

Note

Deuteronomy – Part 1 and 2

Era	Characters	Chapters
In the beginning	God create world	Gen 1
Before 4000 BC	Adam Eve	Gen 1~5
Before 3000 BC	Cain Abel Seth	Gen 4~5
Before 2500 BC	Noah	Gen 5~10
About 2000 BC Era of Patriarchs	Abraham Isaac Ishmael Esau Jacob Joseph	Gen 11 ~50
About 1500BC~1000BC Era of Prophets	Moses Aaron Joshua	Exo Lev Num Deu

Summary

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As a new generation of Israelites prepare to seize the Promised Land, Moses reminds them of their Past journey, Present responsibility to live by God's Law, and expectant Future. Ultimately, God's Law is borne of love, designed to save man and help him lead a life that glorifies God.

1) The Past

- This new generation has to know the sacred Covenant between the God of Israel.

2) The Present

- The responsibilities, rules and regulations the Israelites have to know in order to safeguard themselves from the ungodly temptations present in the land they will take over, mainly:
 - 1) Sexual Immorality
 - 2) Social Injustice
 - 3) Idolatry

3) The Future

- The rewards and/or retributions they will reap in future, depending on their present walk with God.

Of the three speeches, Moses emphasised most on the Present. Some of the features of the Present Rules, Regulations and Responsibilities are:

- 1) Worship One God, at One Place
- 2) Mixed Laws and Structure: every aspect of life is intertwined with our worship of God.
- 3) Do not compare God's Law with the present-day law
- 4) The Law is given by God, with authority.
- 5) Some Laws are given specifically to the Israelites of that time to address issues unique to them.
- 6) God's principles behind the Law is Love
"If you love Me, keep My commandments."

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1) Rewards & Retribution

- Moses delivered his last speech on the future rewards and retribution that Israel will reap in accordance to its choice; obedience or rejection of God's Law. He reiterated this in a song for Israel to pass down.
- Moses reinforced this message with a visual lesson; upon entering the Promised Land, 6 tribes will each stand on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal as the Levites shout out blessings and curses over Israel.

2) Claiming God's Promise

- God primed Israel to enter the Promised Land in confidence with the defeat of two powerful Kings.
- But instead of claiming God's promise and moving forward in faith to possess the land, they wavered.
- Israel's prosperity was short-lived when it eventually rejected God's Law and brought upon its curse.
- God is merciful to alleviate this curse on the day Israel repents and returns to God.

3) After Moses

- After Moses, Joshua, a man of God filled with the spirit of wisdom, is tasked to lead Israel.
- With Deuteronomy, Moses concluded his five books, often referred to as the Torah. However, three promises from God remain unfulfilled to this point:
 - I) The seed of a woman will crush the head of the serpent, as mentioned in Genesis.
 - II) Through Abraham, all the nations will be blessed.

III) God would circumcise the flesh of their heart (Israel), that they will love God

Transcript

Deuteronomy – Part 1 of 2

Let's begin our study on the book of Deuteronomy.

The word “Deuteronomy” means second law. ‘Deutero’: second. ‘nomy’: law.

When you read this book, it really appears like you're reading a repeat of what you just read in the previous few books. Question is, “Why?” Well, this time, what we thought was a repeat to us is not a repeat to the people this book was addressed to. This book was addressed to a different generation from those who were addressed in the previous books. The whole generation of the Israelites who came out of Egypt, had died.

At this point, only three of those original adults were alive: Moses, Joshua, and Caleb; all the rest had died in the wilderness.

Reason: The Bible tells us that when God asked them to enter the Promised Land, they refused. Though Joshua and Caleb begged them and said, “Come on! Let's go in”. They said, “No! We're not going to go in.” And so, they really didn't want to go in, they said, “I would rather want to go back to Egypt.” And so, God said, “All right, if you don't want to go in, you don't have to”. So, one by one, they died. And after 40 years, all had died - except the ones who did not rebel: Moses, Joshua, and Caleb.

This was a totally new generation. This generation were kids at that time, they were not guilty of the sin. Neither were they able to remember what was told to their parents by Moses at Sinai. God had given the Law at Sinai. It was given to them in Exodus, in Leviticus, in the early part of Numbers,

but this generation needed to hear it. So, it's a new generation. Therefore, it seems like a repeat of what was read.

