

Title: Deuteronomy means “Repetition of the law” arises from the title used in the Septuagint and Latin Vulgate. Original title still used in the Hebrew bible is translated “These are the words”

Author and Date of Writing:

The book itself ascribes the majority of the content to Moses. Further, Jesus, Peter, Paul, and Stephen all attribute passages of the book to Moses. However, there are sections (Such as Ch. 34 the death of Moses) that were not written by Moses but were inserted later, likely by Joshua.

Deuteronomy is quoted 50 times in the NT. 3rd most behind Psalms and Isaiah.

Setting:

1. In Moab on the East side of the Jordan.
2. It marks a distinct pause in the Narrative of the previous books.
 - a. The book begins and ends in the same place.
3. Israel is on the threshold of the promised land, a journey that began over 40 years prior when they left Egypt.
 - a. Further, we are on the threshold of fulfilling (a portion of) God’s covenant promise to Abraham of establish a great nation for his offspring. They have the people, just not the land.
 - b. Genesis 15:5-7 Promised a great people and a great land.
 - c. There is one further promise that Israel is on the verge of fulfilling:
 - i. Genesis 15:16

Review of Suzerain Vassal Covenant

Common covenant of that time.

It would have been readily familiar to the people at that time. It is likely what they would have thought of with the term “Covenant”.

Covenants are not just promises.

- Covenant denotes a relationship.
 - o Ancient covenants often were a great king adopting a people he had liberated from oppression
 - o Covenant is a present experience rather than merely a future hope.
 - o It is a word that has been confirmed rather than a word that seeks fulfillment.
 - This does not bar future fulfillment, but emphasizes that the benefits of covenants are immediately seen (even if not in full)

Suzerain Vassal Covenant

- Covenant of Works
- Aspects of this type of covenant.

- **Preamble** - identifying the one who made the treaty
- **Historical Prologue** – providing the historical justification of all that followed.
- **Stipulations** – What was expected of the vassal.
- **Sanctions** – what would happen if vassal failed to keep stipulations
 - **Exile** were often part of the sanctions
 - If the **Vassal** maintained the stipulations, the **Suzerain** was obligated to guard his vassals
 - Often there was a **cutting ceremony**: animals were slaughtered as a symbol of what will happen to the vassal if they are to fail to keep the stipulations. It is a sign that the breaking of the covenant requires **the shedding of blood**.
- **Deposit of the Treaty** – tablets recording the treaty kept by both sides in their sacred temples.
- **Periodic Public Readings** so that the new generations understood the obligations.

The **Suzerain** never took an oath himself.

Structure of Deuteronomy through the lense of Covenant:

Preamble: 1:1-5 The LORD is speaking through Moses

Prologue: 1:6-4:40 Moses reminds them of the historical justification for the Covenant

Stipulations: 4:44 – 26:15

Sanctions (Blessings and Curses): 26:15 – 30

Provision for future Administration of the Covenant: 31-34

Deuteronomy 10:1-2 We see a reminder of the Deposit of the Treaty. The two tablets most likely did not contain 5 commandments each. Rather, they are duplicate copies of the covenant the LORD was making with his people.

- Where are they placed? In the Ark of the Covenant Does this comport with the ancient covenantal practice?

The next generation is preparing to enter the promised land. They have paused to have God reiterate and renew the covenant they had already violated a number of times. God is preparing them to enter the promised land.

There is an eschatological underpinning to the book of Deuteronomy. It is important to see how it fits with the whole of God's revelation in the Bible.

Deuteronomy 3:20 "Rest" The promised land is a foreshadow of the Sabbath rest that is to come when Christ returns and makes all things new.

Hebrews 4:1 - 11

1. Eden, Noah, Conquest of Cana, and ultimately Christ's return.

Revelation 15:1-4. We see the song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb (Rev. 5:9-12 speaking of the worthiness of Christ to reign over all the earth)

However, ultimately as we will see in the unfolding of the scripture (as punctuated in Hebrews 4) this attempt and reclaiming of the dwelling place of God not seen since the failure in Eden. But, it is a shadow of what is to Come, it creates a longing for the greater Moses & the Greater Joshua to come who can faithfully complete all that the covenant requires.

