

05 - Deuteronomy - Remember What God Has Done and Said

1:1-34:12

Key Verse: 8:2

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY

Deuteronomy is the 5th book of Moses. It provides the theological undergirding of the Old Testament. Its name means "a repetition or second giving of the law." Moses and the people were gathered on the border of Canaan in the plains of Moab, 40 years after they had left Egypt. When they were slaves in Egypt, God had promised to give them the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey. But 40 years before, when they had tried to cross over into Canaan at Kadesh Barnea, they had failed because of their unbelief and disobedience. Now, the 40 years of training was over; one generation of fighting men had died in the desert; it was the time to cross the Jordan and take the land. Already they had tasted victory in battle by defeating the Transjordan kings, but the great task lay ahead of them. Moses, their shepherd, would not go with them; it was the time for him to transfer the leadership to Joshua.

Moses spoke to them from his heart. His key word was "remember." He wanted them to learn from their past failures; he wanted them to remember the power and love and faithfulness of God. The book may be divided as follows:

1-4 (1st) Lessons from history--remember and live

5-11 (2nd) Remember the Covenant and the Law

(Ten Commandments repeated)

12-26 (3rd) Laws for Life in Canaan

27-30 (4th) Choose Life (Blessings and Curses)

31-33 (5th) Final Words and Song of Moses

34 Epilogue

Moses gave many instructions, but his main message is summed up in 6:5: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

FROM SINAI TO KADESH BARNEA

Deuteronomy 1:1-18

Key Verse: 1:8

1. At the border of the Promised Land (1-5)

It takes only 11 days to go from Mt. Sinai to Kadesh, but, because of their disobedience, the Israelites had received forty years of desert training. Now they were at the back door of Canaan--east of the Jordan River--ready to enter the Promised Land. Under Moses' leadership they had defeated the Amorite kings who controlled the east bank. Now, Moses gave them a history lesson to remind them of God's promises. They must not repeat their past failure. They must go in and take possession.

2. Go in and take possession of the land (6-8)

They had remained at Mt. Sinai for a year while they received the law and built the sanctuary. Then, God commanded them to break camp and advance. He had promised them the land of Canaan. All they had to do was to go in and take possession of it.

3. The appointment of leaders (9-18)

Moses appointed leaders to help him. These men were to act as impartial judges, for judgment belongs to God. Leaders must fear God, not men.

Prayer: Lord, help me to claim your promises and enter the new year with obedient faith.

One Word: Go in and take possession

TRUST AND OBEY THE LORD

Deuteronomy 1:19-46

Key Verse: 1:21

1. Go up and take possession (19-25)

When they reached Kadesh Barnea, Moses had said, "God has given you the land...Go up...do not be afraid." (8,21) The people wanted to send men ahead to spy out the land, so Moses did. The spies brought back fruit and reported that the land God was giving them was good.

2. Fear and disobedience; pride and rebellion (26-46)

The people had looked at the giants instead of listening to God's word. Moses reminded them that even though the Lord had fought for them in Egypt and shepherded them through the desert, still they had not trusted him. So he was angry, and he disciplined them. One disobedient generation would die in the desert. Only Joshua and Caleb would enter the land. When the people heard God's sentence, they regretted their disobedience, but they did not repent. They went to fight anyway, and they were defeated. Moses called them arrogant and rebellious. Now, at the back door of Canaan they had a second chance; they must not make the same mistake.

Prayer: Lord, take away my fear and unbelief. Purge me of pride. Teach me to trust and obey.

One Word: Trust God and obey him

DESERT TRAINING

Deuteronomy 2:1-37

Key Verse: 2:7

1. Desert life with God (1-23)

For 38 years the Israelites wandered in the desert. The disobedient generation of fighting men died. Then the time came. God told them to turn north. The Israelites had learned to trust God who loved them and cared for them (7). They had learned obedience. When God told them not to bother the Edomites, Ammonites or Moabites (blood relatives), but to pay them for food and water when they passed through those lands, they obeyed.

2. The defeat of Sihon of Heshbon (24-37)

Their first taste of war and victory was against Sihon, king of Heshbon. Sihon was an Amorite king. He refused passage through his country because God had made his heart stubborn. Israel trusted and obeyed God. They fought and won. This was the first step in the conquest of the land. God used this victory to plant the fear of Israel in the nations of Canaan, and to plant confidence and a sense of victory in the Israelites. They learned that to obey God is victory.

Prayer: Lord, teach me the obedience that comes from faith in you.

One Word: God watches over his people

COMMISSION JOSHUA

Deuteronomy 3:1-29

Key Verse: 3:28

1. Every able-bodied man must fight (1-20)

Moses led the people in the battle with the Amorites east of the Jordan. After they defeated Sihon of Heshbon, the Lord gave Og king of Bashan and his whole army into their hands. Moses then gave 2½ tribes (Reuben, Gad and ½ of Manasseh) their inheritance on the east side of the Jordan—on the condition that all of their able-bodied men would cross the Jordan and fight with the rest until the whole land was conquered.