We will see in Deuteronomy 1:2, that the journey, actually, from Mount Sinai to where they were now at this point of the book, is only an 11-day journey, but they took almost 40 years to do the journey. Why did they take so long? Of course, the reason was the spies went into the land to spy out there for 40 days, and so, one year for every day. But also, so that they would all just die off. They didn't want to go in, they said, "We will not go in." God said, "You won't go in, it's okay." So, they travelled very, very slowly during this time, they went to about 40 locations, waiting to die, so to speak.

Finally, they're about to enter the Promised Land. Now, the Bible tells us that these are really the last words of Moses to them, because he's not allowed to go in. He had disobeyed God at the waters of the river where God said, "Speak to the rock," but he struck it twice. And you can't strike the rock twice because the rock is Christ; Christ was struck just once. And that was earlier on, in Rephidim, I believe. So, Moses disobeyed God; he's also not going to go in. But now Moses is there with this generation. And he knows he can't go into the Promised Land with them. So, he's very concerned, very, very concerned that when they enter the Promised Land, they will fall into the temptations of the land. So, these are literally his last words. Like a father, who cannot be around for his kids, he is giving everything he has: very passionate speeches of Moses, before he says goodbye to them and they enter into the Promised Land.

Can you imagine the anticipation after 40 years? "Finally, we would be in a place of rest, instead of not knowing where we are. We keep moving. Finally, we get that beautiful land, all the houses are ready, the city is already built, the houses are filled with things. The wells are dug. The olive trees are matured, the grapevines, the figs. Everything is there, all ready. We're just dying to go in."

The structure of this book, if you're a lawyer, you will begin to see it. This book is written like, what we call, a sovereign treaty between two parties. The conquering nation makes a treaty with the smaller nation. The strong nation says, "If you will obey all these things, then I will protect you or take care of you, etc". So, if you're a

lawyer, you begin to see, because you've written agreements before, you will see that this is actually structured like the way an agreement would be written. A bit of historical prologue... I won't bore you because you're not a lawyer, I'm not a lawyer. I didn't see it until I was studying this. But, for a lawyer, they probably would pick this up. Moses was trained in Egypt. He was trained for 40 years in the family of Pharaoh. So, he knew how to write a treaty. But, as lay people, we see this book not so much as a sovereign treaty, but as three major speeches.

Moses is told, "In 7 days' time, you will die."

"Oh, I've got 7 days to tell this generation what to do."

So, basically, Moses probably spoke on Day 1, a long sermon. Last words, you have to keep saying a lot of things you wanted to say. Then, Day 2, he probably wrote it down. Day 3, he probably spoke again. Day 4, he probably wrote it down. Day 5, he gave the third and last speech. Then, Day 6, he wrote it down. Day 7, he died. That's probably what it was. So, after he wrote it all down, he passed the Law to the priests. And the priests were supposed to put it all by the side of the Ark. And every 7 years, they were to read this Law, the book of Deuteronomy, to the people, to the Jews, Israelites.

That is the structure of the book; you and I will see, as lay people, three long passionate personal speeches from Papa Moses to his spiritual children.

The three speeches can be divided into: Past, Present and Future.

Past - looking back, past reflections, recollections - is a small part of the book.

Present responsibilities, present rules and regulations, what you must do, big chunk of Deuteronomy.

Future, if you do all these, you will have future rewards, or if you don't do them, your future retribution. Significant part but much smaller than the major part, which is your responsibility, rules and regulations, for you, now. I hope you understand the importance of this structure.

Looking back, is very important. To see what God has done, it encourages us, it gives us enough faith to go on. It helps us to know this God whom we want to serve better. We can learn lessons from the past, but don't look back too much. A lot of churches spend all the time looking back on their glory days. Don't do that. Enough! Look back to thank God.

Then, what are our responsibilities now? That's the most important: what we have to do now. That should be our focus. And then, if we do all this, this is how God would bless us, this is how things would progress.

Future: not so big a chunk. Some people are always visioning, talking about the future. What about now? What are you doing now? What are your responsibilities?

So, we see this book is divided into three parts.

1) Past, small;

2) Present responsibilities or rules and regulations for life, big;

3) Future, what will happen, big; but not as big as the Present.

So, Small, huge chunk, and then Medium-sized chunk.

So, we have:

1) S - past

2) L in the middle - Present responsibilities

3) M - Future.

So roughly, let's look at the past reflections or past recollections. That's found in chapters 1-4. Looking back, it seems very brief. Like, 40 years are just squashed in, into the past reflections. So, that's what we should learn to do. Looking back at the past, "Thank You God, thank You for being with me. I was so unfaithful but You were good." That's encouragement to us.

