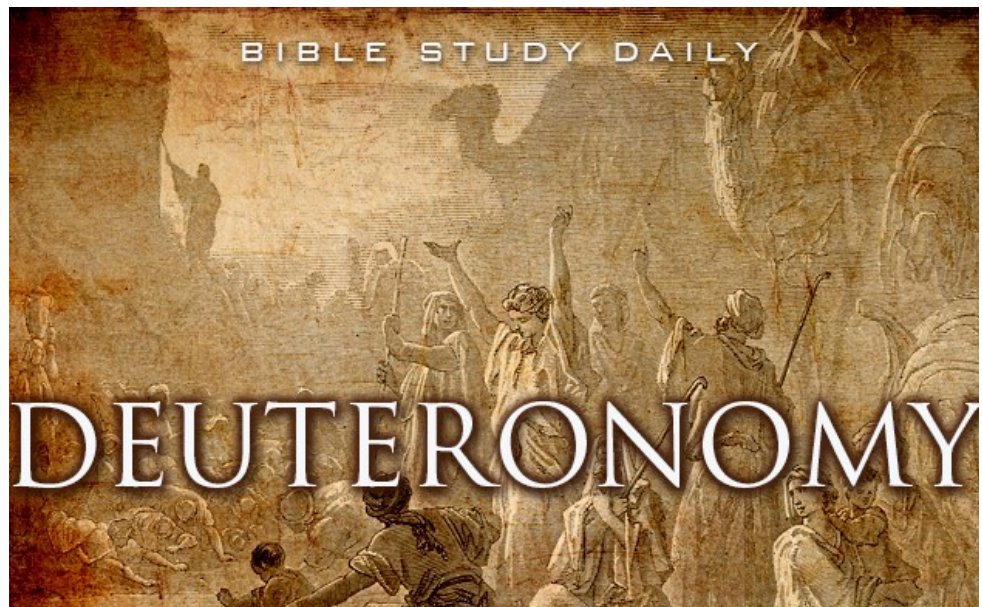




BIBLE STUDY DAILY



This document contains the introduction to the book of Deuteronomy as well as my study notes for the book.

Name

The English title “Deuteronomy” comes from the Greek Deuteronomion which means “the second law,” or “repetition of the law.” The Greek was a mis-translation of the Hebrew phrase “a copy of this law,” in Deuteronomy 17:18. The Hebrew name for the book is elleh haddebarim which means “These are the words.”

Author

Moses is the generally accepted author of the book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy 1: 1, 31:9, and 31:24 each state that Moses wrote as well as spoke these words. No doubt someone else, perhaps a scribe or other official, recorded the portion of the book dealing with Moses’ death (chapter 34).

Genre

Law (a restatement of much of the Leviticus law)

Literary Form

Oration (speeches)

Time Frame

Deuteronomy recounts the history of the nation Israel’s 40 years of wandering through the desert and their arrival at the Promised Land.

Emphasis

The people who left Egypt and received the law on Mt Sinai have died, and now the younger generation is getting ready to enter the Promised Land. Moses recounts their journey and restates the laws that apply to the nation of Israel.

The book of Deuteronomy emphasizes 4 major themes about God and the relationship between God and the people of Israel:

- The nature and character of God
- The covenant relationship between God and the people of Israel
- The people’s response in faith to God
- The consequences of sin

Outline

- First speech of Moses (1:1-4:43)
- Second speech of Moses (4:44-28:68)
- Third speech of Moses (29-30)
- Last words of Moses (31-34)

What I Noticed Today

(Deuteronomy 1-2)

The book of Deuteronomy is more than a repetition of the laws and commandments that God passed on to Moses at Mt. Sinai. In Deuteronomy, Moses not only restated much of the law but applied it to their way of life in the Promised Land.

The Israelites owned the land based on God's grace. They possessed the land through God's power. But they could only enjoy the land by being obedient to God.

Deuteronomy 1

In verses 1-5 the book opens with Moses' address to the people in the wilderness across the Jordan River in the 40th year, on the 1st day of the 11th month since their exodus from Egypt.

In verses 6-8 the Lord our God spoke to Moses instructing the Israelites to proceed into the Promised Land.

Note: The phrase "The Lord (Yahweh) our God" is used 23 times in Deuteronomy.

In verses 9-18 Moses recounted the Lord's promise to multiply the Israelites into a great nation and bless them. Moses appointed leaders from among each tribe over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens to judge the people. Any cases that were too difficult for them were to be brought to him.

In verses 19-46 God promised to give them the Promised Land. But the people, lacking faith, wanted to spy out the land. Moses selected 12 men, one from each tribe to spy out the land. The men returned saying the land was good, but they were afraid to go up and conquer the land. This resulted in the spy's false report and the people turning away from God. The penalty for their rebellion was to wander the desert until all the fighting men had died. The only ones of this generation who would enter the Promised Land were Joshua and Caleb.

Despite the Lord's rejection, the people decided to go up into the Promised Land anyway. The Amorites came out against them and defeated them.

Deuteronomy 2

In verses 1-7 40 years past and all the fighting men of the first census had died when God directed them to turn north and go through the country of the descendants of Esau.

They were told to avoid making trouble with the people of Esau because this land was given to them as their possession.

In verses 8-14 the Israelites journeyed past Edom and Moab:

The Israelites were to pass by the Edomites and travel toward the land of Moab.

But the Israelites were not to fight with the Moabites either since this land had been

given to them as their inheritance.

In verses 16-23 the Israelites journeyed past Ammon:

The Lord spoke to Moss and instructed the Israelites to journey past Moab toward the Ammonites.

They were not to fight with the Ammonites because the Lord had given them this land as their inheritance.

Note: The Ammonites were descendants of Lot. Ammon was the son of Lot born through his incestuous relationship with his daughters.

In verses 24-37 the Lord instructed the Israelites to take possession of the land of Sihon the Amorite King of Heshbon:

Moses sent messengers to Sihon asking permission to travel through the land but the Lord had given Sihon a stubborn heart.

Sihon sent his army out against the Israelites and the Israelites did battle with Sihon the Amorite king of Heshbon, defeated him, and took possession of his cities. They completely destroyed the people, took the livestock, and took plunder from all the cities for themselves.

But the Israelites avoided all the lands and people where the Lord had forbidden them.

