

Bible Study: Deuteronomy – Renewing the Covenant

Author: Moses

Audience: Israel after the 40 years of wandering

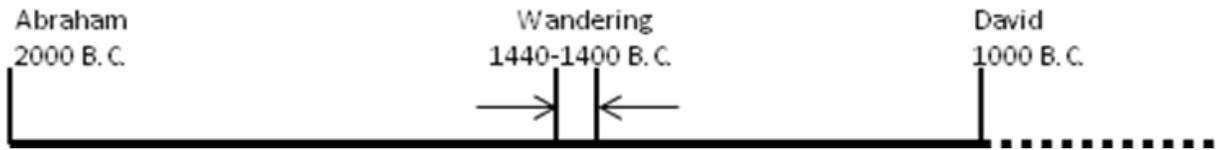
Date: Approximately 1400 B.C.

Location: Across the Jordan in the Arabah opposite Suph

Theme: The Renewal of the Covenant

Genre: Exposition/prose

Timeline of the Exodus Period



Outline

Introduction: The Historical Setting of Moses' Speeches (1:1–4)

The First Address by Moses: Historical Prologue (1:5–4:43)

The Second Address by Moses: Covenant Obligations (4:44–26:19)

The Third Address of Moses: The Blessings and Curses (27:1–29:1)

The Fourth Address by Moses: A Summary of Covenant Demands (29:2–30:20)

The Transition from Moses to Joshua (chaps. 31–34)

Note: Deuteronomy follows the pattern of the vassal treaties typical of the second millennium B.C. When a king (a suzerain) made a treaty with a vassal country the treaty usually contained six elements: (a) a preamble, (b) a historical prologue (a history of the king's dealings with the vassal), (c) a general stipulation (a call for wholehearted allegiance to the king), (d) specific stipulations (detailed laws by which the vassal state could give concrete expression to its allegiance to the king), (e) divine witnesses (deities called to witness the treaty), and (f) blessings and curses (for obedience or disobedience to the treaty)....

Deuteronomy approximates this structure, for 1:1–4 constitutes a preamble; 1:5–4:43 a historical prologue; 4:44–11:32 a general stipulation; chapters 12–26 specific stipulations; and chapters 27–28 blessings and curses. (Of course Yahweh, being the only true God, did not call on other deities to witness the treaty.) These correspondences and others are given specific attention in this commentary. These parallels with the form of vassal treaties of the second millennium B.C. also argue for an early date for the Book of Deuteronomy (Bible Knowledge Commentary).

Categories of commands in Deuteronomy:

1. Limited to Israelites living in the Promised Land (e.g., royal or priestly laws)
2. An example to follow (a limited application based on general principles)
3. General laws are binding on all people, everywhere, all the time

2nd Millennium BC																							
Laws	Treaties	OT Covenant (Deuteronomy)																					
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">Title</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">Prologue</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">Blessings and curses</td></tr> </table>	Title	Prologue		Blessings and curses	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">Title</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">Historical Prologue</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">Stipulations/Laws</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">Deposition</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">Reading</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">Witnesses</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">Blessings and curses</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">Oath Ceremony Sanctions</td></tr> </table>	Title	Historical Prologue	Stipulations/Laws	Deposition	Reading	Witnesses	Blessings and curses	Oath Ceremony Sanctions	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">Title</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">Historical Prologue</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">Stipulations/Laws</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">Deposition</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">Reading</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">Witnesses</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">Blessings and curses</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">Oath Ceremony Sanctions</td></tr> </table>	Title	Historical Prologue	Stipulations/Laws	Deposition	Reading	Witnesses	Blessings and curses	Oath Ceremony Sanctions	<p>Identifies the chief partner</p> <p>To show how past benefits from the chief partner should inspire the vassal to grateful obedience to the stipulations that follow</p> <p>There are provisions for the text to be preserved in the vassal's chief temple. The gods of both parties are witnesses and guarantors of the pact. Curses and blessings on those who disobey or obey its terms.</p> <p>A treaty or covenant was ratified by an oath and solemn ceremony and mention of sanctions against one who breaks it.</p>
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New Bible Dictionary, 3rd Ed.