Then, our present. So, the first speech gets over in 4 chapters.

I'm sure, he spent a lot of time telling them on Day 1-2, the first speech; past. Then, on Day 3, likely, he spent the same time, a whole day, giving them their regulations. But a lot of it is recorded down, to tell us how important it is. They were given a whole bunch of laws, whole bunch of regulations for them to sink into their head - to think about - so that when they enter the Promised Land they were ready for the temptations of the Promised Land. They were going to enter, cross the Jordan, enter into a very occupied land. There were seven nations at that time, very strong nations. And these seven strong nations, their civilization is so much higher than the slaves who were in the desert. They were really like country bumpkins, they knew nothing. Whilst they come to these new civilizations, they would be amazed, attracted by them and tempted to imitate them.

And these seven nations had some common characteristics that united them, in a sense, certain types of behaviour:

- 1) They were all immoral nations.
- 2) There were lots of injustice among them.
- 3) The worst of all, they were idolatrous. Hugely idolatrous.

All these seven nations had these three common sins: Immorality, Injustice, Idolatry.

Immorality was huge. Fornication, normal. Everybody had sex with everybody. Adultery is very common. Divorce, remarriage, very common. Sodomy, very common. Incest, even within families, very normal. You say, "How come everything is like that, so bad, even sex with animals? Why is everybody sex-obsessed?" Well, because, their religion was largely based on sex. "What do you mean religion based on sex?" You see, they believe in the "concept of fertility". Their religion was basically fertility cults. They believe the land produced a lot because it was fertile. And just as humans need to have a lot of sex to have a lot of babies, if humans had a lot of sex, it will make the land more fertile. It's kind of bizarre, but that's what they believe. They believe in the religion of Mother Earth.

Today, we keep hearing that term, rather than Father God, it's Mother Earth. They think, "the Earth is the main thing, so let's make the Earth fertile". Their whole religion was based on "fertility" which, to the human mind is "sex". So, they had temple prostitutes, their religion was based on "worship your god, go and have sex in the temple; we have sex in the temple, you make your land more fertile". And so, that's how they believe.

So, often, our gods determine our behaviour.

If our god is very harsh, our laws can be very harsh.

If our god is very gracious, then our laws, our behaviour can be very gracious.

If our god is very swift to anger then we, as people, tend to take revenge very quickly.

But, if our god is patient, then our behaviour tends to be patient.

If our god is holy, then we tend to live holy lives.

If our god is very lax on these things, then our behaviour becomes very lax.

So, a lot of times, when you see the behaviour of a certain culture of people, you can reflect it back to what is their religion, which probably rules the way they behave.

Injustice, second one. Immorality, everywhere.

Injustice, terrible. The rich really took advantage of the poor and the weak. Example, slaves were treated just as property. Foreigners were treated as nothing, because they had no power. Women were treated really low, because men had the power. So, injustice was, the poor became poorer and poorer because of usury, of lending money at ridiculous rates until there were just a few rich guys in the whole culture. So, in unjust culture, the poor were really treated like dirt; the blind, the weak were just treated like nothing. Injustice.

Lastly, idolatry. So, you have 1) Immorality, 2) Injustice, 3) Idolatry. There were idols everywhere, a god for everything. Under every tree, there was some kind of idol, some countries are like that today. So idolatrous.

When we understand these three common sins, we understand why the Laws tend to address immorality, injustice and idolatry. If you look at the Laws, you're going to see from chapter 5 to chapter 26, more than 20 chapters of all kinds of laws. But if you look at it, they all address these three basic issues.

Now, let's look at some features of this 20 over chapters of rules, present rules, present regulations, present responsibilities they must have as they enter the land.

Number 1, the one that strikes me the most is, the repetition of the word "one God". Worship "one God" in "one place". Rather than, multiple gods under multiple trees, multiple rocks, multiple mountains. One God, one place to worship.

Why does God keep emphasizing this? Because they were going to enter a place where there was multiple gods, multiple altars and shrines everywhere.

Number 2, you will find that the Law seems all mixed up.

For our way of thinking, we like to see things more systematic.

How we worship in church, there are rules.

How we behave in the family.

How we then behave in society.

We like to see things systematic.

The Laws here, when you read them, seem all mixed up. One hand, the verses will talk about how to sacrifice animals in the Tabernacle, so much details. Suddenly, the next law is about when you build a house: don't forget to put a barricade on your rooftop so that people don't fall over. Because that is not good, it's not fair. Some kids may play on the roof and drop over and die. What's that got to do with worship? And then, the next, almost immediately comes after that, something about: don't forget to pay your slaves and your servants on time, don't hold back the salary.

