

**Through the Bible**  
**Deuteronomy 7-28**  
**(7-11, & 17, & 24-28)**

**Overview of Deuteronomy**

Deuteronomy is the last of the 5 books of Torah/books of Moses/Pentateuch

-Moses' parting words are given to the people in a way that they will carry it with them/they are a LOOK BACK

**-A quick look back/Help the class with a recap**

-Genesis introduced us to who God is and who the people are that He is partnering with

-Genesis helps us understand God's love and that He values relationship

-when humans do things their own way, they struggle with the consequences but when they cry out to God, he hears and responds

-when the family ends up in Egypt, enslaved, God answers when they cry out and He rescues them

\*Passover

-the people enter into a covenantal relationship...we said this was likened to their marriage

-they are immediately unfaithful

-for the next 40 years Israel learns how to be in relationship with God

-they need to be tested, to see who they really are

-and they need to learn who God really is too

-they also learn about priests and their role as priests

-they build a tent for God's presence, they learn to trust Him to lead and provide (Moses as their earthly shepherd, God as their ultimate shepherd)

-and here they are, on the verge of the land God has promised them...this is the moment to decide to **REMEMBER God**, to **NOT FORGET**

-The word **remember** (zakar) to recall/to call to mind used 14 times in Deut.

-And don't **forget** (shakach) cease to care/forget used 14 times in Deut.

-They are to HAVE reminders of God and BE reminders of God

-To forget is less a memory problem and more a moral one (ESV study notes)

-Remembering is vital

-And if Israel doesn't keep the covenant, they don't keep the land

-We can't take these verses out of context...the land was not promised to us but we still learn that God wants our allegiance....allegiance of action AND thought

-Another big lens for Deuteronomy is remembering to care for the alien, orphan and widow

-Marty Solomon (BEMA) teaches that:

*-when we remember where we came from, we notice the alien, the orphan and the widow.*

*When we take care of the alien, the orphan, and the widow, we are reminded of where we came from*

\*Ancient Covenants have: (they show up in suzerain/vassal covenants)

Preamble

Historical Summary

Demands/Rules/Laws

Rewards for obedience/punishments for disobedience

Conclusion

\*Deuteronomy as a Covenant:

Preamble: Ch 1a

Historical Summary: ch. 1b-4

Demands/Rules/Laws: ch 5-26

Rewards for obedience: ch 28a punishments for disobedience: ch 28 b

Conclusion: ch 32

\*Torah as a Covenant:

Preamble: Genesis

Historical Summary: Exodus

Demands/Rules/Laws: Leviticus

Rewards for Obedience/punishment for disobedience: Numbers

Conclusion: Deuteronomy

This brings us to

**Ch 7** and amongst other things we find

**3 specific warnings Moses gives Israel regarding their thinking:**

\*-Deut. 7:17-18: warning against fear: the antidote to fear is to recall who God is and what He has done

-Moses also anticipates a day when this next generation will ask "Why?" Why do we have to do all these things?

-bc God rescued us from slavery and He cared for us and provided for us and that God who loves us commanded these things and it's for our good

-they also MUST completely drive out all the people of the land and not intermarry with them  
-(v. 16 don't even pity them)

-God is accomplishing many aspects of His plan:

1. Punishing the wicked nations for their rebellion and He is using Israel as the tool to accomplish that justice
2. He is insuring the line of the Messiah stays intact
3. The hearts of His people stay intact as well and aren't led astray to lesser gods

### **-And other reminders:**

If they don't destroy idols, things won't go well

God even states that he will drive out the enemy little by little (He still has a process in mind)

Moses reminds them God chose them

### **Ch 8**

-Moses is continuing to urge Israel to remember and obey...to look back and see where they have come from

**-the wilderness has been a test, but the promised land will be one too**

-(My experience climbing out of Grand Canyon) - the ability to look back and see where you came from/how far you've come

-again, they will not retain the land unless they respond to God by worshipping him alone

-the Promised land is just another part of God's process to restore humanity to relationship with himself