2. Encourage Joshua (21-29)

The victory over the Amorite kings on the east side of the Jordan was a sign that the Lord God himself would fight for them. Moses rejoiced to see the greatness of God and his strong hand. He eagerly wanted to cross the Jordan and share in the conquest of the land. But God said "No." He could climb Mount Pisgah and see the land, but he must commission Joshua and encourage and strengthen him to lead the people across.

Prayer: Lord, give me a sense of victory and help me to encourage and strengthen others.

One Word: Fight with a sense of victory

FOLLOW GOD'S WORD AND LIVE

Deuteronomy 4:1-24

Key Verse: 4:1

1. This great nation is a wise people (1-9)

God's word makes men wise and understanding. It makes men and nations great (6-8). God's word is flawless; God gives success to those who obey it without adding to it or subtracting from it. Those who ignore God's word and follow their feelings--as did the Israelites at Baal Peor (Nu 25)--will surely perish. People who have God's word are greatly blessed, for God is near them; they know the true way to live.

2. Don't worship idols (10-24)

When they stood before Mt. Horeb (Sinai) to receive the 10 Commandments, God displayed his awesome presence in the fire and smoke. But they saw no form; he revealed himself through his spoken word. Therefore, they must never make or worship idols or worship the sun, moon or stars. God is a jealous God--a consuming fire. God's people must teach their children the lessons they learned from history and the requirements of God's covenant. We must teach the Bible.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your word. Help me to live according to it and teach it faithfully.

One Word: Follow God's word and live

BUT IF FROM THERE...

Deuteronomy 4:25-49

Key Verse: 4:29

1. Seek him with all your heart (25-31)

Moses knew sinful human nature. The time would come when the people would forget God's grace and turn to idols. God would surely punish them by removing them from the land and

scattering them among the nations. But God is merciful; if from there--from their place of deepest distress--they sought God with all their hearts, they would find him.

2. Acknowledge that the Lord is God (32-49)

God's dealing with his people is unique in the annals of history. He delivered them with his mighty arm so that they might know that he is God. He loved them and gave them his word to discipline them. They must keep his laws and obey his commands, for this is the way of life and blessing. The cities of refuge are reminders that they must be merciful, for he is merciful. Moses ends his "lessons from history" with a reminder of victory and an introduction to the law.

Prayer: Lord, help me to seek you with all my heart and acknowledge that you are God.

One Word: Seek God from where you are

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Deuteronomy 5:1-33

Key Verse: 5:29

1. "I am the Lord your God" (1-21)

God made a covenant with his people. He spoke to them out of fire on the mountain. Moses was the mediator (5). God gave them and their descendants the 10 Commandments (Ex 19,20). The first 4 commandments, in verses 1-15, concern man's relationship with God. The commandments in verses 16-21 concern man's relationship with man. These commandments are the basis of the covenant. God brought the people out of slavery; now, they must learn to live as his holy people.

2. Oh, that they would always fear me! (22-33)

God wants men to live according to his rules because they can only be miserable when they ignore his way and follow their own ways. He spoke to them out of the fire, with awesome sound effects in order to plant the fear of God in their hearts. As long as they feared God and obeyed his word, they could live, maintain his blessings, and prosper.

Prayer: Lord, help me to fear you and obey your laws. Thank you for my mediator, Jesus.

One Word: Fear God, obey his word, and live

LOVE THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART

Deuteronomy 6:1-25

Key Verse: 6:5

1. Love the Lord your God (1-12)

God gave his people the Law because he loved them. People who keep God's law are blessed. God wants his people to love and respect him. He does not want superficial, half-hearted obedience. He wants us to obey his laws because we love him with all our heart, soul, and strength. He wants us to hold his words in our hearts and teach them to our children.

2. Fear the Lord and serve him only (13-25)

God is a jealous God. He hates idolatry in any form. He promised victory over the strong occupants of Canaan if his people feared him and kept his laws. When his people became rich and comfortable in the land, it would be easy to forget their former misery, and to forget God's grace. We must remember God's mighty work in our behalf and teach our children a sense of history, for this is life for us and for them.

Prayer: Lord, I remember your great love in my life. Help me to love and serve you with all my heart and soul and strength.

One Word: Love God and keep his laws

DON'T COMPROMISE WITH IDOLATRY

Deuteronomy 7:1-26

Key Verse: 7:6

1. God's treasured possession (1-10)

God's people are holy because God chose them--not because they had any innate goodness or any human quality that made them worthy of his choosing. They were chosen by God's grace alone. They should not be proud or self-righteous. He brought them out of slavery because of his covenant with Abraham. God's holy people must not compromise with idolatry in any way.

