



*Grace Temple*  
BAPTIST CHURCH

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## A STUDY OF THE WHOLE BIBLE THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

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### TESTS OF FAITH (7:1–8:20)

#### The Place of the Passage

God's law centers on the command to love him with all that we are (6:5). Before Moses outlines the details of loving God in all of life (chapters 12–26), he must first challenge the core attitudes of Israel's heart. Moses here warns the people of several great temptations that await them in the Promised Land, which will test their love for the Lord: tests of prosperity, forgetfulness, idolatry, covetousness, pride, and ingratitude. In each case Israel's very identity is at stake: if they fail the tests, they will forfeit everything God won for them when he saved them from Egypt.

#### The Big Picture

Israel must not forget who they are as God's people, rendering Him thanks for the land's blessings, teaching their youth, and refusing to follow in the idolatry of the nations around them.

#### Gospel Glimpses

**JESUS THE TRUE SON.** These chapters contain the three texts Jesus quotes when he is tempted by Satan (Deuteronomy 6:13, 16; 8:3). As Israel wandered 40 years in the wilderness being tested by God, Jesus wandered 40 days in the wilderness, facing similar temptations to disobey God through food, testing God, and false worship (Matthew 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13). And yet, where Israel failed, Jesus succeeded. In this way, Jesus showed himself to be the truly obedient son, whose heart is completely devoted to the Lord and whose righteousness brings blessing.

**SLAVES SET FREE.** Time and again, Deuteronomy looks back to the exodus from Egypt as the great event of Israel's past. When a father seeks to tell his son the core of who they are as Israelites, he focuses on how the Lord redeemed them from bondage by his great power (6:21–25). When Moses wants to remind the people of the Lord's love, he centers on the exodus (7:8). When they fear being defeated and subdued again by other nations, the exodus gives them hope (7:18). As long as Israel remembers that they are objects of grace, former slaves who are now set free, they will never give in to the boast that they are self-made men (8:17). In an even deeper way, Christians are slaves now set free, participants in a new and better exodus. For us in the new covenant, the great saving event was when Christ the Passover lamb offered his blood as the ransom price so that we would no longer be slaves of sin but would be free to obey God from the heart (Romans 6:17–18; I Corinthians 5:7; Titus 2:14).

BY GRACE. The previous two Gospel Glimpses provide the proper context for understanding the role of good works in Deuteronomy. The statement that it “will be righteousness” for Israel if they are “careful to do” all that the Lord has commanded (Deuteronomy 6:25) seems, on the surface, to be advocating works-righteousness. The idea that we are righteous because of what we do is the antithesis of the Reformation’s insistence that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone. But we know that the same Spirit who inspired Moses to write this verse is the one who inspired Paul to write passages like Ephesians 2:4–10 and Titus 3:3–7, which emphasize our being saved apart from works. In this light, the promise that Israel’s obedience will be “righteousness” is not referring to their meriting salvation, since they are already saved. Nor is their obedience considered “righteousness” in the perfect, absolute sense, which we see only in Christ. Rather, “righteousness” is used more loosely here to refer to a life of faith in God’s promises that bears fruit in faithful obedience and leads to blessing in the land (Deuteronomy 8:1).