**\*\*NOTE:** this generation of Israelites were not the ones being punished for disobedience, that was their parents, but they did have to experience the punishment (years in the wilderness)

**-Since it wasn't actually punishment for them, what WAS it?**

-it was discipline, training in how to respond to difficulty and it was, trust building

-And this is similar to us: Since Christ absorbed our punishment on the cross, what we experience now is discipline and training and trust building

-we DESERVE punishment, but if we have received him, he took it for us

### **The next 2 things that Moses warns Israel regarding their thinking:**

\*8:17-18 warning against pride (Pride in effort: my power got me here)

\*9:4 another warning against pride (Pride in righteousness: my righteousness got me here )

**NOTE: they have to be warned twice against pride and only once against fear**

**-both of these have their roots in forgetting God and what He has done**

-it is not because they are righteous that God gives them the land, it's because the other nations are UNRIGHTEOUS

-in fact, right after Moses warns them against thinking it's because of their own goodness, He reminds them of how "ungood" they are, reminding them of 5 stories of their rebellion (and it should have "disqualified" them)

-Golden calf

-Kadesh Barnea (when they wouldn't take the land)

-And 3 times when they grumbled over food and water, doubted his provision and wished they were back in Egypt

-God doesn't want their obedience, but their relationship...for their own joy

-and Moses tells them to "circumcise their hearts"

-full commitment...the "whole heart" was spiritual emotional and mental

- they are to LOVE GOD..."the heart cannot love what the mind cannot know" so this will require mind, spirit and emotions
- and he finishes this section by telling them that one way they can demonstrate the love they have received from God is by caring for the alien orphan and widow....similar to how Levites (another group of 'have nots) are cared for

## **Ch 11**

- in v 16 Moses gives important instruction to God's people to stay vigilant and to pay attention to their hearts. He warns that if they do not, they will be led astray
- Moses is repeating himself regarding faithfulness to God...we repeat things when they are important
- Moses again tells them to hold tightly to these words....teach them, talk about them, **teach their children OFTEN**
- They show their love for God by walking in His ways, and if they will walk in His ways/remain faithful to God, he will drive out their enemies ahead of them, even though their enemies are greater and stronger

**-Critical verses in this chapter are 26-28** In these verses the people are told to choose between blessing and cursing and these two things are represented by two mountains: Mt. Gerazim (blessing) and Mt. Ebal (cursing) **we will come back to this at the end of Deut.**

## **Ch 12 & 13**

- Moses reminds Israel that when they drive out the nations, they must destroy the "high places" (where idolatry/worship of false gods was done)
- Moses also reveals that there will be a shift in how some of the laws and sacrifices work once they are in the land
  - one specific place where God will dwell (not entirely new) but Tabernacle will no longer be in the middle of the encampment, but in the midst of a whole new land that they will be spread out in that land and wherever the Tabernacle is, that's the only place where burnt offerings can be made
  - \*depending on their tribal land allotments, this means some will be far from the Tabernacle, which means far from God's presence
  - allowed/able to eat meat

- Moses warns them not to add or subtract from God's law and not to be fooled by those who call themselves prophets but introduce worship to a god they don't know
- this signifies a test from God, to see if they truly love Him with all of their heart and soul they will obey God, even over family or friends.
- also, the false teacher is to be put to death

## **Chapters 14-16**

-Review guidelines for how/where hair is not to be cut (to be set apart from pagan practices)  
This law had been given to the priest (lev 21) but now it is given to all of the people. They are also not to cut themselves for the same reason

-We also have a review of clean/unclean animals, but of note here is an important kosher regulation in v 21 not to boil a goat in its mother's milk

-Rabbis have debated this and want to be sure that they do not even accidentally break this law

-So the practice is known as "building a fence around the law" and today it means that milk and meat are not mixed

(those two things are not served at the same meal for any place that is kosher)

-Typically dairy is served at breakfast and meat at the other meals

-the heart behind this is good, but the danger is that the "fences" are treated as seriously as the laws themselves

-also we have reminders of regulations for tithes, forgiveness of debt and more reminders for how to care for the poor. The target here is the heart...the heart behind our actions MATTERS (15:7-10)

-btw remember how Jacob agreed to work for his FIL Laban for 7 years for his daughter? That is the same kind of arrangements described here in 15...and when the servant is freed he is to be sent away blessed (not empty handed)

-if a slave loved his family and wanted to stay he could and would be absorbed into the family. This was voluntary and was marked by piercing his ear.