Why are all these laws mixed up? I think, God is trying to teach us something very important that we modern Christians don't quite get.

We like to divide the sacred from the secular. We go to church, we behave one way. We think about, "Oh, this is about God". Then, we go to office, we behave another way, "This is corporate, I can do a lot of things here. But, on Sunday, these things I cannot do." So, we have this separation. Or when we go to play sports, there's another way, "I can behave like a terrible guy in the sports field, because it has nothing to do with God." No, no. no. All these laws are mixed up to tell us that whatsoever you do, whether you eat or drink, do to the glory of God.

In other words, worship is not what we do on Sunday for 2 hours, where we sing some songs and listen to a sermon and put some offerings in. That's one part of our worship. Worship is whatever we do, we do to the glory of God.

So, that's why it's all mixed up - to tell you God is as concerned about how you make an offering in the Tabernacle as how you pay your salaries fairly to your employees.

And how your house should be, whether it infringes on your neighbour's property or infringes on your neighbour's privacy, things like that. All of that is worship. But for the modern Christian mind, "No, that's not worship. That's separate." So, we say, "Let's go worship God today." No, let's worship God 24/7!

But all that we do, everything we do, we say, "How does this glorify God?" For the modern mind, it's very difficult.

So, God purposely mixes it up, knowing that in the future, we'll have this Greek mind. The Greeks always like to divide body and soul and all that, it's just all one. Where does the body begin? The soul? The spirit? I don't know, it's all one.

Number 3 feature is: Please don't compare these laws to present-day modern laws. If you compare them to present-day modern laws, you'd say, "What's the big deal about these laws?" In fact, some of them look pretty archaic. They even talk about slaves, and even talk about things that you and I would say, "Nothing great about this law."

Remember, this law was given to the Israelites, a thousand over years ago, almost 2,000 years ago. You must compare this law, at that time, with other laws of that time. This law was not given for us, this law was given for them. Not for us today but for them at that time, living in that culture, in that era.

In fact, today, when we look at the laws, we'll think our laws today are even better than these laws. Do you know why? Particularly, people who live in Singapore, we have British laws. And British laws unashamedly were taken from the Bible. King Alfred took British laws, basically, from the Bible and then tweaked it for modern times. Or more modern times, I'll put it that way. So, British law always evolved, that it now looks so good but actually, it's from the Bible. And it's evolved from this time.

So, when you look at this law, compare it with the laws of those days, of their neighbours. All cultures have, basically, some things in common. Almost all laws, whether it was in China, Indus Valley, Egypt. Basically, killing someone for no reason is wrong. Basically, stealing someone's wife, else's wife, is wrong. Almost all cultures. Basically, lying to your friend is wrong. That's actually the conscience of men that writes laws. These are the laws written in our heart. So, all these were the same.

But, the laws we're reading here in Deuteronomy, compared to the other laws, are superior. For example, in these laws, slaves had rights. In other laws, at that time, slaves had zero rights. Here, women had rights, in this, you have to treat them properly. In other laws, women are your property, do whatever you want. Foreigners, do whatever you want with them. Kings

were above the law, in other cultures. Here, kings were to follow the law, the kings were also under this law. So, all people under the same law, whether you were king, or whether you were a slave.

So, when you compare this law, please don't compare it with today's law, which is taken from this law and tweaked and improved and fitted into the modern time. So, you can't compare that.

Number 4, these laws, as opposed to other laws of their time, in Deuteronomy. It's basically, 'thou shall not'. Other laws are, 'if you do this, this will be your punishment or your reward'. Why is there a difference? Because this law is given by God. God can tell you, "You cannot do that. You cannot do that." Other laws are written by men and say, "Well, if you do it, this is your punishment." So, you see here, the laws here were strong laws given from a sovereign God.

Number 5, some of these laws are very weird. Extremely weird. For example, some of them say, 'you cannot mix wool and linen in the same cloth'. You say, "What? My clothes are all mixed." Right? How come? Because, this addresses an issue they will face when they enter the Promised Land. What is the issue? Again, it's about fertility. They always believe when you have sex with another type, it improves things, improves the fertility, it's like hybridization. So, you mix animals, you mix plants. So, here it says, 'no mixture'. Now you get it, it's because of the fertility cults where men have sex with animals. "No, no, no, no mixture. Humans are humans".

