

DEVOTED

STUDIES IN

DEUTERONOMY

PART 1



TOONGABBIE
ANGLICAN
CHURCH

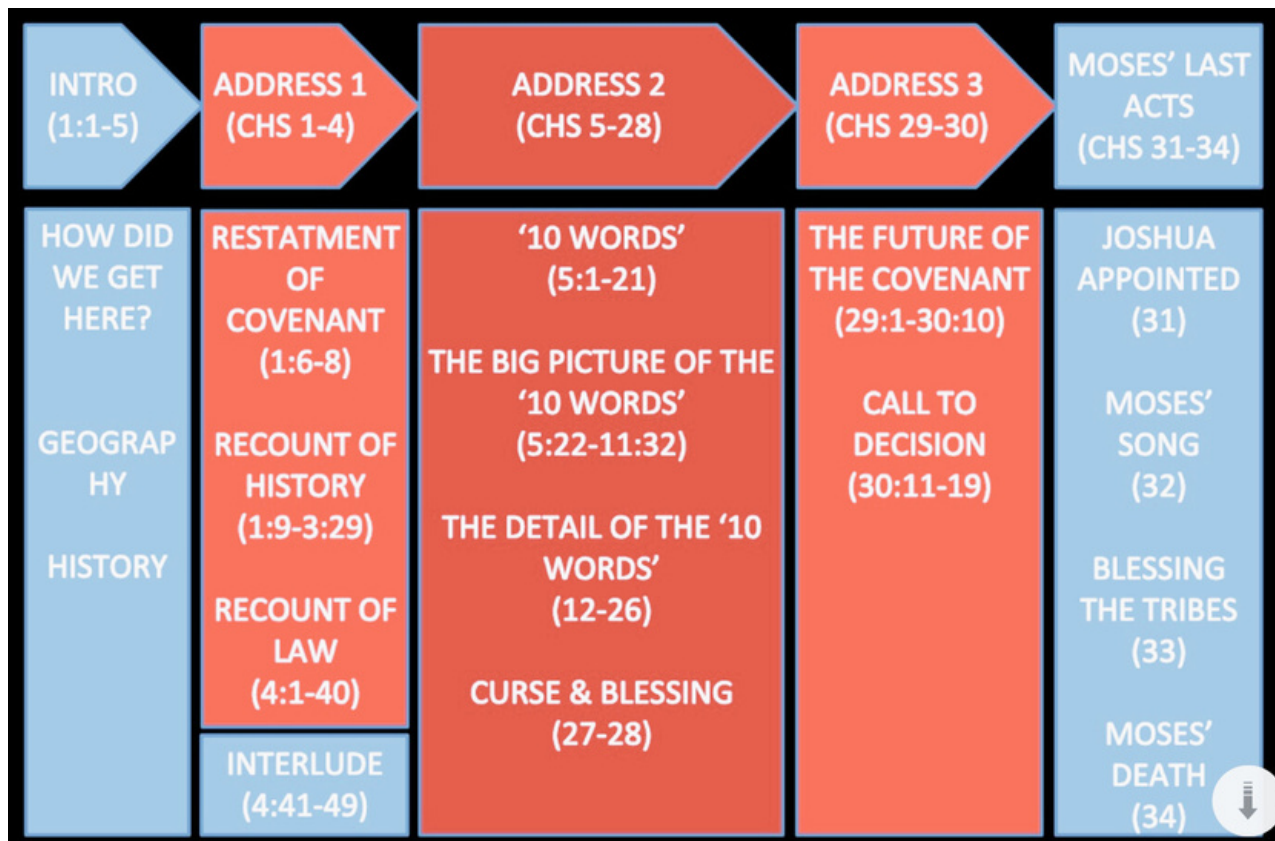
INTRODUCTION

Deuteronomy can be a bit of an overwhelming book. The middle section particularly repeats many of the laws of the previous books and it's easy to get lost in the detail. What are we to make of these things anyway, especially as Christians?

When we boil it all down Deuteronomy is a book about our God. It is a book about God's devotion to His people and his desire for them to respond in devotion to him.

Deuteronomy is largely a sermon given by Moses as Israel finishes their wandering through the desert because of their hardness of heart. It's bleedingly pastoral as he pleads for them to learn from this and be faithful. There are many differences between Israel hearing these words and us hearing them on the other side of Jesus. It will be important for us to make this distinction throughout the studies but it is also important that we see the character of God and his forever pursuit of a people in all holiness. Reading books like Deuteronomy helps deepen our understanding of who God is and makes Jesus shine even greater as the radiance of the fullness of God (Heb 1).