-ch 16 Moses reiterates the festival calendar that we learned about in Leviticus 23

-previously these festivals were celebrated together, but now they will require travel to the Tabernacle

-it is said the Exodus to Jews is what the cross is to Christians...the most important thing in their history that must be remembered /it reminds us who we are

-Again, all of these regulations are important, Israel is supposed to be DIFFERENT than the nations around them

## **Ch 17**

-Begins with guidelines for type of animals approved as sacrifices to God and to handle the carrying out of justice for accusations

-judges and priests are set up as a court to handle these matters

-Moses then predicts the time will come that Israel will look around and see that the other nations have a king and they will want one

-when that time comes God will establish a king from among them and it will be important that that king not to be drawn to wealth power or women

- they were to be humble and trust God for provision and not rely on themselves
  - Assembling horses demonstrated power and marrying foreign wives was for political alliances, but these would all be alliances to pagan nations, which meant their hearts could/would be led astray
  - the king needed to read God's laws daily, keeping him upright and humble
- God also promises to raise up a new prophet among them, like Moses, who hears from God and speaks His words to them
  - this is why mediums and fortune tellers are wicked
  - prophets are accountable for what they say and the people are accountable for listening
  - any true prophet would have all of his prophecies come to pass.

**Ch 18-19** are reiterations of Levitical provision and land and cities of refuge

And **ch 20** God sets up some details for military service

- this is a unique scenario, this nation-state has God as their commander in chief
- reminders follow of who God is and what He has done...He is always the bigger army

**The next few chapters cover some repeated instructions regarding civil and worship issues as well as some additional instructions regarding offerings**

And ends, again, with another call to obey the Lord's commands wholeheartedly.  
READ Deuteronomy 26:16-19

**This brings us to ch 27-28**

-Before we revisit the two mountains: Mt. Gerazim (blessing) and Mt. Ebal (cursing)  
Let's look at something put together by the team at "got questions" ministries

-brief storyline review:

- The Bible begins with the creation of all things including humankind
- who was in perfect relationship with God
- Sin brought death and separation from God
- Genesis then presents God calling out a people, beginning with Abram
- These people, who would later be known as Israel, were to be distinct, chosen by God, and in a relationship with Him
- Because of this people's sinfulness, God gave them the Mosaic Law (Gal 3:19) to guide Israel and show their need for Christ
- Within this Law, God created a system where obedience led to blessing and disobedience led to cursing
- Deut 11:26 introduces this idea plainly, while Deut 27-28 details how this system is to work

- Mt. Ebal is located in the Promised Land of Israel, near the middle of Samaria
- It is one of a pair of twin peaks, the other being Mt. Gerizim
- Both mountains were designated by God for the reading of His blessings and curses Israel would incur for obeying or disobeying His law
- (from Deut 11:26)

*"See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse—the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commands of the Lord your God. . . . When the Lord your God has brought you into the land you are entering to possess, you are to proclaim on Mount Gerizim the blessings, and on Mount Ebal the curses." The Bible identifies Mount Ebal as "near the great trees of Moreh, in the territory of those Canaanites living in the Arabah in the vicinity of Gilgal"*

- God instructed Moses to build an altar of rough stones, covered with plaster, on Mt. Ebal
- The Israelites were to write the words of the law ("the whole body of instruction"...likely the 10 commandments) on this altar
- However, God forbade Moses himself to enter the Promised Land because of his rebellion, so it was Joshua who actually built the altar on Ebal (in Josh 8:30)
- God chose the tribes of Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, to stand on Mt Gerizim as the blessings on the people were pronounced (v. 12)
- Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali were chosen to stand on Mt Ebal as the curses were pronounced as a warning to all Israel (Dt 27:13)