Observation

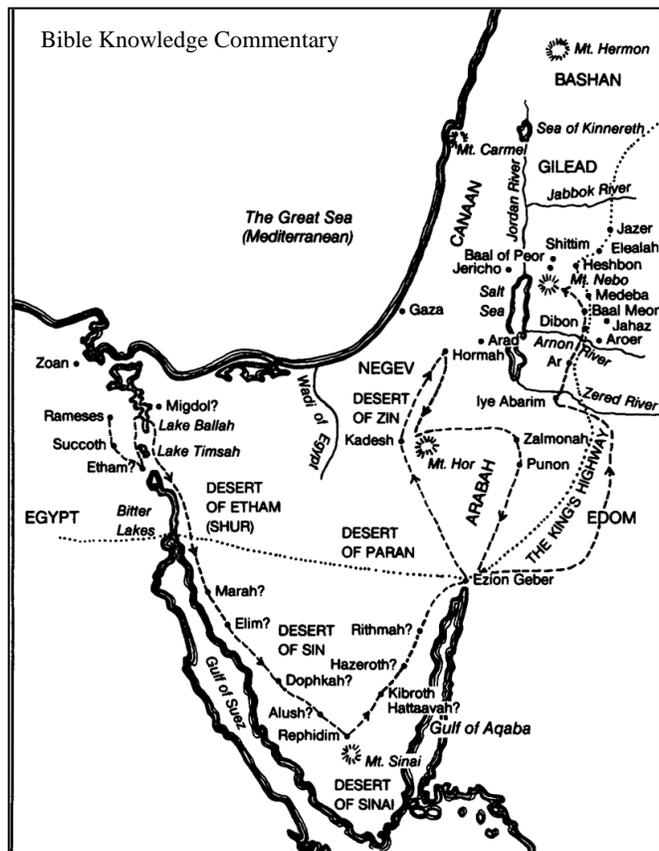
- 1:1 Israel was "across the Jordan" (i.e. east); this was written in the third person years later
- 1:2 Horeb is 11 days south of Kadesh Barnea by way of Mount Seir (150 miles)
- 1:3 Moses spoke to Israel 40 years after the Exodus (contrasted with 11 days)
- 1:5 Moses expounds this Torah = law, instruction, doctrine
- 1:6 The story starts at Horeb; God ordered Israel into the Promised Land
- 1:8 Command: Take possession of the Promised Land (limited to Israel alone)
- 1:10 Israel was as numerous as the stars of heaven, a large and powerful nation
- 1:13 Moses had to delegate authority; Israel nominated, Moses appointed
- 1:15 Moses created a hierarchical organization of leaders and judges
- 1:16 Command: Judge impartially both Israelites and aliens (general, for everyone)
- 1:19 Israel leaves Horeb, travels to Kadesh Barnea
- 1:21 Command: Do not fear or be dismayed (general)
- 1:26 The people lacked faith, were afraid and rebelled against God
- 1:28 Their problems looked too big (giants, fortresses); the sons of Anakim
- 1:29 Moses told them to trust God who guided them through the wilderness
- 1:33 Israel saw the pillar of fire and smoke throughout their journey
- 1:34 God withheld the Promised Land from everyone except Caleb and Joshua
- 1:41 Israel then tried to invade without God's protection; they failed
- 1:44 The Amorites crushed Israel from Seir to Hormah; sin = failure

Interpretation

Where are the places mentioned in Deut 1? Except for **Jordan** and **the Arabah**, the exact locations of the place names given in 1:1 are not known with any certainty. The Arabah is the large rift valley that extends from the Sea of Kinnereth (later the Sea of Galilee) in the north to the Gulf of Aqaba in the south.¹

Horeb (Mount Sinai) is located in the Wilderness of Sinai (cf. Ex 3:1, 19:1-2, 34:2, 27, Num 10:11-13 with Deut 5:2).

The Promised Land extended from Ezion Geber to the Wadi of Egypt, along the Mediterranean coast to Mount Hermon, up to the Euphrates River, back to the Arnon River, down the Dead Sea and back to the to the Gulf of Aqaba excluding the territory of Moab and Edom to the east (Gen 15:16:21, 17:7-8, Ex 23:31).



¹ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Deuteronomy 1:1.

What is the significance of Israel being as numerous as the stars of heaven (1:10)?

If the nation had any doubt about God's intention or ability to fulfill His ancient covenant with Abraham she had only to look at her present condition. Israel had become so numerous that they were like **the stars in the sky** (v. 10). This, of course, was one thing **God** had promised Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; Ex. 32:13).²

Who were the sons of the Anakim (1:28)?

The Anakim (Heb. ^a*nāqîm*), descendants of an eponymous ancestor Anak, were among the pre-Israelite inhabitants of Palestine. The name Anak occurs without the article only in Nu. 13:33 and Dt. 9:2, but elsewhere it appears in the form 'the Anak' (*hā'^anāq*), where it is presumably to be taken as the collective, equivalent to Anakim. The phrase 'the city of Arba (*KIRIATH-ARBA), father of Anak' in Jos. 15:13 apparently indicates that an individual named Arba was the ultimate ancestor of the Anakim, unless the noun 'father' is taken to qualify the city, in which case this city, later known as *HEBRON, was considered the ancestral home of the Anakim.