Some thoughts for additional consideration:

- *A lack of faith at Kadesh Barnea kept the people out of the Promised Land for 40 years! How much of our lives do we waste by not following God in faith!*
- *God told the Israelites who to leave alone, and who to do battle with. How often do we do battle with the wrong people, either by doing battle with those whom we should leave alone, or not doing battle with whom we should?!*

What I Noticed Today

(Deuteronomy 3-4)

Deuteronomy 3

In verses 1-7 the Israelites marched to victory against Og of Bashan at the command of the Lord:

Og sent his army out against the Israelites and the Israelites did battle with Og, king of Bashan, defeated him, and took possession of his cities. They completely destroyed the people, took the livestock, and took plunder from all the cities for themselves.

The Israelites defeated Og of Bashan just as they had defeated Sihon of Heshbon.

In verses 8-11 the territory taken from the Amorite kings, Og and Sihon are described.

Note: The regions of Bashan and Heshbon are the same cities that 40 years before the people were afraid to attack. God promised they would have similar success as they conquered other lands because it was God who was fighting for them (3:22).

Note: The reference to Og's bed in verse 11 as being over 13 feet long and 6 feet wide is considered by most scholars to be a reference to his sarcophagus, not his regular bed.

In verses 12-17 the Transjordan land was divided among the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh:

Reuben was given the Moabite territory from the Arnon Gorge to Heshbon as their inheritance.

Gad was given the southern half of Gilead from Heshbon to the Jabbok River as their inheritance.

The half-tribe of Manasseh was given the rest of Gilead and all of Bashan as their inheritance. Jair and Makir (Machir), descendants of Manasseh were singled out.


Note: Jair was a descendant of Makir (1 Chronicles 2:21-23) which suggest the battles to conquer this region may have taken place over a number of years.

In verses 18-20 Moses reminds the people of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh of their promise to send their fighting men with the rest of the Israelites to help them take possession of their land. After they had taken possession of the Promised Land they could return to their families.

In verses 21-29 the mantle of leadership of the Israelites is transferred to Joshua:

Moses encouraged Joshua saying the Lord would do to their enemies in the Promised Land, what He had done to these two kings (Og and Sihon).

Moses pleaded with God to allow him to enter the Promised Land. God was angry



with Moses because of his rebellion in striking the rock at Meribah. God allowed Moses only to look at the land from the top of Mount Pisgah.

The Lord instructed Moses to commission, encourage, and strengthen Joshua for he would lead the people into the Promised Land.

Note: God led the people into the Promised land to claim their possession, and in so doing, he had kept His promise to them. Rebellion against God over the 40 years in the desert was consistently punished.

Deuteronomy 4

Deuteronomy 4 recounts Moses' speech to the people instructing them in God's commands for obedience, a prohibition against idolatry, a reverence for God alone, the establishment of cities of refuge, and an introduction to the law.

In verses 1-8 Moses instructs the people of Israel on the Law of God:

Moses warned them to keep all of God's commands and to be diligent in passing these commands on to their children.

Moses reminded the people of the treachery of the Moabite women at Baal Peor who led the men of Israel astray and all those who died as a result of the plague.

In verses 9-14 Moses reminded the people of their experience at Mount Horeb:

Moses warned the people to be careful and guard themselves against falling into sin.

They were to teach the Laws to their children and grandchildren.

The Lord had spoken to them in the fire and had given them the Ten Commandments written on the two stone tablets.

In verses 15-24 Moses warned the Israelites against worshiping idols:

Moses warned the people not to act corruptly by making and worshiping any form of an idol.

Do not forget the covenant the Lord made with you and make an idol for God is a jealous God.


In verses 25-31 the result of not living righteously warned Moses, was that they would be dispersed from the land.

Moses warned that if they act corruptly and make an idol, they will be destroyed and God will disperse them from the land.

In the later days, you will search for the Lord when you are in distress and will return to Him and obey Him. He will not abandon you or forget the covenant He swore to you.

Note: The dispersion referenced in verses 25-31 could be any of the times the Israelites were dispersed from the Promised Land, but ultimately, the return to the Lord is seen when Jesus returns for his Millennial reign.

In verses 32-40 Moses shifts from a future orientation speaking of the "latter days" to the past experience of the people hearing from God who spoken out of the fire:



God created man, the earth and the heavens.

God had selected the Israelites to be His people whom He spoke t out of the fire.

God had chosen the Israelites when He performed many signs and wonders and gave them victory in wars.

God protected them and delivered them from Egypt.

Therefore, they should know there is no other God like Him. Hear His voice and obey Him. Keep His statutes and commands so that you will prosper in the land that the Lord is giving you.

Note: The phrase “so that it may go well with you” occurs eight times in the book of Deuteronomy (4:40, 5:16, 6:3, 6:18, 12:25, 12:28, 19:13, 22:7).

In verses 41-43 Moses identifies three cities of refuge in the Transjordan region: Bezer, Ramoth, and Golan. These were the cities for the tribes of Rueben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh where someone who had killed someone could flee.

In verses 44-49 Moses restated the Law (tôrâh) for the Israelite people on the east side of the Jordan after they had defeated the kings of Sihon and Bashan. This was the same law he gave to the Israelites three months after they left Egypt.

Some thoughts for additional consideration:

- *How often to do feel God’s leading and hear His promises yet a lack of faith allows fear to block us from achieving God’s best in our lives? Are we diligently passing on God’s teaching to our children? If not, we are only one generation away from apostasy.*

What I Noticed Today

(Deuteronomy 5-7)

Deuteronomy 4:44-5:33 contains the beginning of Moses' second speech to the Israelites regarding their covenant obligations to the Lord. Its form is typical of suzerain treaties of the time. This section, which lays the historical foundation, is followed by chapters 6-11 in which the Israelites are called to total allegiance to the Lord. Moses continues in chapters 12-26:15 with a detailed exposition of the Law. Moses' speech concludes in 26:16-19 with a short declaration of commitment by the Israelites to the Lord.

Note: Suzerain treaties were between a king and a vassal or subject. They begin with historical precedent (prologue) followed by the obligations of the vassals to the king. The obligations portion was typically divided into two sections: an exhortation to complete allegiance to the king, and the specific obligations of the vassals.

Deuteronomy 5

Deuteronomy 5 is Moses' speech to the entire nation.

In verses 1-5 Moses tells them that they are to hear, learn, and do each of God's statutes.

Note: The Hebrew words carry a very strong emphasis. The word for "hear" means to listen intently. It is listening that leads to obedience. The word for "learn" means to lay ahold of or to memorize. And the word for "do" means to obey in the broadest, fullest sense possible.

In verses 6-21 Moses goes on to restate the Ten Commandments. The first four have to do with our relationship to God, and the next six are regarding our relationship to each other.