2. Obey God's word (11-26)

If they follow God's word and obey his laws, he will keep his covenant of love which he made with Abraham and bless them in everything they do. They will prosper in every way, not because they are able, but because of God's blessing. They must not be afraid to fight godless people, even though those nations seem to be too strong. They must not covet gold and silver or take any for themselves. They must trust God's love and power and maintain God's blessing.

Prayer: Lord, help me to obey your word and live under your blessing.

One Word: Maintain God's blessing

GOD'S DISCIPLINE

Deuteronomy 8:1-20

Key Verse: 8:5

1. Training in humbleness (1-9)

Israel's 40 years in the desert was not aimless wandering. God was training them so that they could live (1). God's discipline is God's love. The greatest spiritual enemy of all is pride. The purpose of the wilderness training was to teach the Israelites not to depend on their human ability, but to depend on God. He humbled them, causing them to hunger, then fed them with manna to teach them that man does not live on bread alone but on God's word. One needs a humble heart to keep God's commands.

2. When you are satisfied, praise the Lord (10-20)

When God blesses us and we become rich and satisfied, it is easy to forget God and think, "I did it by my power and ability." But ability comes from God (18). God's people must praise and thank God and know that every blessing is from him. They must humbly obey his laws and follow his word to the end. Otherwise, he will remove his hand of love and protection and they will be destroyed.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your saving grace and your loving hand which disciplines and protects.

One Word: Depend on God with a humble heart

GOD HEARS INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Deuteronomy 9:1-29

Key Verse: 9:26

1. God's instrument of judgment (1-6)

God would go before the Israelites to give them victory over the strong giants of Canaan. But they must know that victory was not given them because they were righteous. God was using them as his instrument of judgment on the idolatrous Canaanites. God gave them the land because of his covenant with Abraham, and because of the wickedness of the Canaanites. We must not misunderstand or misuse God's grace.

2. Moses' prayers of intercession (7-29)

Moses reminded them that they had failed and angered God because of their unbelief and disobedience. Moses also had been very angry, but he had interceded for them before God with

long periods of prayer and fasting--and God had listened and had not destroyed or abandoned them. Intercessory prayer makes a difference.

Prayer: Lord, you saved me by your grace alone because you wanted to use me. Help me to grow as a prayer servant for your people.

One Word: God hears intercessory prayer

CIRCUMCISE YOUR HEARTS

Deuteronomy 10:1-22

Key Verse: 10:15,16

1. God gives the law a second time (1-11)

After the people sinned by worshiping the golden calf, God was ready to destroy them. But Moses prayed, and God relented. He called Moses to come up the mountain a second time. Again God wrote the 10 commandments on the stones; he set apart the Levites to serve him as priests and caretakers of the ark of the covenant. He listened to Moses' prayer and spared the people.

2. Circumcise your hearts (12-22)

God owns the earth and everything in it, but he loved one man, Abraham, and chose his descendants to be his own possession. He poured out his love on Israel. He wanted them to love him. To love God means to fear him with awesome respect, and to obey his word. Circumcision of the heart means turning from the world and loving God with all one's heart. It means cutting away selfishness and loving helpless and needy people whom God loves. It means remembering God's grace and praising him from the heart.

Prayer: Lord, circumcise my heart so that I may love you and love my neighbors.

One Word: Circumcise your heart

CHOOSE A BLESSING OR A CURSE

Deuteronomy 11:1-32

Key Verse: 11:26

1. God gives strength to conquer (1-9)

The people of Israel saw how God parted the Red Sea and how he destroyed Pharaoh's army; they experienced his mighty hand and his majesty through his discipline in the desert; they saw how he opened the ground to swallow up the rebels (Nu 16). This God of awesome power and

majesty promised to give them strength to overcome their enemies, if they would love and obey him.

2. God is the caretaker of the land (10-32)

The land of Canaan was not irrigated from a river like the land of Egypt. It was dependent on the rain which God gives from heaven. God himself cares for it from the beginning of the year to its end. God promised to bless the land and to drive out all their enemies if they would love him and obey his commands and diligently teach their children. The blessing and the curse were before them. They must choose. The drama of choosing would be enacted on the two mountains after they had entered the land (26-32).

Prayer: Lord, give me spiritual strength to claim the blessed life and the kingdom which you have promised.

One Word: Choose the blessing

DO IT GOD'S WAY--AND REJOICE

Deuteronomy 12:1-32

Key Verse: 12:7

1. Go to the place God will choose (1-14)

The greatest enemy of God's people is not the enemy who threatens with powerful weapons; it is the enemy who seduces the heart and leads them to idolatry. The idolatry of the Canaanites was offensive to God, and the temptation to compromise, strong. So they were to destroy all the places where the Canaanites worshiped their gods. God would choose a central place of worship after they conquered the land. Later, that place became Jerusalem.