The stature and formidable nature of the Anakim were almost proverbial, for they were taken as a standard for comparison to stress the size of such other peoples as the Emim (Dt. 2:10) and the Rephaim (Dt. 2:21), and there was a saying, 'Who can stand before the sons of Anak?' (Dt. 9:2). In the account of the Promised Land brought back by the ten faint-hearted spies, emphasis was laid on the fact that the Anakim were there (Dt. 1:28; the LXX here renders ^a*nāqîm* by *gigantes*, *GIANT). It was even stated that they were descended from the Nephilim, who were also claimed as sons of Anak, and the spies said that they felt like grasshoppers beside them (Nu. 13:33). They were settled in the hill-country, particularly at Hebron (Nu. 13:22), where Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai, 'descendants of Anak', were found. Joshua cut off the Anakim from the hill country (from Hebron, Debir and Anab), but some were left in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod (Jos. 11:21f.), and it fell to Caleb finally to drive them out from Hebron, which had been allotted to him.³

Application

An example to follow: Delegate authority (Acts 6:1-6)

An example to follow: Hierarchical organization (1 Cor 6:1-5)

A command to obey: Be impartial (Acts 10:34, James 2:1, 9)

A command to obey: Do not fear (Hebrews 3:7-19, 10:38 Rev 21:8)

² *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Deuteronomy 1:1.

³ *New Bible Dictionary*, Anak, Anakim.

Bible Study: Deuteronomy – Renewing the Covenant

Observation

2:1 Israel circled Mount Seir for 40 years, going nowhere as punishment for their sin
2:4 Command: Avoid conflict with Edom, Mount Seir belongs to Esau (limited)
2:9 Command: Avoid conflict with Moab, Ar belongs to Lot's descendants (limited)
2:12 Esau annihilated the Horites in Seir just as Israel did (past tense) in Canaan
2:14 It took 38 years to go from Kadesh Barnea to Wadi Zared, to kill that generation
2:19 Command: Avoid conflict with Ammon, the land of Lot's descendants (limited)
2:21 The Lord had already annihilated the Zamzummin (Rephaim) through Ammon
2:22 The Lord had also annihilated the Horites through Esau (a lesson to Israel)
2:24 Command: Conquer the land of Sihon, king of Heshbon (limited)
2:26 Moses sent messengers requesting peaceful passage across the Jordan
2:30 But God hardened Sihon's heart in order to destroy him (judicial hardening)
2:34 Israel captured all his cities and left no survivors (cf. Dt 7:2)
2:35 Israel took the animals and possessions as spoils of war
2:36 No city was "too high" for them; the earlier generation feared these high walls

Interpretation

Who wrote Deut 2:12?

After God's command to treat **the Moabites** (the city of **Ar** was in Moab), Lot's **descendants** (Gen. 19:36–37), as carefully as the Edomites (Deut. 2:4–6), a post-Mosaic editor inserted an explanatory note (vv. 10–12). Though it is impossible to determine precisely when verses 10–12 were inserted, verse 12 indicates that it was after the initial conquest of the land. Editorial notes in the Pentateuch do no harm to the doctrine of biblical inspiration (see "Date and Authorship" in the *Introduction*). Inspiration refers to the final product rather than to the manner of writings. The original texts of Scripture are "God-breathed" (2 Tim. 3:16), and therefore contain no errors, for God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). The Holy Spirit superintended the work of editors just as He did the historical research of Luke (Luke 1:1–4) so that the final words of the text, though obtained by different methods, are the words intended by God. It was this final text (including editorial insertions) that Jesus Christ pronounced perfect (e.g., Matt. 5:18; John 10:35).⁴

Where is Caphtor (2:23)?

Caphtor was the land from which the Philistines came (Je. 47:4; Am. 9:7), and it is presumably the Philistines, as erstwhile sojourners in Caphtor, who are referred to as Caphtorim in Dt. 2:23. It is probable that the biblical name is to be identified with... *CRETE.⁵

Application

An example to follow: Faithful obedience to God's commands (Heb 11:32-34)

A challenge to face: Spiritual giants, fortresses to conquer (2 Cor 10:3-6)

⁴ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Deuteronomy 2:9-13.

⁵ *New Bible Dictionary*, Caphtor.

Bible Study: Deuteronomy – Renewing the Covenant

Observation

- 3:1 Next, Israel faced Og, the king of Bashan, and all his people in battle at Edrei
- 3:2 Command: Do not fear for I have delivered him; annihilate them (limited)
- 3:4 Israel captured all 60 of his cities; not one escaped God's judgment
- 3:5 They were fortified cities with high walls, gates and bars (magnified description)
- 3:8 Israel controlled all the territory from the Arnon to Mount Hermon
- 3:11 Og was the last of the Rephaim; his bed/couch was 9 x 4 cubits (13.5 x 6 ft)
- 3:12 Moses gave southern portion to the tribes of Reuben and Gad
- 3:13 He gave the northern portion to half of Manasseh (Jair & Machir clans)
- 3:16 Reuben and Gad protected Israel's eastern border with the Ammonites (danger)
- 3:18 They agreed to help the other tribes in taking Canaan as compensation (fairness)
- 3:21 Promise: God will do to the Canaanites what He did to Sihon & Og (fulfilled)
- 3:23 Moses asked to enter the Promised Land; God said No! (a prayer principle)
- 3:27 God did allow him to see the land from the top of Mount Pisgah
- 3:28 God chose Joshua to lead Israel into the Promised Land

Interpretation

Where are Bashan and Edrei (3:1)?