In verses 22-33 the Lord spoke these commands on the mountain and gave them to Moses written on two stone tablets.

- The people were afraid they would die if they came too close to the fire of the Lord and asked Moses to be their mediator; to listen to everything God says and then tell them. They promised to listen and obey.
- The Lord heard the people's request for Moses to be a mediator but suggested they would not fear God and keep His commandments.
- The Lord told Moses to tell the people to return to their tents and He would give Moses all the commands, statutes, and ordinances for the Israelites to obey as they went into the Promised Land.
- They were to be careful to obey all the Law so they would prosper and have a long life in the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 6

Deuteronomy 6-11 contains all the commands of the Lord. They are summarized in the single command (Deuteronomy 6:5) to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your might.”

In verses 1-3 Moses exhorts the people to obey all of the Law so they will prosper and multiply as God promised.

In verses 6:4-9 we see that there is no separation between secular and sacred. God expects us to keep his commands at all times, in all ways. We are to diligently teach our children about God.

In verses 10-19 Moses warns the people not to forget the Lord when they become prosperous:

- The Lord was about to give the Promised Land to the Israelites and they would live in cities they did not build, and enjoy the fruit of vineyards they did not plant.
- Moses warned them not to forget God in the midst of this prosperity.
- Moses said the Lord is a jealous God who would become angry and wipe them out of the land if they failed to observe His commands, statutes, and ordinances.
- Righteousness would be theirs if they remained faithful to the Lord’s commands.

Deuteronomy 7


Deuteronomy 7 states once again that the Israelites are God’s chosen people.

In verses 1-5 Moses instructs the Israelites that the Lord would drive out the inhabitants of the land He was giving them. The seven nations to be driven out of the Promised Land included the: Hittites, Gergashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites).

- When the Lord delivers these people over to you, you are to destroy them completely.
- Make no treaty with them and show them no mercy.
- Do not intermarry with them or they will turn you away from God to worship other gods.
- If you do, the Lord’s anger will burn against you and He will destroy you.

In verses 6-11 the Lord chose the Israelites sovereignly and they belong to Him. They are His treasured possession! He loves them, and because He loves them He has promised to redeem them from slavery and bring them into the Promised Land. God is faithful to fulfill His promises. He is a jealous God who will punish those who rebel against Him.

In verses 12-16 the result that stems from the Lord’s covenantal promise is that if they keep His statutes and do them, He will multiply them and bless their crops, wine, oil, and herds when He brings them into the Promised Land.

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- In verses 17-26 the Lord reminds the people, He will go before them and make their enemies' fear the Israelites. The Lord would cause them to panic and in their confusion would be helpless in battle against the Israelites.
 - God does not give them the Promised Land all at once (Numbers 7:22). Rather, He will give it to them little by little as they can handle it.
 - They must burn up the carved images of their gods, and must not covet the gold and silver images or they will be ensnared by them.
 - You must not bring anything abhorrent into your houses or you will be set apart for destruction.

Some additional thoughts for consideration:

- *God will certainly fulfill His promises, but only when we demonstrate our love for Him by our faithfulness! We have the power of the Holy Spirit within us, yet we still rebel against God. Often we are in a hurry to claim God's promises but He grants them to us little by little as we demonstrate that we're ready for the next step.*

What I Noticed Today

(Deuteronomy 8-10)

Deuteronomy 8

In verses 1-6 Moses exhorts the Israelites to remember their time in the wilderness:

- Moses reminds the Israelites that God expects them to keep the whole law, and that He will test them to know what is in their hearts.
- The Lord had led the Israelites through the desert and tested their faith by giving them manna.
- The Lord had disciplined the Israelites just as you would discipline your sons. So keep fearing the Lord and walk in His ways.

Note: The first test is will they hear and obey every word of His commandments?

In verses 7-20 Moses exhorts the Israelites not to forget God's blessings:

- The Lord is bringing the Israelites into the Promised Land. A good land of flowing water and plentiful food. They will lack nothing.
- In the midst of this great blessing be careful not to forget the Lord and fail to keep His commands and ordinances.
- Be careful not to become proud and forget that it was the Lord who rescued you out of slavery in Egypt.
- Remember that it was the Lord who gave you the power to gain wealth in order to confirm the covenant He swore to your forefathers.
- If you ever go after other gods and worship them, you will perish like the nations the Lord is about to destroy for you.

Note: The second test is will they remain humble when God blesses them, or will they become self-righteous, thinking that the blessings are a result of their own hands?

Deuteronomy 9

In Deuteronomy 9 Moses reminds the Israelites that God has chosen them, not because of their own righteousness, but because the other nations were so wicked.

In verses 1-6 Moses encourages the Israelites saying though they are about to cross the Jordan and go up against a powerful people, the Lord will go ahead of them. He will devastate them and subdue them for you.

- Moses warns them not to think the Lord is driving out these people because the Israelites are so righteous.
- The Lord is giving this land to them for three reasons: 1) He is driving out the people because they are so wicked, 2) He swore in a covenant to give this land to

the Israelites, 3) It is a gift of His grace because the Israelites are a stiff-necked people.

In verses 7-29 Moses reminds the Israelites of their previous rebellion against the Lord. The Israelites were a rebellious bunch, provoking God to the point that if Moses had not intervened on their behalf God was ready to destroy them all and start over.

Verses 7-21. As an example of their rebelliousness, Moses recounts the story of the Exodus generation making and worshipping the golden calves.

Verses 22-24. There are also the examples of when they complained about the hardships at Teberah (Numbers 11), the water at Massah (Exodus 17), and the food at Kibroth Hattavah (Numbers 11).

Verses 25-29. Moses humbled himself, interceding on behalf of the people by praying to God for 40 days and nights so that God would not destroy them.

Deuteronomy 10

Law and obedience are in view in Deuteronomy 10.

In verses 1-5 Moses returns to God, and God writes the Ten Commandments on new tablets of stone to replace the ones that Moses had broken. In doing so, God provided the law to the generation that was about to enter the Promised Land.


In verses 6-11 Aaron died while the Israelites were at Moserah. The tribe of Levi was commissioned to carry the Ark of the Covenant, and to stand before the Lord. For this reason, the Levites do not have an inheritance like their brothers because the Lord is their inheritance.

- Moses remained on the mountain 40 days and nights like the first time, interceding for the people. The Lord agreed not to annihilate the people and ordered Moses to continue on the journey to the Promised Land.