2. Worship God in God's way (15-32)

The Canaanite way of worship involved detestable practices, including sexual orgies, even child sacrifice (31). But the worship of God should be joyful and life-giving (7,18). God's people should eat together in the presence of the Lord, and rejoice in the labor of their hands. They must respect life (23) and respect God's servants. They must worship God in God's way--not in their own way. They must follow God's rules.

Prayer: Lord, I rejoice in your presence. Help me to serve you in your way. Help me to worship you every Sunday, in the house of God.

One Word: Rejoice before the Lord

DON'T BE DECEIVED

Deuteronomy 13:1-18

Key Verse: 13:3,4

1. A test of your love for God (1-5a)

The heart is deceitful and is easily led astray, but if love for God fills our hearts, we have spiritual discernment. We will not be deceived by a false prophet or dreamer whose words sound good. We must love and revere God, and obey his word.

2. Purge evil from your midst (5b-18)

When the nation of Israel was in its formative stage, the penalty for trying to draw someone away from God was death. Spiritual death is more serious than physical death. (See Acts 5:1-11.) Even if one we love tempts us to draw us away from God, we must stand on God's side. We must not spare or shield that person from punishment. If a whole town follows false gods, the whole town must be punished. The majority is not always right; even if idolatry and immorality are approved by the national consensus, they are still wrong. God's hatred of evil has never changed. He deals with the problem of evil in different ways.

Prayer: Lord, let the flame of your love burn in my heart so brightly that I may not be led away from you by anyone or anything.

One Word: Love God and don't be deceived

YOU ARE HOLY TO THE LORD

Deuteronomy 14:1-29

Key Verse: 14:2

1. God's holy people (1-21)

God was molding an undisciplined nation of former slaves into a holy people who could be a kingdom of priests. The laws about clean and unclean animals were not just health rules. God wanted to teach them not to follow the customs of the Canaanites, but to obey his word. Eating is a very personal thing. When God's people obey God in the matter of eating, then they can obey him in everything. God used these laws to train his people; later, Jesus declared all food clean (Mark 7:29).

2. So that God may bless you (22-29)

Tithing means giving a tenth of one's income to the Lord. The heart is connected to the pocketbook. The tithe was to be used in two ways: Each year, a part was used to eat together and rejoice in the presence of God; every third year, tithes were set aside to care for the needy. God's

people must not be selfish. He wants his people to be mindful of others.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for making me holy by the blood of Jesus. Help me to welcome your training and grow in holiness.

One Word: Live as God's holy people

LIVE UNDER GOD'S BLESSING

Deuteronomy 15:1-23

Key Verse: 15:3,4

1. Be openhanded toward the poor (1-11)

People who are tightfisted and selfish close their own lives to God's blessing. God helped his people be free from slavery to material things by telling them to cancel all debts every 7 years. They were not to be tightfisted or hardhearted toward the poor. They were to lend freely, without calculating about the 7th year; they were to give generously, without a grudging heart. God would bless them and make them rich. They would be lenders, not borrowers; they would rule others, not be ruled. They would live under God's blessing.

2. Set your servant free (12-23)

The Israelites had been slaves, but God redeemed them and set them free. They were still influenced by the culture of their times. But God told them to set Hebrew slaves free after 7 years, and not to send them away empty-handed. They were also to set aside the firstborn of the flock and eat before the Lord.

Prayer: Lord, give me a generous heart and an open hand. Teach me how to live under your blessing.

One Word: Don't be selfish

CELEBRATING GOD'S GRACE

Deuteronomy 16:1-22

Key Verse: 16:16

1. Celebrate the Passover (1-8)

Life in the Promised Land should be a joyful celebration of God's grace. They were to assemble at the place of God's choosing three times a year, bring freewill offerings, and rejoice before him. The Passover was celebrated to remind them that they had been slaves in Egypt, and that God had delivered them by his almighty hand. We too must remember God's saving grace, and

rejoice.

2. The Feast of Weeks (9-12)

This was a thanksgiving feast celebrated seven weeks after the harvest began. It was a time to acknowledge that the harvest was God's blessing and thank him.

3. The Feast of Tabernacles (13-22)

This feast celebrated the end of the harvest. For seven days they were to live in little booths as they had in the wilderness, and remember God's grace in the desert. Because of his grace, they were to be joyful, to follow justice, and to worship God alone in the Promised Land.

Prayer: Lord, help me to remember your grace and live with a thankful heart.

One Word: Remember God's grace and rejoice

A PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

Deuteronomy 17:1-20

Key Verse: 17:19

1. Do not violate the covenant (1-7)

In most cultures, people live according to their own ideas or feelings, and kings are above the law. But God's people are a covenant people, a people of the Book. Idolatry is a violation of the covenant relationship just as adultery is a violation of the marriage relationship. Astrology, spiritism and any other kind of idolatry must be investigated and punished.

