Luke 7:34)

"If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. They shall say to the elders, "This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a profligate and a drunkard." Then all the men of his town shall stone him to death." (Deuteronomy 21:18-21)

But only He has kept the covenant.

"And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." (Mark 1:11)

## 4. Jesus is the Man who received the curses of the covenant

He received the curses not for His own covenant breaking but rather for the covenant breaking of His people.

"If a man guilty of a capital offence is put to death and his body is hung on a tree, you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse." (Deuteronomy 21:22-23)

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<sup>i</sup> David Murray, Old Testament Introduction Lecture Notes on Deuteronomy