In verses 12-22 the balance of the chapter highlights what God requires of the Israelites:

- To fear God,
- To walk in His ways,
- To love God, and
- To serve God with all their heart and soul.
- Circumcision was an outward sign of their relationship to God, and now God says they were to circumcise their hearts.
- Love the foreigner, since you were foreigners in Egypt.
- Fear Yahweh your God and worship Him.
- Remain faithful to Him and take oaths in His name.

Note: The Exodus generation went through several cycles of being blessed by God, then rebelling against God, and being punished by God. They were stubborn and self



-righteous. If it were not for Moses interceding on their behalf, God would have wiped them out and started over.

Note: Moses re-stated this history of the rebellious sins of their forefathers so the current generation will be mindful of the temptation to return to the sins of the previous generations.

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *How often are we just like the Israelites?*
- *We ask God for His blessings, then when they come we get to thinking we earned it all on our own, and we forget that God is the one who blessed us in the first place! Or worse, we reject God's leading, become rebellious taking on the characteristics of the sinful world instead of His chosen children?*

What I Noticed Today

(Deuteronomy 11-13)

Deuteronomy 11

Five times in the first seven verses of Deuteronomy 11 Moses reminded the people of Israel what God did for them.

Moses used two examples of God's judgment. The first example is external, what God did to Egypt. The second example is internal; what God did to protect Israel from internal rebellion against God.

Moses stressed the importance of learning from the past. The parents must set an example for their children and teach them since the children had not experienced these events themselves.

In verses 8-21 what God asks in return is that the people obey Him:

- The result of obeying God is His promise to provide for them and protect them.
- At the same time, they are warned that if they are deceived by anyone and they fall away from God the result will be God's anger and judgment.
- Because of their tendency to forget, they are also warned about the importance of teaching the children, their future generations, to surround themselves with God's truth!

In verses 22-32 the Lord promises if the people follow His commands and walk in His ways that He will drive out all their enemies and no one will be able to stand against them.

- These instructions contain both a promised blessing and a curse. If they obey God a blessing, if they reject God, a curse.
- When they enter the Promised Land they are to proclaim a blessing from Mount Gerizim, and a curse from Mount Ebal.
- When they cross the Jordan and enter the Promised Land to take possession of it, they are to be careful to follow all of the statutes and ordinances that were given to them by the Lord.

Note: Mount Gerizim and Ebal are twin peaks opposite a valley. It is where Jacob bought property and dug a well (Genesis 33:19-20). It is also where Jesus will encounter the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:20).

Deuteronomy 12

Deuteronomy 12 opens with a repeated instruction for the people to obey all the commands of the Lord when they enter the Promised Land.

In verses 2-14 the Lord commands the Israelites to cleanse the Promised land of foreign idols, and establish places of worship:

- God's first instruction to the people when they enter the Promised Land is to cleanse the land of idols, altars, and other elements of idol worship.
- Once this is done they are to select appropriate places to bring their offering and worship God.
- The Lord will choose the place in the Promised Land where they are to bring their burnt offerings, sacrifices, vows, and personal contributions. They must bring their offerings only to the place the Lord chooses.

Note: Three times in Deuteronomy 12 God tells them to rejoice in their places of worship!

In verses 15-28 Moses provides the Lord's instructions regarding what may be eaten:

- Wild animals whether the person is clean or unclean may be slaughtered and eaten, but they must not eat the blood.
- They may not eat inside the city gates the first tenth of the grain, the olive oil, the wine, or the first-born of the animals. These must be eaten in the presence of the Lord in the place He chooses.

In verses 29-32 Moses warns against following the pagan practices of the people living in the land:

- When you enter the Promised Land be careful not to be ensnared by the evil practices of the people living the land. Do not ask about their practices. They are evil.
- Be careful to follow the practices commanded by the Lord. Do not add anything to it, or take anything away from it.

Deuteronomy 13

Deuteronomy 13 is yet another warning to the people to avoid false prophets and idolatry.

In verses 1-5 the warning is to beware a prophet or someone who tells them to follow after other gods:

- A prophet or someone who has dreams attempts to pull the people into worshipping other gods must be destroyed. Rebellion against God cannot be tolerated. In order to maintain their purity, the evil must be purged.

In verses 6-11 the warning is to not tolerate idol worship:

- This warning is extended to family members and close friends. Anyone who entices you to go and worship foreign gods, you must not show mercy or pity. You must kill him by stoning. All Israel will hear and be afraid and they will no longer do this kind of evil.

In verses 12-18 the warning against idolatry applies to cities as well:

- In case a city becomes corrupt, you are to inquire, investigate, and interrogate thoroughly. If it is true, you are to destroy the entire city, tear it down, burn it,



and never rebuild.

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *We have such a tendency to forget God's commands. We forget that He expects us to obey Him. Instead of remembering and rejoicing in all that God has done for us, and despite all the warnings we have a tendency to march straight into sin and rebellion.*

What I Noticed Today

(Deuteronomy 14-16)

Deuteronomy 14

Deuteronomy 14 discusses forbidden practices and setting aside a tithe for the Lord.

The opening section of Chapter 14:1-21 is a great encouragement! Moses refers to the people as “sons of the Lord your God.” Despite all their rebellion, Moses refers to them as part of God’s family, a people holy to the Lord, chosen to be His treasured possession! This section opens and closes with the reminder that they should do this because “you are a people holy to the Lord your God.”

In verses 3-21 Moses describes three ways the Israelites are to be set apart:

- They were not to mutilate their bodies which was a common practice within pagan religions.
- They were not to eat unclean animals, fish, or birds.
- They must prepare their food in accordance with God’s laws to remain holy.

In verses 22-29 Moses deals with their tithes:

- They were to bring a tithe of their crop every year to a place God chooses and they were to eat it and rejoice in God’s presence.
- Every third year their tithe was set aside for the Levites, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widows.
- It was God’s intention that the people would share their blessings with the less fortunate so they also could celebrate and rejoice in the Lord.
- Then the Lord will bless you in all the work that you do.

Deuteronomy 15

Deuteronomy 15 proclaims the requirements of the Sabbatical year (the seventh year).

Note: This chapter uses the phrase “the Lord will bless you” five times as a reminder that God had blessed them, and He expected them to be a blessing to others.

In verses 1-11 debts were to be released:

- You must cancel debts at the end of every seventh year. You may continue to collect a debt from a foreigner, but not from other Israelites.
- When the Lord blesses you, you may lend to other nations but you are not to borrow from them.
- You must not be stingy or hard-hearted against a neighbor who is poor. Instead,

you must loan to him freely, and not worry about whether you are repaid. Then the Lord will bless you in all you do.