Chapters 1-4 Historical Prologue

1:8 Reminder of the Abrahamic Covenant. (What was different about the Abrahamic covenant vs. the Mosaic Covenant?)

1:19-46 is a recounting of their failure at Kadesh-Barnea.

- 1:26-27, 30 A direct rebellion against God's promise to Abraham in Gen 15
 - o God already fulfilled half of it in an overwhelmingly decisive and glorious way.
- 1:31-33 God also showed his fulfillment in the more mundane (compared to the rescue from Egypt) provision in the wilderness
 - o "God carried you, as a man carries his son"

2:5, 9, 21-22 Here we get a glimpse that God's promises rest on His faithfulness rather than that of the subject of the promise. More evidence of the trustworthiness of His promises.

2:26-37 recount the story first told in Numbers 21.

- Compare Deuteronomy 2:30 and Numbers 21:23

Idolatry

- 4:3 Ominous foreshadow of Israel's downfall.
- Compare and contrast Yahweh and false gods
 - o 4:7-8 & 4:28
- 4:25-28 continued warning
- 4:29-31 a promise of forgiveness and redemption
 - o Notice the wording "you will" repeated
 - o What is the basis for the surety of their salvation:
 - 4:31
 - God's essence of character (Ex. 33:19)
 - o **Aseity** – existing in and of himself
 - o **Immutability** – He is unchanging
 - o **Simplicity** – He is without parts, i.e. his attributes do not make up his being, but are his being. Essence = Existence
 - o **Impassibility** – He is without passions. He is completely self-controlled and is not swayed by emotions.

- His irrevocable covenant (which itself is founded upon his character).

Covenantal Stipulations: 5 – 26

1. The Great Shema 6:46 (Talk about phylacteries)
 - a. This great summation of the entire Law (as summed up on the stone tablets) is to be “Upon their hearts”. **Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:26** (when does this take place? at the restoration after the exile) The current setting is right before the restoration after the 40 year wilderness exile.
 - b. Jesus cites this as the greatest commandment in **Matthew 22:36-40**. In fact he says that it is upon this that all of the law and the prophets (the entire OT) hang on this.
 - c. **Matthew 5:17** “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”
 - d. Jesus is the initiator of the New Covenant **Hebrews 13:20-21** by the shedding of his blood.
2. Destruction of the Canaanites/Amorites Ch 7
 - a. Is it right? Is it just? Yes. It is God’s just judgment on a wicked people. The core of the unbeliever’s issue with the destruction of Canaan ultimately lies in the fact that if God is just to judge the Canaanites, he is just to judge us all.
 - i. Lev. 18, Deut. 12:31 – They were a thoroughly sinful people: Adultery, Incest, Bestiality, idolatry, and child sacrifice (by fire).
 - ii. God was patient in his Judgement (Gen 15:16)
 - iii. This is a cleansing of the promised land of all defilement. It was meant to prepare the land for rest.
 1. The word “destruction” (7:2) means to “set apart, devote”. It parallels the language used for setting apart the holy items for use in the tabernacle.
 - a. God is using Israel to prepare his dwelling place.
 - i. Adam and Eve were “set apart” from the Garden after the fall.
 - ii. The whole earth was destroyed in the flood to make way for a new creation for Noah to inhabit.
 - iii. Jesus will devote the world to destruction to make way for the New Heaven and New Earth Revelation 19:11-18
 - iv. This is NOT a justification for any violence against non-Christians or any subsequent “Holy Wars”. It is a unique commandment.
 1. God sets the destruction of the Amorites apart from all other warfare that Israel may face in **Deut 20** where he lays out the need to provide mercy to their enemies. The Amorites are excluded in **20:16-17**