Another one, for example, in Deuteronomy 14:21, a very strange one. You cannot boil a baby goat in the mother's milk. What is this? Well, in those days, boiling a baby kid in the mother's milk is like the baby having sex with the mother. And that's "good." "Incest, it's okay. In fact, it increases fertility." Oh my goodness! So, don't boil a kid in the mother's milk. Because that's what they do, thinking that this is another kind of fertility.

So, some of the rules don't make any sense to us. But it was not for us, it was for the Israelites entering the Promised Land. I hope you get it. So, sometimes when you read, it's very strange, but don't worry, it's not for you. Some of those laws were specific for them.

Number 6 and last, get principles out of this. Rather than just looking at the law and saying, "Exactly what does this mean?" But rather, see the principle behind it. For example, Deuteronomy 25: 4,

"Don't muzzle the ox that treads the corn". So, when an ox is pulling the millstone to mill corn, you cannot close his mouth. But if you don't close his mouth, he will eat the corn sometimes. He will stop and eat the corn. That's okay. Because in 1 Corinthians, Paul says the principle of this, "Is it not written in the law of Moses that you cannot muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn?" The principle is, when someone takes care of your spiritual needs, please feed him. Please take care of your pastor. Please take care of the full-time workers who serve in God's work, feed them. Paul is trying to tell them, 'don't muzzle the ox' is not so much about God caring for the ox but God's principle is that, when someone does his work properly, feed him properly. That's all.

So you see, Deuteronomy 25:4 is explained in 1 Corinthians 9:9-11 the principle behind it.

So, I hope you see, when you see all this bundle of laws here, get your context right. It was for the Israelites, entering into a land full of immorality, full of injustice and full of idolatry. So, for you and me, it's like, some of these laws have nothing to do with me. But, get the context right. So, you don't really need to read them and underline every one, because it's specifically for the Israelites entering into a particular place at a particular time.

So, principles can be learned, but not necessarily the methods and the details.

I want you to note that, when we see spiritual laws, there are three levels of our life.

First, we do a lot of unclean things, wrong things. We didn't know they were wrong. We lie, white lie. "It's not that bad." It's unclean but we didn't realize. For unsaved people, "I'm not married yet, I can have fornication before I get married. Go to a prostitute and that's okay, that's normal." So, that's unclean. Then when we get saved, we realize, "Unclean. This is unclean, now I better become cleaner.

I better try, not to lie. I shouldn't have sex outside of my marriage." So, unclean to clean, that's a level. But, you'll notice it, a lot of these laws is not about unclean to clean, but from unclean to clean, to sacred. Whoa, three levels. Unclean, clean and sacred. Or, we can even say, bad behaviour, good behaviour and godly behaviour. So, there are actually three levels, not, "Unclean, now I'm clean." "Pastor, I'll be careful what I say. I don't say bad words anymore. I'm more careful of what I say". Good. From unclean - your mouth - to clean. But then, let's move to one level. Clean is not enough. Clean is decent.

So, there are decent people in the world who are not believers. Very decent, their lives are very decent. They don't have adultery, they don't lie, they don't cheat a lot, outwardly. Their lives are good. You have to move one more level up, from clean to sacred. What do you mean by sacred? You do it for God. You're not just doing so that you look okay. But, now, you do it specifically, to glorify God, to please God. So, from unclean, to clean, to sacred. This is a cleaning process and this is the consecrating process from here to here.

I'll give you an example. If I preach a beautiful sermon, great truths, is that sacred? May not be, because I'm preaching to show off how much I know

of theology. What I've done is, I've done a beautiful lecture on Deuteronomy. But, if I did this, for the glory of God, I want God to be glorified in this effort. Then, I've turned what was a clean speech into a sacred speech. See? So, even doing something like preaching, can be just at this level: common, not sacred.

If I'm a taxi driver, and I drive a taxi, sounds like a very decent job. I drive, I don't cheat anybody. Clean. But, I drive for the glory of God. Maybe in my taxi, there's a Cross, there's a Bible verse. And I'm the best taxi driver, I'm polite and kind. And all I did was drive. But I wanted to drive, so that my passenger will realize the driver is a Christian: "This is the most polite kind driver. He carried my bags, put into the trunk of the taxi and was polite and thanked me and said, 'Sir, thank you'." Even driving can be sacred.

I hope you get my point here. As Christians, we don't just try to lead decent lives. But, whatsoever we do, whatever we do, eat or drink, do it for the glory of God. So, that moves up from unclean, clean, to sacred or godly.