Bashan was a little farther north than the Israelites needed to go to reach their point of entry into the Promised Land. However, in defeating Og on the north they were protecting their right flank when they turned to cross the Jordan. Edrei, where the battle began, was about 30 miles east of the southern tip of the Sea of Kinnereth (Sea of Galilee)... The region of Argob (3:4) was another name for Bashan or was a part of Bashan. It was known as the land of the Rephaites (v. 13).⁶

What is the significance of Og's iron bed (3:11)?

Israel invaded Canaan during the Bronze Age (3300-1200 B.C.); while iron was not unknown during this time, it was much less common. The Jewish Virtual Library notes that there are iron deposits in the vicinity of the Jabbok that were exploited in early times.⁷ Bronze has a lower melting point and is easier to make; iron requires much higher temperature and larger quantities of wood. Therefore, the size of Og's bed/couch (13.5 x 6 ft) could be a statement of his wealth and vanity rather than an exact measurement of his size.

Why did God refuse to let Moses enter the Promised Land (3:26)?

In Numbers 20:1-12, Moses and Aaron failed to honor God in the sight of the people; as a result, God decreed that they would not enter the Promised Land. Although Moses pleaded with God to relent, the penalty for sin is often severe and permanent (cf. Heb 12:15-17).

Application

A challenge to face: Spiritual Ammonites on our borders (Acts 20:28, Heb 13:17)

An example to follow: Helping others with their needs & challenges (Php 2:4)

A challenge to face: Sometimes God says no to our prayers (Matt 6:9-10, 26:36-46)

⁶ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Deuteronomy 3:1-5.

⁷ <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org>, Gilead.

Bible Study: Deuteronomy – Renewing the Covenant

Observation

- 4:1 The covenant: If you (Israel) obey this law, then you will possess the Promised Land
- 4:1 This Law consists of statutes (apodictic law) and judgments (casuistic, case law)
- 4:2 Command: They are not to add to it (i.e., the Oral Law) or take from it (general)
- 4:3 God destroyed all the apostates who had worshiped Baal-peor
- 4:6 God wanted Israel to be an example to the Gentile nations around them
- 4:9 Command: Teach these laws to your children and grandchildren (general)
- 4:12 The LORD spoke to Israel at Horeb from the midst of the fire; they saw no form
- 4:13 He declared His covenant, the Ten Commandments, and wrote them on 2 stone tablets
- 4:15 Command: Do not make a graven image (idol) to represent God (general)
- 4:19 Command: Do not worship or serve celestial bodies (general)
- 4:20 God brought Israel out of Egypt, which was like an iron furnace (very hot)
- 4:24 Yahweh is a jealous God, a consuming fire; He will not share worship
- 4:25 Prophecy: After a long time, you will fall away and be destroyed (fulfilled)
- 4:27 Prophecy: God will scatter you and leave you few in number (fulfilled)
- 4:29 Prophecy: In exile, you will seek God and find Him (in process, Hos 3:5)
- 4:32 Has any nation ever heard God, or has a god ever taken a nation?
- 4:35 Yahweh did this to prove that there is no other God (monotheism)
- 4:37 Yahweh did this for Israel because He loved the Patriarchs (election, grace)
- 4:41 Moses set apart three cities of refuge for manslaughter east of Jordan
- 4:44 The preamble is finished; Moses now systematically expounds the Law for Israel

Interpretation

Why does Moses equate the Old Covenant with the 10 Commandments (4:13)?

The entire Law is summarized by two commandments: love God first and love your neighbor as yourself (Matt 22:35-40). The 10 Commandments expand on these two laws, and the statutes and judgments provide even greater detail.

What is the significance of writing the 10 Commandments on 2 tablets (4:13)?

God gave only **two stone tablets** (probably each tablet was complete with all Ten Commandments, in keeping with ancient Near Eastern practice to have duplicates of such covenant documents). Thus in contrast with all the religions of the ancient Near East the Word of Israel's God became the foundation of their religion.⁸

Application

A command to obey: Don't add to or delete God's words (Mk 7:7-8, Rev 22:18-19)

A sin to avoid: Following a different god or religion (2Cor 11:13-15, Gal 1:6-7)

An example to follow: Being an example of godliness to others (Matt 5:16)

A command to obey: Teach your children (Mark 10:14, Eph 6:4)

A command to obey: Avoid making any images of God (Acts 17:29)

A command to obey: Avoid polytheism (1 Cor 8:4-6)

A challenge to face: God is a jealous, consuming fire (Heb 12:29)

A verse to memorize: Yahweh is God; there is no other besides Him (Deut 5:35, 39)

⁸ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Deuteronomy 4:11-14.