-Later, Joshua will lead the people to Mt Ebal and do all that God had commanded Moses (See Josh 8:33)

-The children of Israel would be divided on the foothills of the two mountains, and the Levites would stand in the valley between them and read the words of the law (thoroughly)

-Though it is unknown why the Lord chose these mountains as symbols of his blessings and curses (speculation is that maybe it was because they stood so close together that the people could hear both at once) and yet the blessings and curses were entirely separate, not even to be read on the same mountain...just as Israel was to be entirely set apart from the nations around them

-These are the two highest mountains in this region with Ebal to the north and Gerizim to the south. (Gerizim is only about 30 minutes north of Jerusalem)

-Tradition says that these mountains represented good and evil

- Mt Gerizim was lush and fertile while Mt Ebal was rocky and barren, clearly portraying the ramifications of our choices

- We may choose the good path, cleaving to God and following in His ways, leading to a rich, fruitful life

- Alternatively, we can embrace evil and negativity, which leads to an empty and barren life, devoid of all things good

-Shechem sat between the two mountains, a well traveled intersection at this time

## -WHERE HAVE WE SEEN SHECHEM BEFORE?

- the town Simeon and Levi slaughtered
  - also first seen Gen 12 when Abram arrives here at the “oak of Moreh”
  - It became a Levitical city of refuge and is also where Joseph was buried
  - the formal reading of the law in the presence of the people and with their participation was to represent the renewal of the covenant
  - the blessings were the promises Israel would see if they obeyed the Lord, mainly the things that only God has control over; life, growth and rain
  - As the Levites read the blessings for obeying the law, the six tribes on Mount Gerizim were to pronounce a resounding “Amen!”
  - the curses were a warning to the Israelites and a reminder that the covenant was conditional with punishments for disobedience
  - Curses at Ebal were leveled against those who practiced idolatry, dishonored their parents, took advantage of the vulnerable, withheld justice, committed murder, took bribes, or committed various sexual sins -After each curse, the people were all to say, “Amen!” (which means “may it be so”) (Dt 27:15-26) showing that they heard, understood, and agreed.
  - Covenant curses were not just the absence of blessings, but the complete reversal of blessing
- \*EXAMPLE READ Deut. 28:63...Does this mean God actually enjoys destroying his people? Not this is covenant speak...it’s the opposite of blessing

## -Recent discovery of a curse amulet:

- In early 2022, a research team led by scholars from the Associates for Biblical Research (ABR) announced the discovery of a lead tablet from Mt. Ebal that they claim contains the oldest extant Hebrew inscription
- They say the inscription, which they date to the end of the Late Bronze Age (c. 1200 B.C.E.), is a legal text and curse that invokes the name Yahweh
- The team believes the tablet to be the most important inscription ever found in Israel and one that could drastically alter our reconstruction of ancient Israel’s earliest history
- The lead amulet/tablet (2cm x 2 cm) was found by wet-sifting material taken from a site on Mt. Ebals over 30 years ago by Prof Adam Zertal (it was in the “trash” pile but they went back through that pile to wet sift)
- The amulet has letters inscribed into the lead foil but was folded in half and was too brittle to unfold
- it was sent to researchers in Prague who used tomographic scans (similar to a medical CT scan) to recover the hidden text
- the scans revealed an ancient proto-alphabetic Hebrew inscription consisting of 40 letters/23 words
- it was deciphered and was determined to be a curse tablet and reads:

“Cursed, cursed, cursed—cursed by the God *Yhw*. You will die cursed. Cursed you will surely die. Cursed by *Yhw*—cursed, cursed, cursed.”



-The use of proto alphabetic Hebrew makes the writing on this tablet hundreds of years older than previously discovered Hebrew inscriptions

-and of GREAT Importance: this inscription provides the earliest reference to the name Yahweh found in ancient Israel