### **Theological Soundings**

THE JUST DESTRUCTION OF GOD’S ENEMIES. Zeal for justice is a good and upright part of God’s character: as the holy judge, he is a “consuming fire” (Deuteronomy 4:24; 9:3), jealous for truth. And yet, unlike human anger, which so often lashes out in disproportionate severity, God’s justice is always measured and righteous (32:4; Psalm 9:8). This truth is the path to understanding the command in Deuteronomy 7:1–5 to destroy the Canaanites. As Deuteronomy 18:9–12 and Leviticus 18–19 catalogue, the Canaanites were deep in the appalling sins of child sacrifice, sexual immorality, witchcraft, and idolatry, all of which are sins worthy of God’s holy anger. What is more, God gave them ample time to repent, and some even did (Genesis 15:16; Joshua 2:8–13). God does not sadistically delight to judge but rather calls all to repentance (Ezekiel 33:11). Yet He will not hold back His judgment forever. And even if God graciously chose to save and forgive some (Romans 9:21), one cannot call the destruction of the Canaanites an act of racist genocide, for God later inflicts the same punishment on His own people when they do worse than the Canaanites did (II Kings 21:11–12). In the New Testament we see that God’s judgments in the Old Testament are but shadows of a much greater judgment to come. Far from there being an Old Testament God of wrath in contrast with a New Testament God of love, the true God of the Bible is both just and loving and is reserving His greatest outpouring of wrath for the last great day (Revelations 19:11–21). Indeed, God even came in the flesh to take this just wrath on himself for the sake of his people. While this affirmation of the justice of God does not answer all the questions of this troubling passage, it points a way for us to trust that God is good and does good—always (Psalm 119:68).

## **Whole Bible Connections**

TEACHING THE NEXT GENERATION. The rise of each new generation of Israelites poses a new challenge. If the older generation does not pass on what they have learned, Israel will forget all that they are. Hence Moses warns repeatedly about forgetfulness (4:9, 23; 6:12; 8:11, 14, 19; 9:7). Indeed, forgetfulness is the road to apostasy: forgetfulness leads to a lack of gratitude, which in turn leads to self-reliant boasting (8:11–18). The antidote to forgetfulness is diligent teaching, which is commanded in 6:6–9 and modeled in 6:20–25. Unfortunately, the very generation that Moses addresses fails in this all-important command, and we read with horror in Judges 2:10 that “All that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that He had done for Israel.” Many times thereafter in Israel we see godly men followed by godless sons.

**Please answer the following questions:**

**Chapter 7**

1. Who are the people in the land, that will be cast out? (v. 1)
2. What were they not to make with them. (v. 2)
3. Why is it necessary to run them out totally? (v. 3)
4. Why should they not marry these people? What would happen to those who did? (v. 4)
5. What should they do to the altars, and images? What were they associated with? (v. 5)
6. Why did the Lord choose Israel? (v. 8)
7. What question did the Lord know that the Israelites would ask in their heart? (v. 17)
8. What were they to remember, to help them not be afraid? (v. 18)
9. How would the Lord drive out the nations that occupied Canaan? (vv. 22-24)
10. Why were the Israelites not to take the silver and gold from the graven images into their houses? (v. 25)

## Chapter 8

1. The generation about to enter the land could wrongly view their time of wandering in the wilderness as God's punishment for their sin. In fact, the punishment was on the previous generation, who died in the wilderness, and God intended in time to bring great blessing on the current generation (vv. 7–10; 1:39). But first there were several redemptive lessons the wilderness should have taught them. What were those lessons? (vv. 8:1–10)
2. Why is it important for them to keep the commandments? (v. 1)
3. What was the purpose of the 40 years of wandering? (v. 2)
4. How had God fed them? (v. 3)
5. What was miraculous about their clothing, and their feet on this journey? (v. 4)
6. Those the LORD loves, He does what? (v. 5)
7. What kind of land has God given them? (v. 6)
8. Why will there be no lack of food for them? (v. 8)
9. For Israel, "forgetting" in this passage is more than amnesia; it is willfully embracing their pride and the lies they tell themselves in their hearts. What are the specific lies Israel will be tempted to speak to themselves? How does Moses rebuke those lies? (vv. 8:11–20)

10. When is it easy to forget where the blessings come from? (vv. 12-14)

11. What metals will be found there? (v. 13)

12. What was in the wilderness? (v. 15)

13. They think what has gotten them this wealth? (v. 17)

14. If they worship false gods, what will happen to them? (v. 19)

15. If they act like heathens, they will be do what like heathens? (v. 20)