2. Establish justice (8-13)

God is just, and there must be justice and order among the covenant people. Honest judges who knew and lived by God's word were appointed (16:18-20). They were to be obeyed on pain of death.

3. The king (14-20)

The king of God's people must study the Bible and live by it. He is warned against the dangers of money, women and foreign culture. And he must not become proud. King Solomon should have heeded God's word (1Ki 11:2; 2Ch 1:14-17; 1Ki 10:28).

Prayer: Lord, help your covenant people to live by your word, and not by the consensus of the times.

One Word: God's people must live by God's word

PRIESTS AND PROPHETS

Deuteronomy 18:1-22

Key Verse: 18:2

1. The priests and Levites (1-13)

God established two kinds of spiritual leaders to shepherd his people: priests and prophets. The whole tribe of Levi, as well as the priests who were descendants of Aaron, were set aside to serve God. The Lord was their inheritance. God used the sacrificial system to teach the sinfulness of sin. He provided a way of forgiveness, a way back to God through the blood. Sinful man must come to God in God's way. This looks forward to Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Those who proclaim repentance and forgiveness through Jesus' blood are a priestly nation.

2. The prophets (14-22)

A true prophet is one who speaks God's word; he speaks to the people everything God has given him to say. He does not make up his own messages or teach his own ideas. God's promise to raise up a prophet like Moses is fulfilled in Jesus (Ac 3:21-26). God's people must not listen to false prophets nor consult horoscopes or fortune-tellers or spiritists.

Prayer: Lord, you are my inheritance. I come through the blood of Jesus. Help me to teach your word truly.

One Word: Listen to God's word.

JUSTICE AND MERCY

Deuteronomy 19:1-21

Key Verse: 19:9

1. Cities of refuge (1-14)

Israel had come out of slavery. In a slave society, mistakes and crimes were dealt with according to human passions. God's law established basic justice. Men must know what justice is if they are to appreciate mercy. Six cities were designated "cities of refuge" (2,9). They were places where a person who accidentally killed another "without malice aforethought" might flee for safety. He should be protected from the rage of the avenger. On the other hand, one who kills deliberately--in anger or hatred--must be brought to justice. Justice cannot come from anger or passion; revenge has no place in God's justice.

2. Witnesses (15-21)

Truth is established by witnesses; the guilt or innocence of a person is decided on the basis of the testimony of witnesses. A false witness is particularly evil, because he perverts justice. Basic justice--an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth--is the foundation on which Jesus built a higher concept of justice, one tempered with mercy and forgiveness.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the refuge of the cross. Help me to act justly and love mercy.

One Word: Love God; walk in his ways

ON GOING TO WAR

Deuteronomy 20:1-20

Key Verse: 20:1

1. The attitude of the Lord's soldier (1-9)

The outcome of a battle is not decided by numbers. A soldier of the Lord must not allow fear to invade his heart. If he believes God's promise, that God will be with him and give him victory, he can overcome the enemy. A soldier must not allow civilian affairs to occupy his heart and rob him of strength. Men whose hearts are full of personal affairs had best go home.

2. Conquer the land (10-20)

The conquest of Canaan was God's judgment on the idolatrous and morally corrupt Canaanite nations. God trained his people in obedience by telling them how to deal with defeated enemies. There was one rule for nations outside the borders of Canaan, and another rule for the Canaanite nations. God was concerned about preserving the spiritual life and purity of his people. If God's people compromise with idolatry or worldliness, they will die--and there is no hope for the world.

Prayer: Lord, help me to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Help me to trust you for victory.

One Word: Don't fear; claim God's victory

TEACHING RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Deuteronomy 21:1-23

Key Verse: 21:8

1. Atonement for innocent blood (1-9)

The slave mentality is marked by disrespect and irresponsibility. But life is a sacred trust from

God. If a murder is discovered, and the guilty party cannot be found, then the city nearest the site of the crime must take responsibility. The elders must offer a blood sacrifice to atone for the shedding of innocent blood.

2. Respect and order (10-23)

Men should treat women with respect, even if they are captives in war. A man must follow God's laws, not his feelings in dealing with his family members and their rights (15-17). Rebellious children who ignore their parents' discipline are not just a family matter--the whole community is involved. The punishment seems severe, but respect and spiritual order were crucial in the building of a nation. Evil seeds of rebellion must be purged from the infant nation. Verse 23 looks forward to Jesus who took our curse on himself (Gal 3:13).

Prayer: Lord, thank you for teaching us basic respect for life and for people. Help me to live by your law, not by my feelings.

One Word: Respect others; follow God's word

TO BE A HOLY PEOPLE

Deuteronomy 22:1-30

Key Verse: 22:1

1. Do not ignore it (1-12)

The Lord wants his holy people to have a sense of responsibility. They should be responsible for the property of others--even when the other person is careless. Thoughtless cruelty reveals a corrupt heart. God's people must be trained to have a sense of justice and mercy--even toward birds. These laws helped train God's people to take time to care about others and to keep their hearts and lives pure.