Bible Study: Deuteronomy – Renewing the Covenant

Observation

- 5:1 God made a covenant specifically with Israel at Horeb
- 5:3 God didn't make this covenant with their fathers (Patriarchs); it is distinct (conditional)
- 5:7 Command: You shall have no other gods before Me (general)
- 5:8 Command: You shall not make an idol and worship them (general)
- 5:9 Promise: God will punish those who hate Him to the fourth generation (general)
- 5:10 Promise: God shows loving-kindness to those who love and obey Him (general)
- 5:11 Command: Don't take the name of God in vain – OMG! (general)
- 5:12 Command: Remember the Sabbath day; keep it holy (general)
- 5:16 Command: Honor your father and mother (general)
- 5:17 Command: You shall not murder (general)
- 5:18 Command: You shall not commit adultery (general)
- 5:19 Command: You shall not steal (general)
- 5:20 Command: You shall not commit perjury (general)
- 5:21 Command: You shall not covet (general)
- 5:27 Israel asked Moses to mediate the covenant; they promised to obey God's Law
- 5:31 God dismissed Israel and called Moses to stand before Him, receive the Law

Interpretation

Does the second commandment prohibit religious art or icons (5:8-9)?

The second commandment did not prohibit art in Israel (as the making of the tabernacle demonstrates), but rather the making of **an idol** to represent the Lord. The danger in this practice was twofold. First, since other nations used idolatry to express their devotion to their gods there was always the danger that the worship of **the Lord** could be contaminated by idolatrous forms of worship. Second, any attempt to represent **God** in any form from the natural world would have called into question the sovereignty of the One who cannot be limited by anything.⁹

Application

- A command to obey: You shall have no other gods before Me (1Cor 8:4-6)
- A command to obey: You shall not make an idol and worship them (Gal 5:20)
- A command to obey: Don't take the name of Yahweh in vain (Lev 24:16)
- A command to obey: Remember the Sabbath day; keep it holy (Heb 4:9)
- A command to obey: Honor your father and mother (Eph 6:1-3)
- A command to obey: You shall not murder (Rom 13:9)
- A command to obey: You shall not commit adultery (1Cor 6:9)
- A command to obey: You shall not steal (1Cor 6:10)
- A command to obey: You shall not commit perjury (Eph 4:25)
- A command to obey: You shall not covet (Eph 5:5, Col 3:5)
- A promise to claim: God is faithful to those who obey Him (1John 3:21-22)

⁹ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Deuteronomy 5:8-10.

Observation

- 6:2 By obeying this law, Israel would prolong their lives in the Promised Land
- 6:4 The Shema: Hear, O Israel! Yahweh our God, Yahweh one! (monotheism)
- 6:5 Command: You shall love Yahweh, your God, completely (general)
- 6:6 Command: These commands shall be on your heart, in your mind (general)
- 6:7 Command: Teach these commands to your sons throughout the day (general)
- 6:8 Command: Bind these commands on your hand or forehead like frontlets (example?)
- 6:9 Command: Write these commands on the doorposts of your house and gates (example?)
- 6:12 Exhortation: After God blesses you, do not forget the One who saved you
- 6:13 Command: Fear and worship Yahweh (general); swear by His name (limited)
- 6:15 Yahweh is a jealous God; He will destroy you if you follow other gods (general)
- 6:16 Command: You shall not test Yahweh as you did at Massah (general)
- 6:20 In time to come, your son will ask what this all means (e.g., during Passover)
- 6:24 Yahweh gave them the Torah for their good and for their survival (blessing)
- 6:25 The Torah is God’s standard of righteousness for those who obey Him

Interpretation

How can God be jealous if jealousy is sinful (6:15)?

This means He is zealous to protect what belongs to Him alone. Jealousy in this sense is ethically right. Jealousy in the sense of envy for another’s possessions or privileges is, of course, wrong.¹⁰

What does it mean to test the Lord (6:16)?

Moses envisioned another sin to which the Israelites might be tempted in the new land, that of testing the Lord (6:16). This implies that at times the people would face hardship as they did at Massah (cf. Ex. 17:1–7) where they lacked water and thought they would die of thirst. Rather than trusting God in this trial they tested Him by complaining and quarreling. They were to know that if they obeyed His commands..., doing what is right and good, then no matter what hardship they might encounter it would go well with them (cf. v. 3).¹¹

Application

- A verse to memorize: The Shema (cf. Deut 6:4-5, 1Cor 8:5-6)
- A command to obey: Love God completely (Ps 31:23, Rom 12:1, 1Cor 16:22)
- A command to obey: These commands shall be on your heart, mind (James 1:23-25)
- A command to obey: Teach these commands to your children (Eph 6:4)
- An example to follow: Bind God’s Word on your hand, forehead (e.g., on clothing, jewelry)
- An example to follow: Write God’s Word on your doorposts, gates (e.g., a mezuzah, plaque)
- An error to avoid: Forgetting about God when times are good (Deut 6:10-13)
- A command to obey: Fear Yahweh (1Pet 2:17); worship Him (Ps 86:9)
- A command to obey: Do not test Yahweh with evil (Mal 3:10, 1Cor 10:9)