Note: Verse 4 proclaims “there will be no poor among you” because when you obey the Lord will bless you. However, verse 11 says, “there will never cease to be poor people in the land.” Israel never fully obeyed the Lord. While there should have been no poor because of the Lord’s blessings, sin prevented a full measure of the Lord’s blessing. Jesus said, “You will always have the poor with you” (Matthew 26:11).

In verses 12-18 servants/slaves were to be released:

- A fellow Hebrew who sells himself to you to pay a debt must be released in the seventh year.
- When you release him, give generously to him from you flocks, winepress, and grains.
- But, if the slave desires to stay with you, pierce his ear with an awl and he will become your slave for life.

In verses 19-23 the firstborn male animals are to be consecrated (Exodus 13:11-15):

- Every first-born male animal is to be set aside and consecrated to the Lord.
- Each year you are to eat it before the Lord in the place the Lord chooses.
- If it has a defect it cannot be sacrificed to the Lord, but must be eaten at home.
- Both clean and unclean persons may eat it.
- The blood must not be eaten. It must be poured out on the ground.

Note: God’s many blessings upon the people were contingent on them strictly obeying and doing God’s commandments.


Deuteronomy 16

In Deuteronomy 16 Moses highlights three of the seven feasts ordered by God (Leviticus 23):

- Verses 1-8. Feast of Unleavened Bread, Weeks, and Tabernacles (or Booths). The Feast Unleavened Bread looks back as a reminder of how God saved and redeemed the people from the land of Egypt.
- Verses 9-12. The Feast of Weeks is a celebration of thanksgiving to God for the harvest and His provision.
- Verses 13-17. The Feast of Tabernacles (Booths) is a reminder of the 40 years of desert wanderings

In verses 18-20 Moses commands the people to appoint judges and officials over the people:

- They are to judge righteously, not denying justice to anyone.
- They are not to accept bribes.

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- The judges are to ensure that Asherah poles are not erected and that people do not worship them. The Lord hates them.

Note: Asherah poles were a symbol of Asherah, the goddess of fertility, in the worship of Baal.

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *What a blessing it is to be part of God's family! To be considered His sons and daughters, to be set apart, holy! But along with this blessing comes the responsibility to remain set apart to God. We are to be a witness to the world of what it means to follow God, and we are to do it in such a way that others are drawn to the Father.*

What I Noticed Today

(Deuteronomy 17-20)

I'm not sure why I didn't notice this before but, since the beginning of Deuteronomy the phrase, "the Lord your God" (or a variation) occurs over and over. Moses is telling the people what God expects of them, but making sure they realize these commands are coming from God, not simply from him.

At the end of Deuteronomy 16 Moses relates God's instructions for establishing a system of justice that was to be fair and impartial. Deuteronomy 17 concerns the execution of justice.

Deuteronomy 17

Deuteronomy 17 begins by reminding the people once again that they are to remain holy, set apart, and to not transgress the covenant God made with the people.

In verses 1-7 the idea of transgressing is immediately applied to those who would seek to worship foreign gods. On the evidence of two to three witnesses, these people were to be put to death by stoning in order to keep the entire nation from falling away.

In verses 8-13 difficult cases involving bloodshed, lawsuits, or assaults were to be brought to the judges at the city gates.

- More difficult cases were to be brought before the priests and the chief judge.
- People are reminded that they must be true to all of God's law they cannot pick and choose what they will obey. Anyone who brought a case to the priests and judges for adjudication must obey whatever they decided.
- Any refusal to obey the decision of the judges/priests was considered a capital offense.

In verses 14-20 the Lord also lays out laws concerning kings:

- The king must be a man of the Lord's choosing.
- The king must not acquire many horses for himself or send men back to Egypt to acquire them.
- He must not acquire many wives so that his heart will not be led astray.
- They were not to be concerned with the acquisition of wealth.
- As they sit on the throne they are to write for themselves a copy of the book of the law, keep it with them and read from it every day so as to not turn away from God.

Deuteronomy 18

Deuteronomy 18 includes instructions regarding provisions for the Levites and an

admonition against cultic practices.

In verses 1-8 there is another reminder not to neglect their offerings for the Levites since they have no inheritance in the land.

In verses 9-22 there is yet another reminder to remain holy by not following any of the abominable practices of the people in the land.

- Anyone who does these things is detestable and the Lord is driving out the people of the land because of their detestable practices.
- God promised to send prophets who will speak the word of the Lord. The people must listen to him. Anyone who refuses to listen to the Lord's prophet will be held accountable.
- But, the Lord warns that some prophets are not from God. The way to tell if they are prophets of God is whether or not what they say comes true.

Deuteronomy 19

Deuteronomy 19 restates the laws concerning the cities of refuge and justice for the accused.

- God makes a clear distinction between causing an accidental death, and premeditated murder.
- A total of six cities were to be set aside (three on each side of the Jordan River) where a person accused of manslaughter could seek refuge.
- However, if someone committed premeditated murder and fled to a city of refuge they were to be handed over to the avenger of blood to be killed. In this way they will purge the evil from the Israelites.

Note: In the event of growth in the population, an additional three cities were to be set aside as cities of refuge.

In verses 15-21 concluding this section on matters of justice, God established a rule of evidence that an individual cannot be convicted on the testimony of a single witness, but only when there are two or three witnesses.

Note: This witness rule comes into play during one of Jesus' trials.

- If one person testifies against another and there are no other witnesses, the two must be brought before the Lord in the presence of the priests and judges.
- The priests and judges must investigate the matter thoroughly. If one person is found to have lied accusing his brother falsely he is to be punished by doing to him what he intended to do to the other person. In this way, the evil will be purged from among the people.
- You must not show pity; judgment must be life for life, eye for eye, etc. (Exodus 21:23-25).

Note: This concept of proportionate justice is also known by its Latin term: Lex Talionis.

Deuteronomy 20

Deuteronomy 20 establishes laws of warfare (similar instructions in Deuteronomy 2:24-3:11).

- The priests are to step forward and remind the Israelites the battle is the Lord's and that He goes before them. They need not be afraid.
- The army is to be an all-volunteer army. God excuses those who have just built a new house, recently planted a vineyard, become engaged, or are fearful.
- Separate rules were established for land that God had promised the Israelites versus land that was far away. Lands further away from the Promised Land were spared if they opened their gates to live in peace with the Israelites. The Promised Land of the Jebusites, Amorites, Hittites, Canaanites, Perizzites, and Hivites were all to be completely destroyed.
- When they laid siege to a city for a long time they were not to cut down trees used for food, but it was alright to cut down trees that did not produce fruit and use them as siegeworks.