2. Responsible sex life (13-30)

God created sex as a blessing to mankind. The purpose of sex is to bind families together and to create new life. When it is used according to God's purpose, it is a precious gift and a great blessing. But when men and women ignore God and his laws and ignore the responsibility that goes with the blessing, they displease God, defile their own lives, destroy the home, and corrupt society. God's word for the infant nation was, "You must purge evil from among you."

Prayer: Lord, help me to live a pure and responsible life before you.

One Word: Take responsibility

A HOLY PEOPLE--KEEP THE CAMP CLEAN

Deuteronomy 23:1-25

Key Verse: 23:14

1. A holy assembly (1-14)

The Law strictly regulated who could be a part of the assembly of God's people. God remembers the past record and holds a people responsible for the sins of their fathers. But the God of grace welcomes all people who have faith. (Think about the women in Jesus' genealogy--all are exceptions to these rules--Mt 1.) The Lord moves about in the camp to protect his people, so the camp must be kept clean and decent.

2. Special rules for a holy people (15-25)

God does not want his people to oppress others; he does not want them to be involved in the immoral orgies of the Canaanite religions. He wants them to be responsible for what they say and generous with what they have.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your grace. Thank you for the precious blood of Jesus that redeems me from the empty way of life handed down from my forefathers. Help me to keep my heart and life pure, and be generous with others.

One Word: The Lord is in the camp.

REMEMBER THAT YOU WERE SLAVES

Deuteronomy 24:1-22

Key Verse: 24:18

1. Don't take advantage of weak people (1-6)

In a world in which women had no rights, the law gave them protection. The law gave a new family time to take root (5). People were more important than material things, so the law protected the poor (6,7).

2. Remember that you were slaves (7-22)

Selfish men who forget their former condition and forget God's grace can even enslave and sell brothers. It is not cruel but wise to identify and isolate those with contagious diseases. God's laws are wise. They are for the protection of the whole community. The law not only protected the rights of the poor, it also encouraged God's people to live with wide and generous hearts--not with narrow-minded calculations. We must not take advantage of the hired man, the poor, the alien, the fatherless or the widow; they should be treated with justice, compassion, and generosity. If we remember God's grace, we cannot but be generous and forgiving toward others.

Prayer: Lord, help me to remember that I was a slave to sin and you delivered me.

One Word: Remember God's grace

JUSTICE AND RESPECT FOR PERSONS

Deuteronomy 25:1-19

Key Verse: 25:1

1. Just and fitting punishment (1-16)

Slavery degrades men and destroys justice. It breeds irresponsibility. These laws seek to restore justice and human dignity and teach responsible living: i) Guilty persons must be punished, but not degraded. ii) The man who does not want to marry his brother's widow is treated with disrespect, for he is selfish and irresponsible [See Ge 38 and Ru 4.]. iii) Even in the heat of anger or passion, men and women must stay within certain limits and preserve human dignity. iv) Cheating and lying are marks of the slave mentality. The Lord detests anyone who deals dishonestly.

2. God's judgment on the Amalekites (17-19)

The Amalekites had no fear of God. They were the desert people who attacked the Israelites when they were most vulnerable--at the time of the Exodus (Ex 17:8-15). At that time, Moses, supported by Aaron and Hur, held up his hands in prayer while Joshua fought. With God's help, Israel won a victory, but the Amalekites were marked for God's judgment, for they respected neither God nor his people (1Sa 15:2).

Prayer: Lord, help me to love justice and honesty, and to respect people created in your image.

One Word: Justice and respect

WHEN GOD GIVES YOU SUCCESS

Deuteronomy 26:1-19

Key Verse: 26:18

1. Maintaining God's blessing (1-15)

How can God's people maintain his blessings? First, they must have a sense of history. They must remember God's grace (1-9), and thank him by bringing to him the firstfruits of the harvest (2,10-12). In the time of success, one's first thought should not be of self-indulgence, but of thankfulness to God. After worshiping God and rejoicing in him, they must think of those in need. The tithe of the third year was set aside for the Levites, aliens, fatherless and widows.

2. Two declarations (16-19)

God gives his word, the Bible. His people must declare that the Lord is their God and that they will obey his commands and walk in his ways. God declares that these, his covenant people, are his treasured possession. He will set them above all people and make them a holy people. God wants his people to be a holy nation and a kingdom of priests (Ex 19:5-6). The covenant relationship between God and his people is a commitment of the heart and soul and life.

Prayer: Lord, help me to love and obey you, and make me your treasured possession.

One Word: Offer God your heart

TWO MOUNTAINS

Deuteronomy 27:1-26

Key Verse: 27:8

1. The altar on Mount Ebal (1-8)

After entering the land God had promised them, God's people were to carry out a ceremony to confirm them as God's people. They are special because they have the word of God: they are blessed if they obey it, cursed if they do not. The word of God was to be written on large stones covered with plaster. Then, the people were to offer a burnt offering to God. They were to eat and rejoice in the presence of God. Burnt offerings were for the forgiveness of sin. The fellowship meal symbolizes peace with God, and peace and oneness with each other.