The Structure of Deuteronomy



Central Verse

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. (Deut 6:4-5)

Key Words

- Love 25 times (3 times God's covenantal faithfulness)
- Listen 96 times. Translates as hear, listen, obey, pay attention, contempt
- Obey 167 times. Obey, do, follow, show, observe

Reading Deuteronomy as Christians

- God is a speaking God! He was and is! Deuteronomy makes this clear.
- The character of God, his love, justice and mercy is revealed in tension in Deuteronomy helps us see how it is all resolved in the fullness of God revealed in Jesus. In fact, Jesus opens the eyes of his disciples starting with the teachings of Moses (Luke 24:27)!
- Moses, as God's appointed leader foreshadowed Jesus. Moses was a great leader, but his weaknesses, and inability to lead Israel into blessing are marred by his inadequacy that only Jesus fulfils.
- The laws of the Old Testament point to the holiness and justice of God. Also, the law does show us God's love for Israel in restraining evil and guiding them into His good and pleasing will. It was a shadow of good things to come (Hebrews 10:1). We too are called to obedience but unlike Israel we are disciplined by Jesus who has fulfilled the law as He asks us to follow him. Further, unlike Israel we are brought into a spiritual community of God's people, not a geo-political foreshadowing of the Kingdom of God. And we are filled with his Spirit to empower us to do so from within, for the law only has power to condemn (Rom 8). What is important to see is that God has always been a God of grace. This is made clear when he saved Israel out of his own love for them and gave them the law afterwards to guide their expression of love, faithfulness and dependence.

STUDY 1 - DEUTERONOMY 1

SETTING THE SCENE

– TRUSTING GOD’S FAITHFULNESS



Read Genesis 12:1-3, 7 and 15:5

1. What does God promise Abram (later Abraham) in these verses?



Read Exodus 1:7-11

These verses describe a period of time 100s of years later after Abraham’s children (particularly Isaac and then his son Jacob who was renamed Israel) became a nation.

2. How does these verses relate to the promises to Abraham?

God answers Israel’s prayer to deliver them from the Egyptians (Exod 2:23-25). However after God’s incredible deliverance of Israel it had been a bumpy road for them.

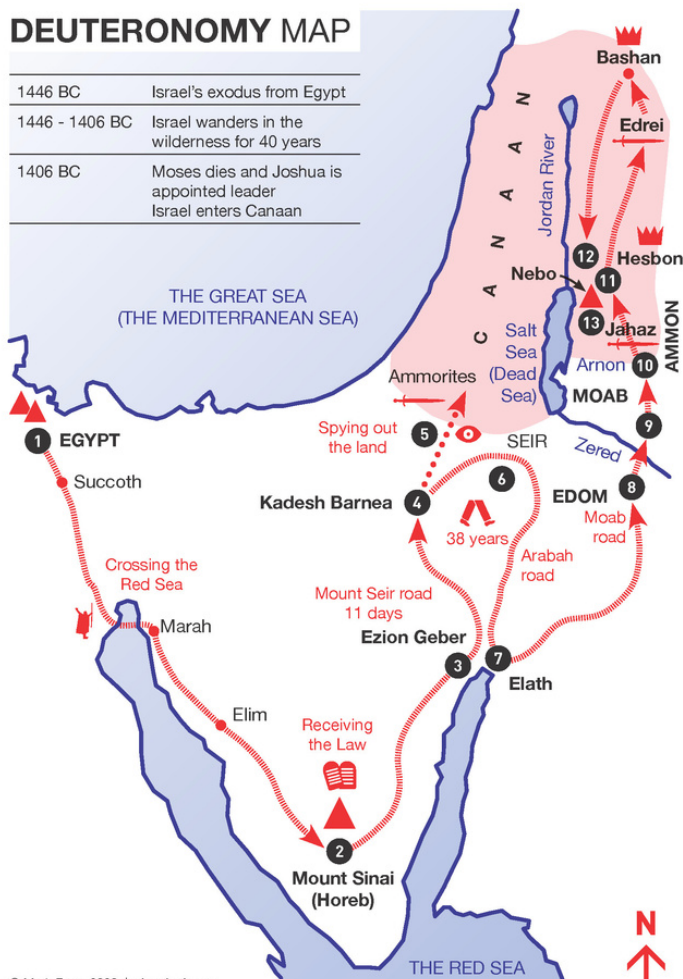


Read Deuteronomy 1:1-8

3. Note their journey on the map on the next page.

DEUTERONOMY MAP

1446 BC	Israel's exodus from Egypt
1446 - 1406 BC	Israel wanders in the wilderness for 40 years
1406 BC	Moses dies and Joshua is appointed leader Israel enters Canaan