Some *thoughts for further consideration*:

- *The administration of justice is important to God. The people were to remain holy and they could not remain holy if there was an element of the people that turned away from God. Those that turned away purposefully were to be killed so that they would not corrupt others.*
- *In some ways this seems harsh, but as we shall see the Israelite's reluctance to purge their body of unfaithful men did indeed cause the people to turn away from God.*
- *I wonder what would happen today if our leaders took the time to handwrite God's commands and keep it with them if they would follow God more faithfully!*

What I Noticed Today

(Deuteronomy 21-23)

Deuteronomy 21

God is concerned for human rights and Deuteronomy 21 contains laws regarding people who were murdered in the open country, a woman who is seduced or raped, a person who is neglected or not cared for, private property, and the rights of the firstborn.

In verses 1-9 if a man is found slain in the open countryside his body is to be taken to the nearest town. The elders and priests must get a young cow and break its neck by a stream and declare they did not kill the man or see who did. In this way, they will be declared innocent of the bloodshed.

In verses 10-14 a woman captured in the course of war must be allowed one month to mourn for her family (cut her hair and nails). After that, she may be taken as a wife. However, if you are unhappy with her you must not sell her, but let her go free because you have humiliated her.

In verses 15-17 if a man has more than one wife, he must not show favoritism to the son of the second wife over the first wife. The firstborn son must maintain the rights of the firstborn son.

In verses 18-21 a rebellious son who refused to listen to and honor his parents was to be brought before the elders at the city gate. If guilty, he must be stoned by the elders to purge the evil from the land.

Note: This rebellious son had violated the fifth commandment (Deuteronomy 5:16).

In verses 22-23 anyone found guilty who is executed by hanging on a tree must not be left overnight. He must be buried that day.

Note: God is a God of justice. Individuals, as well as communities, were collectively responsible for maintaining God laws and commands.


Deuteronomy 22

Deuteronomy 22 continues with various laws regarding lost possessions, and laws concerning sexual immorality.

In verses 1-4 if you find a brother's animal or cloak you are to return it to him. If he lives far from you, you are to bring it to your home and keep it until your brother returns looking for it. If a brother's animal falls into a pit you must not ignore it, but help him lift it out.

In verses 5-12 you must preserve the natural distinctions established by the Lord:

- Men are not to wear women's clothes, and women are not to wear men's clothes.

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- You must not take a mother hen along with her chicks. You may take the eggs or the chicks but leave the hen.
 - If you build a house, you must also build a railing on the roof so that someone does not fall from it.
 - Do not plant a vineyard with two types of seed or both crops will be defiled.
 - Do not yoke an ox with a donkey.
 - Do not make clothes of wool and linen.
 - You must place tassels on the corners of your outer garments.

Note: These instructions describe principles of the Lord's created order and how certain things should not be mixed.

Note: The instruction for placing tassels on the garments is explained in Numbers 15:37-41. The tassels served as a reminder of the commands of the Lord and the responsibility of the Israelites to obey them.

In verses 13-30 Moses describes violations of sexual purity:

- If a man believes the woman he marries is not a virgin, the woman's mother and father are to take the evidence of her virginity (the bedding) to the elders at the city gate. The elders will punish the man and fine him 100 silver shekels. The fine will be given to the woman's father. The woman will remain the wife of the man and he may not divorce her. However, if the woman is guilty she is to be stoned by the men of the city.
- If a man is discovered have intercourse with another man's wife, they must both be stoned.
- If a woman is engaged and a man has intercourse with her in the city they must both be stoned. However, if the engaged woman is raped in the countryside only the man is to be stoned because there was no one there to rescue her.
- If a man rapes a woman who is a virgin and not engaged, he is to be fined 50 shekels and the fine given to the woman's father. She must become his wife and he cannot divorce her.


Note: In all cases, evil was to be purged from the nation, so that the people would remain holy, set apart to God.

Deuteronomy 23

Deuteronomy 23 reveals that God is concerned with both major details and the minor ones.

In verses 1-8 God is very strict about who may come into the assembly of God and who may not. No one whose testicles were crushed, no one born of a foreign union, no Ammonites or Moabites were allowed. The Edomites and the Egyptians, however, were not to be abhorred.

In verses 9-14 because God walked among the people in the camp, the camp was to be kept clean and holy because God is holy.



In verses 15-16 slaves who escaped from ruthless masters were to be given sanctuary by the Israelites.

Note: This was contrary to what was a common practice among the pagan nations.

In verses 17-18 prostitution was a common practice among pagan nations and was considered worship by many of them. As another example of being set apart, Israelites were prohibited from prostitution. Even money earned from prostitution was not to be brought in as an offering to God.

In verses 19-20 another example of Israelites being set-apart was they were not to charge interest on any kind of loans to other Israelites. They were allowed to charge interest to foreigners, but not other Israelites.

In verses 21-23 God takes vows very seriously, and any promise made to God needed to be fulfilled as promised.

In verses 24-25 when you enter a neighbor's vineyard you may eat as many grapes as you want but you must not put them into a container. When you enter a neighbor's grain, you may pluck heads of grain and eat them but you must not put a sickle to it.

Note: This final instruction is directed to someone traveling through the land.

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *God established many laws and commands designed to keep the people holy, and to set them apart from the pagan nations that surrounded them. Many of the laws seem harsh, but ultimately God's laws were for their benefit.*

What I Noticed Today

(Deuteronomy 24-27)

Deuteronomy 24

There are three main sections to the laws and commandments established in Deuteronomy 24.

The first section (vv. 1-5) deals primarily with relationships between husbands and wives and issues of divorce.

- If a man finds something improper about his wife, he may issue her a certificate of divorce and send her away. If she remarries and divorces again, the first husband may not remarry her, that is detestable to the Lord.
- When a man is newly married he is not liable to join the army for one year.

The second section (vv. 6-9) deals primarily with lending, kidnapping, and the care of infectious disease:

- Do not take a millstone as security for a debt and thereby deprive a man of his ability to earn a living.
- A kidnapper has deprived someone of their freedom and must be punished by death. You must purge the evil from among the people.
- Be careful to follow all of the commands of the priest to care for an infectious skin disease.

The third section (vv. 10-22) deals with relationships between the rich and the poor.