2. A sacred promise (9-26)

The people were to divide into 2 groups: 6 tribes would stand on Mt. Gerizim to pronounce the blessings, and 6 tribes on Mt. Ebal to pronounce curses (see 11:26-31). The Levites were to read the Bible lesson, based on the 10 commandments, and the people were to say "Amen," thus committing themselves to God and promising to obey his word.

Prayer: Lord, help us to obey your word so that we may be your blessed people.

One Word: Obey God's word and be blessed

ESTABLISHED AS GOD'S HOLY PEOPLE

Deuteronomy 28:1-35

Key Verse: 28:9

1. Blessings for obedience (1-14)

If God's people pay attention to God's word and follow it, they will always be on top--never at the bottom (1,13). Every ordinary activity of life will be blessed; enemies will be destroyed. God's people will indeed be a holy people (9) and a kingdom of priests (10). But they must not turn aside from the commands of God or follow any other gods.

2. Curses for disobedience (15-35)

If God's people, who have covenanted with God to love and serve him, do not obey his laws--which they promised to obey, they will be cursed. Everything they do will fail; they will suffer from disease, mental illness, and defeat at the hands of enemies. The best blessings of life--marriage, building one's own home, having one's own business--will all turn into nightmares.

Prayer: Lord, help me to keep your word in my heart so that I may live a blessed life instead of a cursed life.

One Word: Keep God's law and be blessed

BECAUSE YOU DID NOT SERVE GOD JOYFULLY...

Deuteronomy 28:36-68

Key Verse: 28:47

1. Serve the Lord gladly in time of prosperity (36- 52)

The good life will not last forever. We must serve the Lord gladly and joyfully in times of prosperity, or we will serve idols and enemies in poverty, sorrow and despair.

2. When selfishness reigns (53-57)

God blesses those who obey his word, but life under God's curse is terrible. A nation from afar--an invader--will swoop down like an eagle and devour everything. But the greatest curse is the inner selfishness that comes to the surface in seemingly cultured, gentle people when times really get tough.

3. World missions in reverse (58-68)

When people once blessed by God abandon his law, he will surely punish them. When people without God and without his mission are scattered to foreign countries, they suffer on the bottom of society as aliens and immigrants. They only have anxious minds and despairing hearts. They can't even get jobs as slaves.

Prayer: Lord, save us from the curse of selfishness and life without mission.

One Word: Follow God's word

THE SECRET THINGS BELONG TO GOD

Deuteronomy 29:1-29

Key Verse: 29:29

1. Standing in the presence of the Lord (1-15)

Just before entering the promised land, Israel stood before God to enter into a new phase of their covenant relationship with him. They must live by God's written word (28:58). Moses reminded them of God's mighty works in Egypt, of his provision for them in the desert for 40 years, and of the victory he had given them over the Transjordan Amorites. This covenant confirmed them as God's people; it was binding on future generations. They did not have to understand everything, but they had to trust and obey God.

2. Don't make mental reservations (16-29)

Our covenant relationship with God must be made wholeheartedly, with no mental reservations. If one leaves room in his heart for idolatry, all the curses of the book will fall on him. We cannot understand everything about God and his ways, but his revealed word is enough. The secret things belong to God, but what is revealed belongs to us to follow and obey.

Prayer: Lord, purify my heart and help me to follow and obey your revealed word.

One Word: Obey the revealed word

CHOOSE LIFE AND LIVE

Deuteronomy 30:1-20

Key Verse: 30:19

1. Return to the Lord (1-10)

When God's people sin, he punishes them. But when they repent and turn to God with their whole hearts, and seek to obey him, he will restore their fortunes. He will circumcise their hearts and enable them to love him with all their hearts and souls--and live. (6). Circumcision of the heart means to sincerely repent; it means to love God. God punishes those he loves because he wants to bless them.

2. I set before you life and death (11-20)

The way of life is not beyond our reach: God's word is right there--to accept by faith, to hide in our hearts, to obey in our practical lives and to share with others (Ro 10:5-11). The way of death is rebellion, disobedience, and idolatry. If God is in our hearts, he must dwell there as the sole ruler. We must not lose our hearts to anyone or anything, but give our hearts to God, for this is

the way of life.

Prayer: Lord, circumcise my heart so that I may love you purely. Cast all idols from my heart today. Help me to obey your word and walk in your ways.

One Word: Choose life and live

GOD'S SERVANT AND GOD'S WORD

Deuteronomy 31:1-29

Key Verses: 31:11-12

1. Moses charges Joshua (1-8)

Moses' task was finished. In the presence of the people he commissioned Joshua to go before Israel to conquer the land. The Lord would go with them. Joshua must conquer the land and divide it fairly. Above all, he must set an example of courage and faith. He must trust the Lord who would never leave nor forsake him.

