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## **A STUDY OF THE WHOLE BIBLE**

### **THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY**

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#### **An Overview**

Deuteronomy (the title is Greek for “second law” or “second lawgiving”) is a national constitution, a founding document for the new life that Israel is about to begin in the Land of Promise. Forty years previously, God had brought Israel out of bondage in Egypt and made a covenant with them at Sinai. But then, instead of receiving the land God had promised to them, Israel refused to enter it and was compelled to wander in the wilderness for 40 years. Now, at the end of those 40 years, Israel is on the cusp of entering the land once more. The book of Deuteronomy is the great, all-encompassing vision for what life in the land should look like for God’s people.

But Deuteronomy is also a farewell sermon. Moses is now 120 years old and is about to die. For decades he served as a mediator: he was God’s messenger to Israel and represented Israel’s requests to God. He was also Israel’s ruler, guide, and judge, with authority unsurpassed by anyone else in Israel. As his life draws to a close, Deuteronomy is Moses’ last plea to Israel to live by the light of all that God has taught them.

And yet, Deuteronomy is ultimately about what God does for Israel, not what Israel does for God. The call to obedience (chapters 4-26) is rooted in God’s redemptive work in the past (chapters 1-11) as well as the promise of God’s work in the future (chapters 27-28). Even as Deuteronomy reckons with Israel’s profound brokenness and inability to obey (chapters 29, 31-32), it still holds forth an unshakable hope for the future based on God’s faithfulness (chapters 30, 32-33).

#### **The Larger Story**

To begin to read Deuteronomy is to enter an epic story midstream. Deuteronomy is a major milestone in a narrative that began all the way back in Genesis and that continues to the end of Revelation.

Back in Genesis, God made several promises to Abraham: Abraham would have abundant offspring, this offspring would have a covenant relationship with God, and this offspring would enjoy that covenant relationship with God in the land of Canaan (Genesis 17:6-8). These promises encompass all that the garden of Eden held out to Adam before his fall into sin: a holy God dwelling among a holy people in a holy place. What Adam forfeited, God promises He will still provide one day.

By the time we reach Deuteronomy, Abraham’s offspring has become a large nation (Exodus 1:7; Deuteronomy 1:10), and God has established his covenant with them at Sinai (Exodus 24:1-8). What remains is for them to enter the Promised Land, which they are about to do. Deuteronomy calls Israel to the obedience that leads to genuine life with the Lord, in contrast to Adam’s choice of death.

But Israel ultimately chooses death, just as Adam did, and they must be removed from the land (Judges–Kings). Thus Deuteronomy points forward to the true Adam and the true Israel, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ obeyed God on our behalf and won for us the ultimate fulfillment of the promises to Abraham: eternal life and brings about the holy kingdom foreshadowed in Deuteronomy.

### **Book of Leviticus Outline**

1. Prologue: Israel's Recent History (1:1–3:29)
  - i. Setting of the book (1:1–5)
  - ii. Israel's failure at Kadesh-barnea (1:6–46)
  - iii. The journey to the plains of Moab (2:1–3:29)
2. The Heart of Covenant Life with the Lord (4:1–11:32)
  - i. The uniqueness of the Lord and his law (4:1–43)
  - ii. The Ten Commandments and Moses as mediator (4:44–5:33)
  - iii. Israel to obey the Lord alone (6:1–8:20)
    - a. With all that they are (6:1–25)
    - b. Not drawn away by other nations (7:1–26)
    - c. Not boasting in themselves (8:1–20)
  - iv. Israel to love the Lord (9:1–11:32)
    - a. For his grace shown at Sinai (9:1–10:11)
    - b. For his powerful love to Israel (10:12–22)
    - c. For the reward of life in the land (11:1–32)
3. Specific Commands (12:1–26:19)
  - i. Concerning the place of worship (12:1–32)
  - ii. Concerning false teachers (13:1–18)
  - iii. Concerning food and times of the year (14:1–16:17)
  - iv. Concerning leaders, war, and justice (16:18–21:9)
  - v. Concerning marriage, money, and the details of life (21:10–25:19)
  - vi. Concerning the firstfruits (26:1–19)
4. Blessings and Curses (27:1–29:1)
5. The Future of Israel (29:2–33:29)
  - i. God's implacable anger (29:2–29)
  - ii. A future beyond judgment (30:1–10)
  - iii. Moses' final plea (30:11–20)
  - iv. New leaders, but the certainty of Israel's apostasy (31:1–29)
  - v. A song of Israel's future (31:30–32:52)
  - vi. Moses blesses Israel (33:1–29)
6. Epilogue: The Death of Moses (34:1–12)

### **Glossary of Terms**

**Covenant:** *A binding agreement between two parties, typically involving a formal statement of their relationship, a list of obligations for both parties, a list of witnesses to the agreement, and a list of curses for unfaithfulness and blessings for faithfulness to the agreement.*

**Holy:** *Set apart by God for a good and special purpose.*