Now, when you see so many laws, you say, "So many laws." Remember, in this book of Deuteronomy, the word 'love' appears 30 over times. Love and law are related. Jesus said in John 14:15, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." I hope you get it. God's going to send them to the Promised Land. He said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." Shabbat is so legalistic, so many laws. No, legalistic doesn't mean more laws. Many laws don't mean legalistic. Legalistic means, 'I do all these laws, hoping to get saved', that's legalistic. I hope you understand the difference. As a believer, I do all these things, not hoping to get saved, but because I love God. I want God to be glorified by my life. "If you love Me, keep My commandments." So, when you see a lot of laws, don't say, "Legal, legal all legal." No, if you obey laws for the glory of God, that's called love, not legalism.

So, let me just summarize very quickly.

The whole book has three speeches: Moses' three speeches:

Looking back, small part, letter S, small size.

Present laws, present responsibilities, L size.

Then, we'll move on, to the next lesson

- to Medium size: Future reward or retribution.

Deuteronomy – Part 2 of 2

In this second part of Deuteronomy, we examine the future rewards and retributions:

rewards, if they obeyed the regulations given to them, and retribution, if they chose to disobey them.

They were going into this land full of temptations. The religion was immoral, immoral religions are very tempting. You'll find that religions that allow lax moral standards, or that a man can have many wives, are very attractive. Then, you'll also see that religions that allow injustice, where a man can bully the woman, is very popular with men, who, generally, rule. Religion, where you can take advantage of the poor where you can exploit the foreigner, is very popular.

Even among Christians, you'll find that churches will not usually touch on these areas of lax moral standards. They don't say very much about their members' sexual lives e.g. Young people before marriage going on holidays together are not brought up because it's very normal now.

Injustice. Even churches will not talk about treating their helpers properly, treating foreign workers properly. We don't want to bring up these things because it drives people away. They don't deal with those, they just talk about spiritual things: going for Bible study, coming to worship, giving your offering. A lot of people can accept that, but, "Don't touch my moral standards. Don't touch how I take care of my maid at home. That's a different issue."

Then you say, "Idolatry, how does that affect us?" Idolatry is very, very much in the churches today, except they're not graven images. An idol is anything that we put above God. Our hope is in that thing. This is our hope; it's not in God, but in this. It can be something as simple as our jobs. We think, "Our security is in our jobs. So, I put my job, really, as my protector of my life, my security". That's an idol. It could be anything, even your health food. You think you're healthy because you take the right health food. That's idolatry. Health is from God. Yes, we must take good food and have good jobs, yes. But it's God that provides us the right jobs, help us to do them well. It's God, ultimately, that we look up to. These are means - medicines are means, the job is a means. So, all these things are, actually, already into our religion, into our faith. We don't realize how attractive they are, and how we just quietly absorb it.

So, when the Israelites were entering the Promised Land, Moses told them, "You have to choose, you have to make a choice, whether to obey these rules. To the people in the Promised Land, they are very unusual rules. "Why do you care about slaves? Why do you care about foreigners? Why do you care about poor people? Why do you care about women? They have no rights."

In all these things, they would have to make a choice. Be like these people or obey God. If they chose to obey God, then they would be blessed greatly. You find this in the remaining chapters - future responsibilities and regulations are found in chapters 26 to 34. It's a medium-sized chunk of this book. Then, Moses tells them of the horror if they were to disobey the rules given to them. Deuteronomy 28 - Horror. If you read it really carefully, you'd get scared. What would happen to Israel, to the Israelites? How they'd be scattered, how they'd eat their own children. You cannot believe it, I mean, "You'd cook your boy, your child? And eat your child and you would even let your husband eat your child because that's the meat?" You can't believe these things, but it actually happened. Deuteronomy 28 is the history of Israel, for the past 3,000 years. "What? You mean it's

written so long ago? It speaks all the way of Israel?" Yes, Deuteronomy 28, let me repeat, is a summary of the history of Israel for the past 3,000 years. They chose to disobey God and they went through the sufferings described in Deuteronomy 28. It was said, in Deuteronomy 28:37, "They would be an astonishment, a horror, a byword, and a proverb". Scattered like the Jews, suffering like the Jews - it came to pass.