2. Moses writes down the law (9-13)

Moses wrote down the law. His writings became the Bible--the Pentateuch. It was to be kept in the ark, in the heart of the nation. At appointed times the people--men, women, children and aliens--were to assemble in the place designated by God and listen to the reading of the Bible. Children must be taught the Bible so that they can learn to fear and obey God.

3. God commissions Joshua (14-29)

God commissioned Joshua to lead the people after Moses' death. The people would rebel. But God gave them the Bible, and a song to remind them of God's grace. And he promised to be with them.

Prayer: Lord, help me to obey leaders whom you appoint, live by your Book, and sing songs of praise.

One Word: Read the Bible and obey God

GOD'S LOVE FOR HIS PEOPLE

Deuteronomy 31:30-32:14

Key Verse: 32:10b

1. Praise the greatness of our God (31:30-32:6)

God gave Moses a song to teach the people to remind them of who he is and who they are. God is great. He is the Rock; his works are perfect; he is faithful, upright and just. His people, on the other hand, proved to be weak, corrupt and unfaithful. How foolish it is for men to rebel against their Creator.

2. They were the apple of his eye (7-14)

God loved his people. He made them his special portion. Among all the nations of the earth, he chose them to belong to him. He shielded them in the desert and there he gave them "eagle-wings" training (Ex 19:4), so that they might overcome their earth-bound slave mentality and learn to soar like eagles. God's training is one of his best blessings. He fed them and supplied all their needs in the desert, and kept his promise to give them a land flowing with milk and honey. God trains those he loves.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for making me one of your own people. Train me until I can trust and obey you wholly.

One Word: The apple of his eye

THESE WORDS ARE YOUR LIFE

Deuteronomy 32:15-47

Key Verse: 32:47

1. When Jeshurun rejects God (15-25)

Jeshurun was God's pet name for Israel. Ironically, it means "the upright one." When God's people give their hearts to idols that are not gods at all, then God will pour his love and grace on people who are no people. This promise looks forward to God's saving grace poured out on the Gentiles (Ro 10:19). God hoped that his people Israel would become jealous and return to him. When God's great love for his people is rejected, his love turns to wrath; he punishes those he loves in order to lead them to repentance.

2. I have wounded and I will heal (26-47)

God's dilemma is that the wicked nations don't know that they are only instruments in God's hand to punish his people. Their arrogance is groundless. But someday they will know, for he will judge the wicked nations and take vengeance on his enemies. He will make atonement for his land and his people. He wounds his own people so that they will repent and be healed. God wounds so that he may heal; he puts to death so that he may bring to life (39).

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your tough love; help me to repent before your word daily.

One Word: These are not idle words (47)

MOSES' FINAL HOURS--BLESSING ON HIS LIPS

Deuteronomy 32:48-33:29

Key Verse: 33:27a

1. The Lord speaks of Moses' death (32:48-52)

Moses' task was finished. It was time for him to go to be with God. He was not permitted to enter the promised land--but he could look over into it from the heights of Mt. Nebo. God was strict with him because he was a shepherd. A shepherd must honor God among the people at all times (Nu 20:9-13).

2. Moses blesses the tribes (33:1-29)

Moses had a bright vision of God who loved his people and who had escorted them through the desert with his angels. The Lord is King and he rules by his Law. Moses' shepherd's love is poured out in his blessings; he prays for each tribe. [Simeon is missing; there are 2 tribes of Joseph.] He especially remembered how the Levites had defended God's honor at Sinai, even standing against their own loved ones (Ex 32). In verses 26-29, he reminds them that belonging to God is the only real security in this world or the next. There is no one like God and no people like his people.

Prayer: Lord, I trust the security of your everlasting arms; help me to be faithful to you.

One Word: Underneath are the everlasting arms

THE DEATH OF MOSES

Deuteronomy 34:1-12

Key Verse: 34:10

1. The promise of God in his heart (1-4)

Moses climbed Mount Nebo and looked over into the promised land. Moses could not enter the land, but he died with God's promise in his heart.

2. The Lord buried him (5-9)

The people grieved for Moses, for he was their shepherd and they loved him. But his death was not sad. He never became a weak, senile old man. Even though he was 120 years old, his eyes were not weak, nor was his strength gone. When he died, the Lord buried him. He left behind him Joshua, a shepherd whom he had trained and whom God had appointed to take care of God's flock.

3. A man whom the Lord knew face to face (10-12)

Moses did many mighty deeds and showed the mighty power of God through his life. But the greatest thing about him was that the Lord knew him face to face. He had a personal relationship with God.

Prayer: Lord, help me to grow in my knowledge of you, and in my love for you.

One Word: What is a man's true greatness?