

## AP 36

### Deuteronomy / Second Law<sup>1</sup>

### דְּבָרִים / De-bar-im / The Words<sup>2</sup>

Deuteronomy in English means the Second Law. So, it's likely this book is a summation, or a restatement of the law as found in the first four books of the Torah/Pentateuch. Some think Deuteronomy was written by Moses just as Israel is about to cross into the promised land, just as the narrative makes it appear (cf. 1:1-5). Others, see it written during the 7<sup>th</sup> century as there are numerous correlations with the reign of Josiah (2 Kings 22-23) and Deuteronomy feels different (not contradictory) from the first four books of the Torah. During Josiah's reign the Book/Scroll of the Law was rediscovered (yep, they lost the Bible). This re-discovery would be a super believable situation to restate the law in terms of their own situation. I lean toward a late writing and so that's why we are looking at Deuteronomy later in our trek through scripture. Regardless of when it was written, the whole book reads like the final words<sup>3</sup> of Moses.

It is interesting that with the Torah (the heart of the OT) and with the Gospels (the heart of the NT) we see a different perspective included. John is the different perspective in the Gospels and Deuteronomy plays that role in the Torah

The book has 3 fairly obvious sections, which are sometimes called Discourses of Moses: 1-4 Moses contextualizes by looking at their recent history, 5-26 Moses clarifies and reminds by restating the law, 27-33 Moses cautions<sup>4</sup>, by giving covenant warnings

In Deuteronomy we see some unique concerns, particularly: centralized worship, the phrase "worship... at the place the Lord, your God will choose" occurs 18 times; a particular and heightened concern for the poor (widows, orphans, and resident aliens – immigrants); and the covenant of God is more highly conditional. Sin, rebellion, covenant, obedience, blessings, curses, and conditionality are all big themes in Deuteronomy.

Jesus quotes the Psalms the most, but in second place comes... wait for it... Deuteronomy! I never would have guessed that this was the case. This alone is good reason for me/us to pay attention to what we read this week.

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<sup>1</sup> The title Deuteronomy is based on the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible

<sup>2</sup> *Debarim* is the second word in the book that we know of as Deuteronomy. Each of the first 5 books of the OT use this mode of naming for Hebrew Bibles. The first meaningful word of the book becomes its title.

<sup>3</sup> Note the Hebrew title.

<sup>4</sup> I do not have the spiritual gift of alliteration, but contextualizes, clarifies, and cautions is some of my best work ever. I work with a low bar.

- Sunday, July 31** Deuteronomy 1  
**For Reflection:** 1:6 – 3:29 is a review of the Hebrews 40 years of wandering. This is the 1<sup>st</sup> major discourse of Moses in Deuteronomy it ends with the sermon in chapter 4. The rebellion recorded in Numbers 13-14 is restated here. *When was your most rebellious season with God? What were the consequences, where did you experience grace?*  
**Lagniappe: Acts 7:51**
- Monday, Aug 1** Deuteronomy 4  
**For Reflection:** This chapter is cast as Moses' 3<sup>rd</sup> to last sermon. Three times in this sermon (9, 10, 25), Moses points to needs future generations. *What are you passing down to your children or grandchildren, to future generations?*  
**Lagniappe:** Deuteronomy 6:4-9<sup>5</sup>
- Tuesday, Aug 2** Deuteronomy 18:9-22  
**For Reflection:** *Is Jesus this giver of the new law, a second deliverer of the people? What level of attention/respect would you say you are giving to the commands of this Prophet like Moses?*  
**Lagniappe:** Acts 3:22, 7:37 (both Peter and Stephen believed Jesus fulfilled 18:15-18)
- Wednesday, Aug 3** Deuteronomy 27:1-28:19  
**For Reflection:** *Where is the place for warning/encouraging (curses/blessings) in the community of faith?*  
**Lagniappe:** Galatians 3:13
- Thursday, Aug 4** Deuteronomy 30  
**For Reflection:** The covenant renewal. *Which of these verses spoke mostly richly to you this morning?* It appears, discipline, correction, punishment are an expected aspect of their relationship with God. *How do you understand the discipline of God as a follower of Jesus? Does he even do it still? How does it interact with the grace of God?*  
**Lagniappe:** Hebrews 12:5-6
- Friday, Aug 5** Deuteronomy 31

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<sup>5</sup> This passage is called the Shema (Shema = שמע = Hear) "Hear, O Israel..." Comes up often in Deuteronomy: 5:1 before the decalogue, 9:1 the grace of God sermon, 20:3 the courage sermon, and 27:9 the warning sermon.

**For Reflection:** Vss 1-8 are a concluding inspiration, in which Moses reminds the people of God's promises and God's faithfulness. *Which promises of God most inspire you to persistent in faithfulness?* In today's post-modern world leaders and the institutions, they represent are distrusted. But here, passing the baton to a new leader is essential. *Are leaders essential?* The concluding paragraph is a downer, but not if it was written later during Josiah's reign. Then it is an explanation.

**Lagniappe:** 1 Corinthians 16:13

**Saturday, Aug 6**

Deuteronomy 34

**For Reflection:** God gives Moses a good long look (more than a vision, or a dream) at the promised land. *What vision is God giving you for your life, your family, our faith community, our world?*

**Lagniappe:** Acts 1:8