¹⁰ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Deuteronomy 6:13–19.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

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Observation

- 7:2 Command: Annihilate the seven indigenous nations; show them no mercy (limited)
- 7:3 Command: Do not marry them or make a covenant with them (example)
- 7:4 Otherwise, they will lead Israel into idolatrous worship (e.g., Baal Peor)
- 7:5 Command: Tear down all their worship objects: altars, pillars & idols (limited)
- 7:6 Because, Israel is God’s chosen people out of all the nation on the earth
- 7:8: God chose Israel because He had sworn an oath to the Patriarchs (unmerited grace)
- 7:9 Promise: God is faithful with those who love Him and keep His Law (general)
- 7:10 Promise: He will destroy those who hate Him without delay (general)
- 7:12 The Old Covenant was conditional; if Israel obeys, God will richly bless them
- 7:14 Promise: You will be blessed more than any other people (fulfilled under Solomon)
- 7:15 Promise: God will remove all diseases from them, put them on their enemies
- 7:18 When the battle looks impossible, remember what God did to Pharaoh, Egypt
- 7:19 Promise: God will do the same thing to these nations (fulfilled)
- 7:20 Promise: God will send the “hornet” against them until they perish (fulfilled)
- 7:25 Command: Destroy their idols; don’t covet the gold, silver that is on them (example)
- 7:26 Command: Do not bring an abomination into your house; utterly detest it (example)

Interpretation

What does God mean by sending hornets against them (7:20)?

God would cause Israel’s enemies to run from her in battle as if they were attacked by swarms of hornets (cf. Ex. 23:28; Josh. 24:12). (Some say the reference to the hornet is to be taken literally; others say it refers to the Egyptian army.)¹²

Why did God refer to these idols as “an abomination” (7:26)?

The Canaanites’ idols, some of them suggestive of sexual perversions, were detestable to God. So His people were to detest them too, for the images were designated (set apart, *hērem*; see comments on Josh. 6:21) for destruction.¹³

Application

An example to follow: Do not marry outside the faith (1Cor 7:39, 2Cor 6:14)

A promise to claim: God is faithful to all who follow Him (cf. Deut 7:9, Isa 56:1-8, 1Cor 10:13)

A challenge to face: When facing spiritual battles, focus on how great God is, not on the enemy

An example to follow: Don’t profit from idolatrous images, evil objects (cf. Acts 19:19)

An example to follow: Have nothing to do with idolatrous images, worship (2Cor 6:14-18)

¹² *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Deuteronomy 7:17-26.

¹³ *Ibid.*

Observation

- 8:1 God expected Israel to be careful to follow every command (proactive, diligent)
- 8:2 God led Israel through the wilderness (1) to humble them & (2) to test them (like us)
- 8:3 Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from God
- 8:5 Yahweh was disciplining you as a man disciplines his son (correction, not just punishment)
- 8:10 Command: When you have eaten & are full, praise God for this good land (general)
- 8:11 Command: Be careful not to forget Yahweh and disobey His commands (general)
- 8:13 When you are prosperous, you will become proud and forget Yahweh (e.g., Solomon)
- 8:17 You may claim that your own hand brought you this wealth (pride > ingratitude)
- 8:18 Remember that Yahweh gives you the ability to produce wealth (basis of tithing)
- 8:19 Prophecy: If you forget Yahweh & worship other gods, you will perish (fulfilled)
- 8:20 Israel will be destroyed like the nations Yahweh destroyed (i.e., God's law is universal)

Interpretation

What is the Hebrew term for discipline (8:5)?

- 1) was disciplining (*yāsar*, verb, Piel, participle, ms construct)
- 2) disciplines (*yāsar*, verb, Piel, imperfect, 3ms)

BDB [רָסַר S3256 TWOT877 GK3579, 3580] vb. discipline, chasten, admonish¹⁴

TWOT 877 רָסַר (*yāsar*) discipline, chasten, instruct.¹⁵

DBL 3579 I. רָסַר (*yā·sār*): v.; ≡ Str 3256; TWOT 877—1. LN 38.1–38.13 (qal) correct, discipline, i.e., punish in order to improve behavior, implying the training of the person; (nif) disciplined, accept correction; (piel) punish, correct, discipline (Dt 8:5)¹⁶

Application

- A challenge to face: God tests His people to see what they will do (cf. Jer 17:9-10)
- A verse to memorize: Deut 8:3 Man does not live by bread alone (cf. 2Tim 3:16-17)
- A challenge to face: God disciplines us like a father (Prv 3:12, Heb 12:5-11)
- A command to obey: Thank God for His blessings and provision (1Th 5:18, 1Tim:3-5)
- A command to obey: Do not become a forgetful hearer of God's Law (James 1:22-25)
- A challenge to face: Remaining faithful to God in times of prosperity (Prv 30:8-9)

¹⁴ *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (p. 415).