- Do not enter the home of a man to collect security for a debt.
- If a man is poor and only has a cloak to offer as security you must return it to him at night.
- Hired hands must be paid their wages every day at the end of the day so they can provide for their families.
- Each person is to be judged according to their own sins.

Note: In the Near East it was not uncommon for a son to be put to death for the sins of his father.

- Do not deny justice to the fatherless, a widow, or a foreigner in your land.
- When you harvest your land leave some behind for the fatherless, the widows, and the foreigners to gather so they will not be humiliated by having to beg.

Note: In each case, God is stressing the importance of being fair, being honest, and being generous with those less fortunate.

Deuteronomy 25

Deuteronomy 25 continues with laws that deal with wrongs in society and proper justice.

The wrongs include abusive punishments, abuse of animals, rejection off a sister in law (we'll see this play out in Ruth), excessive force, dishonesty in business, and cruelty to God's people.

- When there is a dispute between men they will go to court and appear before the judges. If the guilty party deserves to be flogged, no more than 40 lashes are allowed.
- Do not prevent an ox from eating while it treads out the grain.
- If a man died without having children his brother shall take his wife and bear children in his brother's name so his name will not be blotted out. If he refused to marry his brother's wife the elders of the town were to remove one of his sandals and spit in his face as a sign of their disapproval.

Note: This is the law of the kinsman redeemer.

- If two men are fighting and the wife of one intercedes and grabs his genitals, her hand must be cut off.
- You must have honest weights and measures.
- Remember what the Amalekites did to you, showing you no mercy they did not fear God. Destroy them all.

Deuteronomy 26

Deuteronomy 26 reinforces the importance of the offerings of first fruits and the tithes to the Levites after the people arrive in the Promised Land.

When the people enter the Promised Land and have taken possession of it in the third year they must offer their first fruits to the Lord:

- When the tithes to the Levites is completed, they are to make a positive affirmation that they have done as instructed (v. 13), a negative confirmation that they have not transgressed any of God's laws (v. 14), and then pray for a blessing from God (v. 15).
- Moses reminds the people that these commands come from the Lord and they are to be careful to do them with all their heart and soul (v. 16, see also Deuteronomy 6:5).
- Note: This language is treaty language meaning that the people accept the terms of God's covenant.
- Immediately following this agreement, Moses restated the covenant which God made with Israel (Deuteronomy 18-19, see also Exodus 19:5).

Deuteronomy 27-29:1

This section contains the third speech of Moses given to the Israelites. It concerns the renewal of the covenant with the Lord, the blessings that will be derived from obeying, and the curses that will come for disobedience.

Deuteronomy 27

Deuteronomy 27 contains Moses instructions for a renewal of the covenant with the Lord.

In verses 1-10 Moses begins with instructions for the building of a special altar on the day they cross into the Promised Land.

- It is to be of smooth stones and coated with plaster, with the words of the law written on it. Both burnt and peace offering are to be made there and the people are to rejoice before God.

In verses 11- 26 Moses then gave instructions that on the same day they were to divide the entire nation of Israel standing between two mountains (see this done in Joshua 8:32-35).

- The tribes of Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin were to stand on Mt. Gerizim.
- The tribes of Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali were to stand across the valley on Mt. Ebal.
- The tribes on Mt. Gerizim would call out a blessing while the tribes on Mt. Ebal would call out a curse, and each blessing and each curse would be answered with an Amen by the people.

Note: What is especially interesting about this assignment of tribes is that the tribes on Mt. Gerizim were the sons of Rachel and Leah while the tribes on Mt. Ebal were the sons of the handmaidens Zilpah and Bilhah (plus Reuben who had given up his birthright and Zebulun).

Note: Mt. Gerizim was a mountain of trees and water while Mt. Ebal was barren.

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *Once again God demonstrates that He is concerned with every aspect of the people's lives; from the very important issues of marriage fidelity and treatment of the less fortunate, to issues as simple as taking proper care of their animals.*
- *What really stands out to me is the admonition to obey God with all their heart and soul and to rejoice in the worship of God. We live today under grace and it seems that many Christians don't think about obeying God with all their heart and soul. I wonder, how many people attend church because of some sense of duty or obligation, rather than because they want to rejoice in the Lord? And for that matter, why is it that we tend to reserve our worship and rejoicing for an hour during a Sunday sermon?*

What I Noticed Today (Deuteronomy 28)

Deuteronomy 28

Deuteronomy 28 displays the stark contrast between the blessings for obedience and the curses for disobedience!

In verses 1-6 Moses starts out saying IF you faithfully obey and do all of God's commands THEN the result will be great blessings. It doesn't matter where you are, in the city or in the fields the blessings will come. It doesn't matter if you are coming in or going out the blessings will come. The blessings are described as fruit, including the womb, the ground, the cattle and all the herds.

In verse 7 additionally, God will come against their enemies defeating them.

In verses 7-15 the result of this support from God is that other nations will see how God is prospering and protecting the nation of Israel in three specific ways.

- Israel as a nation will be blessed with military success and financial prosperity.
- Israel will be blessed in all their agricultural endeavors.
- Israel will be blessed as an example to all the peoples of the earth of God's grace.

In verses 15-68 however, if the people do not obey God then they will suffer a myriad of curses. The curses will come wherever they are, in the city or in the fields. The curses will come whether they are coming or going out. Their wombs will be cursed, their cattle, their herds, the ground, and all their crops. Sickness and pestilence will consume them. Their enemies will come up against them and destroy them. They will be scattered throughout the land and will serve gods of wood and stone.


- The result of these curses is that they will become servants to surrounding nations because they did not joyfully and completely obey God's commandments.
- Obeying God would lead to the entire nation being lifted up.

Note: This must have been encouraging to a nation that had suffered hundreds of years of oppressive slavery in Egypt, followed by 40 years of wandering in the desert.

- Yet, knowing their hearts, Moses emphasizes what will happen if they do not obey God diligently and joyfully. They will not only forfeit all the blessings, but God will actually come against them, allowing them to once again be scattered into foreign lands and suffer oppression as slaves.

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *Reading this chapter with the contrast of God's blessings and curses it seems the*



only reasonable choice for Israel to obey God and enjoy His blessings and protection. Yet we know they fail, and fail miserably, not once but over and over. Even so, God keeps coming back to them, willing to bless them if they will follow Him faithfully.

- *It seems we are just like the Israelites. We say “yes” to God with our mouths, but then in our hearts and in our actions we reject Him. We must follow Him completely, diligently, and joyfully if we want to enjoy these blessings!*

What I Noticed Today

(Deuteronomy 29-31)

Deuteronomy 29 and 30 are the fourth restatement of the Mosaic covenant.