- v. This is NOT justification for colonizing or conquering non-Christian Nations.
 - 1. **Ch 9:4-6** God makes it abundantly clear that they are not conquering the Amorites because they are more worthy. No, they are merely God's tools to enact his judgement. A judgment that he has now reserved for Christ alone.
 - vi. This is a hard truth to accept. It should be. We should not take God's just judgment lightly. When we properly understand God's *perfect holiness* in contrast with our *utter sinfulness* then we must admit our judgment is lacking and submit to his perfect will.
 - vii. This should create in us an urgency to proclaim the mercy of God found in the sacrifice of Jesus. A proclamation of impending judgment is a mercy. Go back to Revelation 22:12 – 17.
3. The Laws of the Old Covenant. What do we do with them?
- a. First we need to understand their purpose: **Deuteronomy 26:18-19**
 - b. **The three categories of Law:** Ceremonial Laws/Civil Laws/Moral Laws
 - i. Ceremonial – The laws meant to guide the religious rituals and sacrifices.
 - 1. They are meant to demonstrate the wide gap between the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man.
 - 2. These laws remind us that God made *temporary provisions* (Gen 3:21 animal skins) for his people. He knew they could not keep his Law perfectly on their own.
 - 3. Jesus as the ultimate, sufficient sacrifice fulfilled the need for all of these shadows. They all point to Him.
 - 4. Some of these laws (dietary laws, etc.) also served to set Israel apart from the heathen Gentiles. This separation is done away with in Acts 10 when Peter sees the vision and is told to kill and eat (10:28). The ultimate meaning is the opening of the gospel to the Gentiles.
 - ii. Civil – these were the guidelines for the nation-state of Israel. Jesus has initiated a new kingdom, but it will not be fully realized until he returns. The specifics of these civil laws no longer apply.
 - iii. Moral –summed up in the 10 commandments, not time-bound and reflect a more general view of what is good and evil giving us insight into God's morality.
 - 1. These too were fulfilled by Jesus through his keeping of them perfectly. However, most of these laws are reiterated or even intensified in the New Testament.

2. It is by our obedience to God's commandments that we show God our love. (**John 14:15**)

1. Sanctions (Blessings and Curses): 26:15 – 30

- i. Deuteronomy 28:1-2, Deuteronomy 28:15
- ii. Promise of mercy Deut 30:1-4
- b. Deut 30:6 Circumcision of the heart
- c. What did physical circumcision represent? Mark of the covenant
 - i. Romans 2:28-29
 1. Even here in the midst of the giving of the law, God recognizes the need for Grace and mercy.
 2. It is through faith that we are saved, not by the law.
 - ii. Deut 30:11-14
- d. Romans 10:5-13
 - a. Righteousness by Faith did not start with the New Testament.
 - b. It is seen throughout the OT. It preceded the Law.
 - c. Here we see it is spoken of within the Law and fully revealed in Jesus.
 - d. The inverse of this is found in Deut 30:17-18
 - i. Failure does not come from burdensome laws (God makes provision for that through sacrifice and repentance). No, rebellion comes from an idolatrous heart.

Provision for future Administration of the Covenant: 31-34

1. 31: 1-6
 - a. Moses will not be able to lead them into the Promised Land.
 - b. It will be the LORD that leads them.
 - c. Joshua will be their appointed human leader.
 - i. His name means Yahweh is salvation.
 - ii. Further importance to his name?
 - iii. Is Joshua successful in conquering the Land?
2. 31:16-22 God foretells of Israel's future failure.
 - a. Is their failure due to Joshua's failure as a leader?
 - i. No, it is because of their rebellious and idolatrous hearts.
 - b. Overall, Joshua was successful in conquering the *people* of Cana, but he could not defeat the sin.
 - c. A greater Joshua is needed. The one who would perfectly embody the name "Yahweh is Salvation".
3. The Song of Moses (Remember this is evoked in Revelation prior to the Final Judgment)
 - a. 32:36-43 God's song of indictment is also full of hope.
 - i. He punishes them until their idolatry is removed.
 1. He cleanses his people.
 - ii. He wounds so that he can heal. V. 39

- iii. We are to rejoice that he will bring judgment.
- iv. For through it He cleanses his people and the land, ushering them into their final rest.
- v. **V. 43.** The final judgment must necessarily accompany the cross.
 - 1. At the cross he took our curses upon himself, he took the wrath of God upon himself for the sake of His people. He atoned for the sins of his People.
 - 2. At his second coming, he atones for his land by punishing the sin that ravaged his promise land through his righteous judgment. When Christ returns, it will be the end of his patience and the fulness of the sin of the world will be at hand.(Just like it was for the Amorites/ Canaanites)
 - 3. Our response should be
 - a. humble obedience in wonder and fear.
 - b. Glorious praise of his mercy, justice, and might.
 - c. An urgency to plead with the world to repent and believe upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.