¹⁵ *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 386).

¹⁶ *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)*.

Bible Study: Deuteronomy – Renewing the Covenant

Observation

- 9:3 God would destroy mighty nations for Israel (i.e., providential victory)
- 9:4 He did not give Israel the Promised Land because of their righteousness (grace)
- 9:5 He destroyed the Canaanites because of their sin (i.e., His law is for all humanity)
- 9:6 Israel was a stubborn people, constantly provoking God to wrath
- 9:9 At Horeb, Moses fasted 40 days, received the 2 tablets of the covenant
- 9:12 Meanwhile, Israel committed apostasy, made a molten image (golden calf)
- 9:14 God offered to destroy Israel, create a mightier nation through Moses (change His plan)
- 9:17 Moses smashed the 2 tablets, effectively negating the covenant with God
- 9:18 He fasted another 40 days, no bread or water, to intercede for Israel
- 9:22 Israel also provoked God at Taberah, Massah and Kibroth-hattaavah
- 9:23 They rebelled again at Kadesh-barnea, on the verge of entering the Promised Land
- 9:26 Despite their constant rebellion, Moses begged God not to destroy them
- 9:27 Moses appealed to God's promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
- 9:28 He appealed to bad report the Egyptians would spread (reasoning with God)

Interpretation

What happened at Taberah, Massah and Kibroth-hattaavah (9:22)?

For the incident **at Taberah**, where the people complained about their hardships, see Numbers 11:1–3; **at Massah**, where the people complained about no water, see Exodus 17:1–7; **and at Kibroth Hattavah**, where Israel complained about the manna, see Numbers 11:31–34.¹⁷

Application

- An error to avoid: Thinking that God's Law is only for Israel, not for Gentiles (9:5)
- A sin to avoid: Provoking God to anger through unbelief, rebellion (9:22-23)
- An example to follow: Moses's intercessory prayer for sinful Israel (9:26-27)
- An example to follow: Wrestling with God in prayer (leveraging logic, promises)

¹⁷ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Deuteronomy 9:22.

Observation

10:1 Yahweh tells Moses to make 2 new stone tablets, thus restoring the covenant
10:2 Yahweh tells him to store the tablets in a wooden ark (typical of suzerainty treaties)
10:4 God wrote the Ten Commandments on the new tablets “like the former writing”
10:6 Israel travelled to Moserah where Aaron died and Eleazar became High Priest
10:8 Later, Yahweh directed Levi to carry the ark, serve Him and bless in His name
10:10 During the second fast, Yahweh agreed not to destroy Israel (grace has limits)
10:12 What Yahweh requires of Israel: to fear Him, walk in His ways & serve Him
10:13 Keep Yahweh’s commandments and statutes for your own good (self-interest)
10:16 Circumcise your heart, no longer stiffen you neck (i.e., be converted, humble)
10:17 Yahweh is great, mighty and awesome; He does not show partiality (favoritism)
10:18 He helps widows, orphans and resident aliens (i.e., the poor and needy)
10:19 Command: Love the resident alien, because you were aliens in Egypt (example)
10:20 Command: Fear (reverence) Yahweh (general); swear by His name (limited)
10:22 Seventy people went into Egypt; now Israel is like the stars of heaven (blessed)

Interpretation

Should Christians swear by the name of Yahweh (10:20)?

In Matthew 5:33-37, Jesus said, “Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR VOWS TO THE LORD.' 34 But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING. 36 Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes ' or 'No, no ' ; anything beyond these is of evil.”

If called upon to give sworn testimony, Christians can legally invoke the right to “affirm” rather than swear an oath. It is just as legally binding but meets the requirements of Jesus Christ.

Application

An example to follow: God does not show partiality, favoritism (10:17, James 1:1-9)
An example to follow: Help the poor and needy within society (10:18, Gal 6:10)
An example to follow: Love resident aliens, strangers (10:19, Rom 13:8-9, James 1:8)
A command to obey: Fear God (10:20, 1Pet 2:17, Rev 14:6-7)