Deuteronomy 29

In verses 2-8 one noteworthy difference is the inclusion of the statement that until now the Lord had not given them the heart to understand, eyes to see, or ears to hear all that God had done for them.

In verses 9-15 this covenant was binding on the entire nation; those standing before God as well as those not present that day (v. 15).

Note: Those not present that day refers to future generations.

In verses 16-29 Moses reminds the Israelites of the curses that will come if they break the covenant with God:

The Israelites were familiar with idolatry from their time in Egypt. One idolatrous person could poison a whole nation.

The idolatrous person may think he is safe but the Lord will not forgive him. He will be cursed and his name blotted out.

God's judgement will come not only to the person who introduced the idolatry but to the entire nation who followed him in his idolatry.

The devastation that comes from God's judgement will be so complete that people will ask what happened, and the answer will be that they abandoned their covenant with God (the Mosaic covenant).

Deuteronomy 30

Deuteronomy 30 predicts the pattern of the nation receiving God's blessings, then turning away from God, then finally turning back to God with all their heart and soul. When they turn back to God with all their heart and soul, God promises to return to them and bless them once again.

In verses 1-10 God promises to bless the Israelites after they repent:

- God predicted the people would turn away from Him and be driven out of the Promised Land. When they realized they had done wrong and repented of their sin in turning away from Him, He would restore them to the land and bless them.
- Then God will put curses upon their enemies.
- They will once again obey and follow the commands of God and He would prosper them.

In verses 11-20 God gave the people a choice between life and good, and death and evil. If they chose God by obeying and doing his commandments, they would enjoy

life and goodness.

- God said His commands were not too difficult or beyond their reach.
- They were to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commands, statutes, and ordinances. If they do, they will live long and be blessed by God. But if they turn away from God they will perish and not live long in the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 31-34

These four chapters describe the leadership transition between Moses and Joshua.

Deuteronomy 31

As Moses comes to the end of his life, he encouraged the people, telling them that God would go before them and that they should remain strong and courageous.

In verses 7-23 then Moses encouraged Joshua telling him to be strong and courageous, reminding him that the Lord would be with him always!


- Moses encouraged the Levites, reminding them to teach all the people including the children about God.
- Moses then commissioned Joshua to lead the people into the Promised Land. Moses and Joshua enter the tent of meeting, and God spoke to Moses telling them that the people would indeed turn away from God, and do evil so that His anger would burn against them.
- The Lord then commissioned Joshua telling him to be strong and courageous, to lead the people of Israel into the Promised Land, and promised that He would be with him.
- God even told them when the people would turn away; after God brought them into the Promised Land and they got comfortable they would rebel, turn to other gods and serve them.

In verses 24-30 Moses wrote down every word of the Law from God and commanded the Levites to place it beside the Ark of the Covenant as a witness against the people.

- Moses accused the people of being rebellious and stubborn because they had rebelled against the Lord while he was still alive so he was sure they would rebel more after he was dead.
- He called for all the tribal leaders to be assembled so he could speak the Word of the Lord directly to them.

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *Like the Israelites we need a spiritual renewal that gives us a heart to understand, eyes to see, and ears to hear all that God has done for us!*
- *We will see the drama of God's prediction of the Israelite's rebellion come to fruition, not once, but several times as we continue in our study of the Scripture.*

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- *What amazes me, is that we see the very same thing happening today, and, for the most part, people don't seem to understand how much we have rebelled against God, and how far from Him we are!*
 - *As a society of believers, we need to pray God would give all of us a spiritual awakening so that the world would have the heart to understand, the eyes to see, and the ears to hear what God has done for us!*

What I Noticed Today

(Deuteronomy 32-34)

Deuteronomy 32

Moses opened Deuteronomy 32 with a song of instruction. He called for all of creation to listen (heavens and earth) but directed the song to the nation of Israel.

There are four main sections to the song:

- 1) The character of God (vv. 1-4),
- 2) The goodness of God to His people (vv. 5-14),
- 3) The faithfulness of God chastening His people (vv. 15-25), and
- 4) The vengeance of God (vv.26-43).

God is described as a Rock (v. 4) whose work is perfect, he is just, faithful, and without iniquity.

God is referred to as both Father and Creator in verse 6.

Note: It is unusual to have God described as either Father or Creator in the Old Testament, and this is the only instance where the two terms, Father and Creator, appear together in the OT.

God is described as savior (v. 15) of the rebellious nation.

God is described as the deliverer (v. 30).

Moses concludes his instruction to the people with an admonishment to remember what God had done for them, and to teach and do His laws and commandments.


In verses 48-52 on that same day the Lord told Moses to go up Mount Nebo, across from Jericho. Moses would be allowed to see the Promised Land but would not be allowed to enter it because he had broken faith with God at the waters of Meribah by failing to treat God as holy.

Deuteronomy 33

Deuteronomy 33 is a poem of blessing upon the individual tribes of Israel. Moses describes aspects of the tribe's character and what the future holds for them.

Note: The tribe of Simeon is omitted from the list of tribes being blessed. Simeon was later absorbed by Judah (Joshua 19:1-9).

- Verses 2-5. Moses' praise of the Lord.
- Verse 6. Reuben.
- Verse 7. Judah.
- Verses 8-11. Levi.

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- Verse 12. Benjamin.
 - Verses 13-17 Joseph.
 - Verses 18-19. Zebulun and Issachar.
 - Verses 20-21. Gad.
 - Verse 22. Dan.
 - Verse 23. Naphtali.
 - Verses 24-25. Asher.

In verses 26-29 Moses' final praise of God.

Deuteronomy 34

Following this blessing Moses went up to Mt. Nebo to Pisgah

Note: Pisgah is a ridge extending across the top of Mount Nebo. This is the same mountain of some of Balaam's oracles, Numbers 23).

God showed him the entire Promised Land and confirmed His promise to give it to the people. Moses was 120 years old and still in good health when he died. God buried him in the valley in the land of Moab facing Beth-peor.

The entire nation wept and mourned for Moses for 30 days.

In verses 9-12 Joshua had the spirit of the Lord in him because Moses had laid hands on him. The Israelites obeyed Joshua and did as the Lord commanded Moses.

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *God is indeed our Rock. Faithful and just, God is our Father and Creator. He is our savior and our deliverer! We would do well today to remember these simple truths, and as Moses commanded the Israelites, we must teach these truths to our children!*