Then, God tells them, "When you cross into the Promised Land, you divide: six tribes to go on Mount Gerizim, six tribes to go on Mount Ebal". This is just after they entered the Promised Land. These two mountains face each other. In between these two mountains is a valley, which is a very nice amphitheater. In other words, if someone stood at the bottom and shouted, it would echo between these two mountains. Six tribes on Gerizim: the blessings. Six tribes on Ebal: the curses. And, according to Jewish tradition, we don't know whether it's true, but according to Jewish tradition, Mount Gerizim, at that time, was lush, full of vegetation. Mount Ebal was barren, just rock. And so, it was almost a visual contrast. Then, the Levites were to stand in the middle and shout the blessings and the curses. And the people on both sides would say, "Amen, Amen, that is true. Let it be true. It is true." So, they'd say like, "Cursed be you, Israel, if you don't obey this law", and they'd all say, "Amen, amen". And so, this will be a graphic lesson for them that would, hopefully, stick in their heads, these curses and the blessings. "If we obey God, blessing. Amen, amen. If we disobey God, curses. Amen, it will come to pass." So that was what Moses instructed them to do.

And then Moses finally writes a song because he knows that whatever you tell people, they tend to forget. Lectures go in, through the right ear, and come out the left ear. That's how it is, our brain doesn't keep lectures well. We keep stories well, like this picture of Ebal and Gerizim. We tend to remember that. Or, we keep songs well. So, he wrote a song, describing what God would do if they obeyed and what God would do if they disobeyed. So, Moses not only gave

his last speeches, three impassionate speeches to the Israelites, but he wanted them to have a song to remember and teach this song to their children. And the song will tell the lesson of making a choice between blessing or cursing.

So, Moses is really doing his very best to plead with them, to choose not to disobey. But, in Deuteronomy 32:15, he admits, 'But Israel will be prosperous, grow fat, and then disobey God'. He predicted that. How sad. He saw them going into the Promised Land. He saw them, eventually, soon after, disobeying God and rejecting all these laws that God had given them. But, then, he goes on to say, 'But God is so merciful, that He would gather Israel again if they repented'. He would scatter them, they would be scattered. They would be a proverb, a byword of a scattered nation. But, when they repent, God would gather them again. And that was so beautiful.

And, in Deuteronomy 30:6, he said, 'One day, God will circumcise the flesh of their hearts and give them a heart that would love God'. Wow! He knew that they would disobey because their heart was still not a changed heart. When the laws were given, the heart was still a sinful heart, inherited from Adam.

So, while he saw Israel being messed up, he also got a little peek that one day God will gather them and give them a new heart that would love God.

Before he goes, he's got a replacement -Joshua. So, Moses has done his job. He's given his best speech. He pleads with them. He writes a song. He gives a drama for them in Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. And then, he is replaced by Joshua.

In Deuteronomy 34, it says that, 'Joshua was full of the spirit of wisdom'. God gave Joshua the Holy Spirit, to be full of wisdom. It's so important, when you lead God's work, you must have that Spirit.

And then, Joshua would be a mini Moses, not as great as Moses, but a mini Moses. He would part the Jordan River, just as Moses parted the Red Sea. And, as Moses led them from the Red Sea to Mount Sinai, Joshua would lead them from the Jordan River to Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, for that drama. So, you see, a little bit of the type, a little bit of the copy of Moses, on a miniature scale. Of course, the Jordan River is not that big compared to the Red Sea. Gerizim and Ebal did not go up in a fire like at Mount Sinai. But still, the people would see a little Moses in him and obey him.

Then, as they were to enter the Promised Land, you will find these words repeated in Deuteronomy. "God has given you this land." Given. But as he says the land is given, he says, "You must go in and possess it." 40 times. I hope you're getting what I'm saying. The land is given to you, but you must possess it. What does that mean? It means that the land, a promised land, the ownership, title deed was given to the Israelites. It's a promise from God. But, ownership and occupation are two different things. You can own a house but never get to stay there. Because, you're sick, maybe? You can own some beautiful food but you never get to eat it, because you don't have the appetite. So, ownership and occupation are two different things. You might own a billion dollars but never have a chance to spend it because you died. They are two different things. They would own the land, but they will never really occupy it, except for short periods of time. To occupy the land they must go in and possess it. So, they were to go into this land, which was theirs, their place of rest. And then, they must possess one city after another city, conquer one nation after another nation. That took their own effort.

What's the principle here? We are also given promises by God. The promises are ours, it's given to us. But do you enjoy these promises - the peace and joy that passes all understanding, the assurance that God will guide you, the assurance that, "all things work together for good to them that love God". All these promises - will you enjoy them? Or, will you just have the promises, but never enjoy them?

