

Reading Deuteronomy

The Big Picture

1-11 Israel is Called to Honor the Covenant

1-4 Retelling of the Covenant History

5-11 Moses urges Israel to obey

12-26 The Terms of the Covenant

12-13 Laws about the worship of Yahweh

14-16 Laws about sacred foods and festivals

17-18 Laws about leaders: Kings and
Prophets

19-26 Laws for life in the promised land

27-28 Covenant Blessings and Curses

29-31 Moses' Final Appeal for Obedience

32-34 Moses Parting Words

32 The Song of Moses

33 Moses' Blessing on Israel

34 Moses' Death

Key Themes in Deuteronomy

1. Deuteronomy is a collection of Moses' final speeches to Israel right before they enter the land of Canaan: see 1:1-8; 31:1-8; 34:1-12
2. Israel is called to worship Yahweh alone and avoid all temptations to follow the gods of the Canaanites
 - Yahweh alone is Israel's God: 4:32-40; 6:1-5
 - They are to destroy all the idols in the land: 4:15-31; 7:1-6
3. Israel is called to obey the terms of the covenant to fulfill their mission to the nations
 - The laws in Deuteronomy 12-26 are designed to make Israel a holy people of justice and generosity in the land (see handouts on Exodus and Leviticus for reading the laws in these chapters).
 - Deuteronomy 4:5-8 explains why Israel should obey: to show the character of Yahweh to the nations
4. Obedience to the covenant will bring blessing and life, but disobedience will bring curse, death, and ultimately exile from the promised land:
 - Moses foresees that Israel will rebel and go into exile: 4:25-29, 28:58-65, 29:22-28
5. But after the exile, Yahweh will restore the people and fulfill his promises:
 - Yahweh will 'circumcise their hearts': 4:30-31, 30:1-10

Things to look for in Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy is a book about loving God and remembering his grace:

1. Yahweh loves Israel and calls Israel to respond by loving him in return

Key Word: keep track of the word "love" and "heart" when Moses talks about Yahweh's faithfulness to Israel and why they should obey Yahweh

2. Obedience to the covenant is a matter of remembering Yahweh's grace in the past

Key word: keep track of the words "remember" and "forget":

- What actions of Yahweh is Israel supposed to never forget?
- How exactly will Israel remember Yahweh's grace, by what means?
- How is forgetting linked to sin and rebellion? How is remembering linked to obedience?