4. How long has it taken them?
How long could it have?

5. Why did it take so long?



Read Deuteronomy 1:19-40

6. Summarise what happened to Israel since they left Egypt.

7. How is their sin described (v26, 32)?

8. How does God respond (v34-40)? What do you make of that?

Deuteronomy is like a sermon as Moses hands over leadership and a new generation of Israel enter the promised land.

9. Imagine you were one of the Israelite's hearing Moses' words in Deuteronomy. How might you be feeling?

The Apostle Paul draws upon the example of Israel's grumbling and disobedience and writes "these things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us".



Read what he says in 1 Corinthians 10:11-13

10. What are we to make of God's discipline of us?

11. How have we seen God's faithfulness?

12. How might we encourage each other to stand firm?



Pray

- Thanking God for his faithfulness, mercy and even his discipline
- Pray that we would love God and respond in obedience
- Pray that we would be encouraged through trials and temptations so that in Christ we would be strengthened and not grumble and disobey.

STUDY 2 - DEUTERONOMY 4:1-40

OBEY THE LIVING GOD

Chapter 4 is the climax of Moses' first address to Israel. Deuteronomy is made up of several sermons. The three sermons all begin with the designation of the physical place of the sermon (1:5, 4:46, 29:1).

1. If you were Moses, what kinds of things would you have in mind to address the issues of the past and set them up for the future.



Read Deuteronomy 4:1-8

2. What are the purposes of God's law for Israel (v5-8)?



Read Deuteronomy 4:9-20

3. Why does Moses repeat the language of "watch yourself" (v9,15)?
4. What is an idol?
5. Why can't Israel make an image of God? Why does Moses contrast this with listening to his voice so strongly?



Read Deuteronomy 4:21-31

6. How is God both jealous and merciful?



Read Deuteronomy 4:32-40

7. List all the things God did that lead Israel to conclude in verses 35 and 39 that 'there is no other'.

8. What special privileges does Israel have?

We are to listen to God's word as we love and trust Him. His word has now become flesh in Jesus (John 1:1, Hebrews 1:1-4).

9. In what ways is it still difficult to trust God through His word?

10. How does Jesus change our experience of obeying God (Romans 6:1-14)?

STUDY 3 - DEUTERONOMY 5

THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

These are the most famous ethical commands in all of history!

They are typically seen as 4 commandments about relationship with God and 6 about relationship with others.



Read all of Deuteronomy 5 as a recount of the moment when God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai (Exodus 20)

1. What initiatives has God taken to save Israel? How does the introduction to the 10 commandments (v6) frame how we are to understand these laws? What does it provide by way of motivation to obey and how does it guard against misunderstanding them.

2. See how the New Testament speaks further to God's motivation to save us (Romans 5:6-8, 1 John 4:7-10)



PART 1: THE VERTICAL RELATIONSHIP

3. Why do you think the 10 commandments begins with how we understand and respond to God?

4. Why is God so jealous? Discuss what it might mean for God to show love to a thousand generations but punish sin over a few generations?

5. What does it mean to misuse the name of the Lord? (Remember a name is more than just a name!)



PART 2: THE HORIZONTAL RELATIONSHIP

6. What do the final 6 commandments protect? How might you reword them as “rights”?



LOOKING TO JESUS

7. How does Jesus help us understand the 10 commandments?

Note Matthew 5:17-48. It's too large a passage to dig into now perhaps! But look at how Jesus speaks to not abolishing but fulfilling. And calling us to understand a deeper aspect to the law that is part of following Jesus. It makes us see our sin even more! It also prompts us to see the wonder of Jesus who perfectly fulfilled the law and listen and obey him knowing that life is only found in Him and the grace he offers us.



GOING FURTHER

8. Explore the Sabbath a little further. What does it mean that God rested on the 7th day? What might we learn and practice from such reflections? How does Colossians 2:16 and Hebrews 4:9-11 speak of the Sabbath our understanding of the Old Covenant law?

NOTES & PRAYER POINTS