

LESSON 8 - DEUTERONOMY

Deuteronomy is the fifth and last book of the Pentateuch. After you have thoroughly studied this lesson and completed the questions, review the lessons on the first four books of the Pentateuch. Prepare for a test on Lessons 4-8.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. (Deut 6:4)

GENERAL FACTS ABOUT DEUTERONOMY The name "Deuteronomy" comes from the Greek and means literally "second law." We should not think of Deuteronomy, however, as a book of new laws given to Israel. It is instead a repetition of the law given by God through Moses. Rather than "second law," a better name would be a "second giving of the law."

At the end of the Book of Numbers, the Children of Israel were in sight of the Land of Canaan in the Plains of Moab. The forty years of wandering in the wilderness were at an end. Moses knew that his era in the history of God's chosen people was also coming to an end. He knew that he would not be allowed to enter the Land of Canaan (Num 20:1-13, 27:12-14; Deut 3:23-28, 32:48-52). In the Book of Deuteronomy Moses speaks to the Children of Israel as an old grandfather might speak to his beloved family (He was 60 years older than the oldest of any of the Israelites apart from Joshua and Caleb). He reminds them of their history and God's faithfulness in all of their history. He repeats to them the Law that God had given to them. He admonishes them to faithfully keep God's Law. At the end of Deuteronomy the last acts and death of Moses are recorded, perhaps by another human author.

GENERAL OUTLINE OF DEUTERONOMY Deuteronomy can logically be divided into four main parts:

1. Moses' First Oration (1-4)
2. His Second Oration (5-26)
3. His Third Oration (27-30)
4. Moses' Last Acts and Death (31-34)

PART 1 - MOSES' FIRST ORATION (1-4) In these chapters Moses first reviews the past 38 years of history of the Children of Israel, that is their history from the leaving of Mount Sinai until they reached Moab. He tells again of the sending out of the 12 spies, the people's rebellion, the wanderings in the desert, the defeat of certain enemy kings, and the division of the conquered lands. The end of chapter 3 tells of Moses being forbidden to enter Canaan and his view of the land from a mountain top. In chapter 4 Moses earnestly commands the Children of Israel to obedience to the Lord God.

Remember that there was by now a young generation of Israelites who had not personally experienced all of the things of which Moses spoke. They needed this review and encouragement. Remember also that even the people who had experienced God's care in the past were quick to forget. They also needed this review of their history and the encouragement to remain faithful. We also need to review the lessons from history which have been written down as warnings to us (1 Corinthians 10:11). As Romans 15:4 reminds us, "Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."

PART 2 - MOSES' SECOND ORATION (5-26) In these chapters Moses repeats the Law for Israel. The three kinds of law are repeated: the moral

For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, His treasured possession. (Deut 7:6)

Now if you obey me fully and keep My covenant, then out of all nations you will be My treasured possession. Although the whole earth is Mine, you will be for Me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. (Exo 19:5-6)

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him Who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. (1 Pet 2:9)

PART 3 - MOSES' THIRD ORATION (27-30) In these four chapters Moses urgently pleads with the people and encourages them to be faithful in keeping the Law. The blessings of obedience are enumerated as well as the curses for disobedience (See Deut 11:26-32, 27:1-26). Moses confronts the people with a clear choice: life or death, blessings or curses. He also clearly foretells that Israel will in the future turn away from God and as a result will receive God's judgment and be exiled from the land (Deut 29:1-29, 31:14-22). However, in chapter 30 Moses foretells that if they repent, God will once again bless them by restoring them to the land of their forefathers and making them prosper. (Deut 30:1-10)

Read these four chapters in your Bible.

PART 4 - MOSES' LAST ACTS AND DEATH (31-34) Chapter 31 tells of the appointment of Joshua to succeed Moses. Chapter 32 is a song that Moses composed. His song tells of the faithfulness of God, the Rock, and of the

corruption of His people. In spite of their evil, the song says that faithful God still cared for His covenant people. In chapter 33 Moses blesses the tribes of Israel. No blessing appears for Simeon however! (Gen 34:25-31, 49:5-7, Ex 32:26-29) Chapter 34 records the death of the 120-year-old Moses after he had been able to view Canaan from the top of Mount Nebo. When he died, "his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone" (34:7). He died because God called him. His role in the history of God's chosen people was fulfilled. Joshua became the new leader.

Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the LORD swore to their forefathers to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance. ⁸ The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." (Deuteronomy 31:7-8)

THE DEFINITION OF A PROPHET Do you remember the definition of the word prophet? It is someone who "speaks forth" the message of someone else. For instance, we saw how Moses' brother Aaron "spoke forth" Moses' words to Pharaoh (Exo 4:13-16). Aaron was Moses' prophet to Pharaoh (Exo 7:1-2). God's prophets "spoke forth" God's Word. They were God's prophets to His people Israel. Moses was the first prophet given by God to Israel. In the same way we can say that Jesus was God the Father's prophet! Jesus said, "**I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father Who sent Me commanded Me what to say and how to say it.**" (John 12:49) and "**The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in Me, Who is doing His work.**" (John 14:10) Clearly Jesus was speaking forth God the Father's words. In His "high priestly prayer" Jesus prayed to the Father as follows: "**I gave them the words You gave Me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent Me.**" (John 17:8)

MESSIANIC PROPHECY IN DEUTERONOMY

Deuteronomy 18:15 records an important prophecy of Christ. Moses is speaking in this

passage and says: **"The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to Him"** (18:15). Later on the people heard Jesus and said, **"Surely this man is the Prophet."** (John 7:40) Muslims acknowledge that Jesus was the prophet for His time, but do not acknowledge that He is the Son of God. Likewise, some of the Jews recognized Jesus as "The Prophet" but did not realize that He was not only "The Prophet" but also the long awaited Savior, The Christ (The Messiah). As Hebrews 1:1-3 says, **"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, Whom He appointed heir of all things, and through Whom He made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word. After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven."**

Memorize Deuteronomy 18:15.

THE TEST OF A PROPHET How could the Israelites tell if someone was speaking God's Word?

How could they tell if someone was a true prophet from God or a false prophet? ***One of the tests was the prophet's ability to foretell the future.*** Moses said in Deuteronomy 18:21-22, **"You may say to yourselves, 'How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?' If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him."** Over and over again the scripture stresses prophecy fulfilled as a way of marking a prophet. Only God knows the future. (Isa 44:6-7) Therefore only a prophet to whom God has spoken can accurately predict what will happen in the future. (Isa 44:24-26) God stressed that He alone could foretell the future through the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 44:6-8. **"This is what the LORD says – Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from Me there is no God. Who then is like Me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before Me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come – yes, let him foretell what will come. Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are My witnesses. Is there any god besides Me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one."**

Because of this, the prophets themselves appealed to their ability to predict the future as proof that they were a true prophet sent from God. When the prophet Micaiah prophesied that King Ahab would die if he went to war against the King of Aram, King Ahab said, "Put this fellow in prison and give him nothing but bread and water until I return safely." But Micaiah then said, **"If you ever safely, the LORD has not spoken through me."** Then he added, **"Mark my words, all you people!"** (1 kings 22:28)

The second test of whether someone was a prophet was whether they spoke in accordance with the previously revealed Word of God. Isaiah the prophet said, **"To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn."** (Isa 8:20) Isaiah's meaning was, "Compare what they say to previously revealed Scripture. If it doesn't agree with God's Word, then you know they are not speaking from God." In much the same way, the apostle John warns us, **"Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world."** (1 John 4:1) Even if someone could do miraculous signs, that was not in and of itself proof that that person was indeed a prophet of God. In Deuteronomy 13:1-4, God warned the Israelites through Moses that they must compare the words spoken by those who claimed to be prophets with God's Word and not follow those who went against His Word. **"If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, 'Let us follow other gods' (gods you have not known) 'and let us worship them,' you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love Him with all your heart and with all your soul. It is the LORD your God you must follow, and Him you must revere. Keep His commands and obey Him, serve Him and hold fast to Him."** (Deut 13:1-4) This test of whether a person is a prophet or not is not merely some interesting piece of history for us, but is relevant for us today. Satan is misleading people by the use of miracles to substantiate his false teachings just as Paul predicted he would in 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12, **"The coming of the Lawless One will be in accordance with the work of Satan, displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the**

truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness." Why does God allow false prophets to do miracles? He allows such things in order to give us the opportunity to exercise our faith by being faithful to His Word through rejecting the false teachings so that we will grow in the faith. (Acts 17:11) He also allows such things in order to judge those who have rejected His Word.

JESUS' USE OF DEUTERONOMY Jesus quoted from the Book of Deuteronomy frequently. When Jesus was being tempted by the devil in Matthew 4, three times He responded to the temptations with quotations from Deuteronomy. You will find His answers to the devil in Deut. 8:3, 6:16, and 6:13. In Matthew 22:37 Jesus summarizes the First Table of the Law by quoting Deut. 6:5. There are many other instances of Jesus quoting from Deuteronomy. The fact that Jesus frequently made reference to Deuteronomy shows the great importance of this book.

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. The name "Deuteronomy" comes from the _____ language and means _____.

2. Mostly new laws are recorded in Deuteronomy. ____ true ____ false (check one)

3. Write the four-part general outline for Deuteronomy including the chapters:

4. Write from memory the prophecy of Christ in Deuteronomy 18:15.

5. What were the two tests which a true prophet needed to pass?

6. Why does God allow false prophets?

7. Agree or Disagree Most people of Jesus' day were not very familiar with the prophecies about the coming Savior.

Give a few examples from Scripture to support your answer.

8. At what occasion did Jesus quote three passages from Deuteronomy?

9. What value is there in memorizing Scripture passages? (Psalm 119:11, James 4:7)