

DEUTERONOMY

A Brief Overview

Deuteronomy 1:1 to 34:12

The word "Deuteronomy" means "Second Law", or "Repetition of the Law". In Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, laws had been promulgated, at intervals. Now, their wanderings over, on the eve of entrance into Canaan, these laws were rehearsed and expounded, in anticipation of, and with applications to, settled life. [Courtesy of "Halley's Bible Handbook" by Henry H. Halley, Zondervan Publishing, 1965.]

Summary

1. Deuteronomy is the fifth book of the Torah (the Law, or the Instruction). The first five books of the Bible are also referred to as the Pentateuch.
2. As indicated in the introduction above, it means the second law, or more literally the second giving of the law -- and through it, God issues a call to repentance and renewal.
3. It was written by Moses, and it covers three messages, or addresses, that he gave to the people of Israel at the end of their wilderness wanderings, prior to their crossing over the river Jordan to possess the Promise Land.
 - a. It is the preparation for the coming out, or calling out, of God's people as they prepare to leave the wilderness and enter into Canaan.
 - b. It is a call to renewing the covenant, and to living a life that's obedient to God.
 - c. It is an instruction book for how to treat our relationship with God and with our neighbor -- our fellow man.
4. God's people are called out through this writing to be a holy people, a nation of priests -- to be His witnesses in a lost and dying world.
5. The keys to this relationship are obedience and commitment. In this writing, we see Moses leading God's people into a covenant renewal ceremony -- a key theme of Deuteronomy: renewing our relationship with God.
6. God's primary covenant with his people contains four promises as stated in this book. They are:
 - a. Israel will be God's special nation.
 - b. Yahweh God will be their God.
 - c. They will be obedient to God.
 - d. God will give them a homeland and innumerable descendants.
7. This covenant was first made with Abraham, then renewed at Mt Sinai, and now with them again, before crossing the Jordan.
8. The book follows the structure of what a Near Eastern Treaty would have followed in those days, and contains three addresses by Moses to Israel. The basic outline of the book is:
 - a. Chapter 1:1-5 Introduction, time and place of address.
 - b. Chapter 1:6 through Chapter 4:40 -- The importance of trusting God.
 - c. Chapter 4:44 through Chapter 28:68 -- Lessons for life in a foreign land.
 - d. Chapter 29:1 through Chapter 30:20 -- Covenant renewal, repentance and commitment assure life and the blessings of God, rebellion results in death as a nation
 - e. Chapters 31-33 -- Moses farewell, blessing and death.

9. Deuteronomy is the most often quoted book by Jesus and his Apostles in the New Testament. Over 80 references to it are found in the New Testament. This points to the importance of the book in today's New Testament Church.
10. Through this book, God reveals a lot about himself and his relationship to us:
- a. He is represented as sovereign, the redeemer, the covenant maker, and our benefactor.
 - b. He reveals much about Himself in multiple ways -- His hand, his arm, His eyes, His face, and His mouth all reveal things to us about God.
 - c. He writes, walks, and rides; is near, moves about the camp, and is transcendent. He is the only God, sovereign and eternal father to his people.
 - d. He is gracious and continues to offer blessings; He is faithful to His commitment, and to defending His people. He is righteous and just. He is jealous, has anger, and brings judgment as well as mercy.
-

Clearly, the theme is repentance and renewing our relationship with God, as we acknowledge Him as redeemer and provider of our salvation through Jesus His only Son.

Yours in Christ,

Wes