So, I hope you will begin to see that this principle is very important, even in our Christian life. After we got saved, God gave us promises. Just as the Israelites were out of Egypt, they were given the promise, the ownership of the land. But, they never enjoyed it. Many Christians never enjoy the promises because for many Christians, all the promises are just there, never claimed by faith, just as the Israelites had to conquer city after city, by faith.

Just before they entered the Promised Land, God allowed them two major victories over King Og and Sihon. Two amazing victories so that they will be encouraged, and that Joshua could then go in and see, "God gave us these two victories over powerful kings. Then, we can go in and conquer the rest of Canaan". So God, actually, had primed them to enter the Promised Land with confidence.

So, Moses finished writing the Torah, the five books, the Pentateuch, from Genesis to Deuteronomy.

But, three questions still remain unanswered.

Number 1, there was a promise in Genesis chapter 3, 'that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent'. That was a hint. The question is, When? Still unanswered in the Pentateuch.

Genesis 12 says, "Abraham, through him, many nations, all nations will be blessed". Question - how is Abraham going to bless all nations? For that, we have to look at the continuation of the drama. This is how a drama unfolds, little hints, but the answer is not given till the final chapter when it all wraps up.

Third one, Deuteronomy 30:6 says, "God, one day, would circumcise the flesh of their hearts, that they will love God". How would God do that? Again, we have to wait for the answer later. How is this human heart of ours going to be a new heart? You have to wait. There are still three unanswered question marks.

Moses is 120 years old. Nobody had ever been like him, speaking to God face to face. God speaks to us now through the Word, through a prompting of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, through some circumstances. God spoke to men in the past through dreams, through visions, through interpretation of dreams, but God spoke to Moses face to face. Through that rod that Moses wielded - ten amazing miracles. Amazing. There was nobody like Moses. The Jews look to him as Number 2 after Abraham.

Did you know? In the Quran, Moses is the personality most mentioned. Musa is Moses. 135 times - mentioned more than anyone else.

Finally, Moses is told to go up to Mount Nebo. Sometimes, it's called Pisgah, sometimes it's called Nebo. Different names for the same

places, it's quite common in the Bible. Like, Horeb is Mount Sinai, sometimes Horeb, sometimes Sinai. Some have even three names like Moses' father-in-law - he is sometimes called Jethro, sometimes called Reuel, sometimes called Hobab. They had different names. It's quite common in those days. Finally, he goes up, he sees the land but he cannot enter. From Nebo, just across Jordan (it's in the modern-day Kingdom of Jordan) you can see almost the whole of the Promised Land, right to the Mediterranean on a clear day. So, Moses goes up and God tells him, "This is the land. But you can't go in."

And then, the Bible says, Moses died and was buried, but nobody knows where. Why? Because, if the Israelites knew where the tomb of Moses was, they will worship it. There will be another place of worship. But God wanted them just to worship at the Tabernacle, and later the Temple. It's one place of worship. Interestingly enough, in Jude chapter 1, it tells us in Jude (Jude is only one book), that an angel and Satan fought over the body of Moses to bury him. That's very unusual, I don't understand why.

A unique man, a unique life, a unique death. It says he was the meekest of all men. A meek man is a man who never defends himself, it doesn't mean he's a coward. When he was accused, he just let God defend him. That's meekness. We know God will defend us.

Even though he wrote this book, very interestingly, he wrote it not as if 'God spoke to me, and I said to them'. No, he wrote it in the third person. "And God spoke to Moses", he wrote it, "and say unto the people of Israel", in third person, as if he's just a reporter. He was the actor.

But the last part has to be written by Joshua, it's after his death. So, the part about him going up to Nebo and dying there and being buried must be added by Joshua to end the book.

We see the end of a very important section of the Bible. These five books take up almost 15% of the entire Bible.

Now, I would suggest you listen to Deuteronomy. You can read it, I'm not against that. If you have the time and the ability to read, read it. But, if you have all these points that were brought up, and you think about the points, and then you listen to it, you would take roughly 2 hours to go through the whole book of Deuteronomy. When you read, you tend to stop, you tend to think, you tend to underline, you tend to refer. And you might take a long time. Not 2 hours, you might take 200 hours to read it. So, I suggest you just listen. And, then at certain points, stop. Then, check your Bible, if you want to.

So, listen to it because it's basically an impassioned speech - not for you, for the Israelites; not so much for your time, but for them, at that time. But there are lessons to learn.

So, as we are going through this beautiful Book, I want you to see how it all ties up. I want you to see how it all weaves together into this amazing story. Not so much an in-depth study of the Book, but an overview of the gorgeous Book, the beautiful Book.

God bless you.