Observation

- 11:1 Loving God is closely connected with obeying His charge and His Laws
- 11:2 Moses was not speaking to their sons, who had not seen God's earlier miracles
- 11:3 Their sons had not seen the signs against Pharaoh and the land of Egypt
- 11:4 Their sons had not seen the Red Sea crossing or the destruction of Egypt's army
- 11:6 Their sons had not seen the earth open up and swallow Dathan and Abiram
- 11:7 But, their eyes had seen it 40 years earlier (i.e., they were now 40-60 years old)
- 11:8 Obey God, so you can possess the Promised Land, prolong your days in it
- 11:10 Canaan is not like Egypt, where they sowed seed and watered it by foot
- 11:11 The Promised Land drinks water from the rain of heaven (personification)
- 11:12 Yahweh cares for the land; His "eyes" are always on it (anthropomorphism)
- 11:13 Obedience will lead to covenant blessings (rain, grain, wine, oil, grass for cattle)
- 11:17 Apostasy (seeking other gods) will lead to drought, bareness and swift death
- 11:18 Repetition: Put these words on your heart; bind them on your hand, forehead (6:8)
- 11:19 Repetition: Teach them to your children as you go throughout your day (6:7)
- 11:20 Repetition: Write them on your doorposts and gates (6:9, mezuzah)
- 11:23 Promise: If they diligently obey, God will drive out these great nations (fulfilled)
- 11:24 Israel will control the Negev to Lebanon, the Euphrates to the Mediterranean Sea
- 11:26 God promised them a blessing for obedience and a curse for disobedience
- 11:29 Command: Recite a blessing on Mt. Gerizim and a curse on Mt. Ebal (limited)
- 11:30 The mountains are west of the Jordan, near the Arabah (rift valley), opposite Gilgal

Interpretation

What does it mean to water a garden "with your foot" (11:10)?

There is no archaeological evidence from this period of an apparatus for irrigation that was foot-operated. However, one would expect that an Egyptian would use his feet to clear a channel for the flow of water to where he wanted it in his garden. Irrigation by foot may also simply mean carrying buckets of water from the source of the water to the field: that is moving it on foot. The Torah translates this clause in v.10 as "watered by your own labors," which at least focuses the meaning in the right direction.¹⁸

What are the early and late rains (11:14)?

The early rain comes in September-October; the late rain comes in March-April. "Those rains begin and end the rainy season. The rains are necessary to help crops and trees grow, including grain (wheat, flax, and barley), grapevines (wine), olive trees (oil), and grass in the fields."¹⁹

Application

A condition to meet: Loving God involves keeping His Law (John 14:15, 1John 5:3)

¹⁸ *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Deuteronomy 11:8-25.

¹⁹ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Deuteronomy 11:10-15.

Observation

- 12:1 The historical review is over; the next section focuses on laws (12:1-26:15)
- 12:2 Command: Utterly destroy every pagan shrine, high place and idol (limited)
- 12:4 Command: Don't use pagan shrines or objects to worship God (general)
- 12:5 Command: Seek the Lord where He puts His name, at His sanctuary (general)
- 12:6 Command: Bring your sacrifices, tithes and offerings to His sanctuary (general)
- 12:7 Command: Eat your sacrifices, rejoice with your family at His sanctuary (general)
- 12:8 Everyone was doing what was right in his own eyes; not what God wanted
- 12:10 God planned to give Israel rest from all their enemies in the Promised Land
- 12:13 Command: Do not offer sacrifices at other locations, cultic shines (general)
- 12:15 Command: You may slaughter and eat meat in your towns at any time (general)
- 12:16 Command: Don't eat blood; pour it on the ground like water (general)
- 12:17 Command: Don't eat the festival tithe or offerings in your towns (general)
- 12:19 Command: Don't forsake the Levite in your towns, provide for him (limited)
- 12:22 Command: Anyone (unclean or clean) may eat meat, not a sacrifice (general)
- 12:27 Command: Offer sacrifices on God's altar, pour out the blood (general)
- 12:31 Command: Don't worship God using pagan religious practices (general)
- 12:27 Command: Do what God commands; don't add to it or take from it (general)

Interpretation

Where is the place that God chose to establish His name (12:5)?

Initially, God used the Tabernacle as His portable sanctuary; ultimately, God used Solomon to establish the Temple as His permanent sanctuary (1Kgs 9:1-9) and a house of prayer for all nations (cf. 1Kgs 8:41-43, Isa 2:2-4, 56:6-7, Zech 14:16-17). However, Jesus also noted that true, spiritual worship is not limited to a specific, physical location (John 4:19-24).

Application

- A command to obey: Don't use pagan shrines or objects to worship God (2Cor 6:14-18)
- A command to obey: Seek God where He puts His name, sanctuary (Deut 16:16, Isa 56:6-7)
- A command to obey: Bring your sacrifices, tithes and offerings to His sanctuary (Lev 17:8-9)
- A command to obey: Eat sacrifices, rejoice with your family at His sanctuary (Deut 16:10-15)
- A command to obey: Do not offer sacrifices at other locations, cultic shines (Lev 17:1-7)
- A command to obey: You may slaughter and eat meat in your towns at any time (Gen 9:3)
- A command to obey: Don't eat blood; pour it on the ground like water (Gen 9:4, Act 15:20)
- A command to obey: Don't eat the festival tithe or offerings in your towns (Num 15:13-16)
- A command to obey: Anyone (unclean or clean) may eat meat, not a sacrifice (Gen 9:3)
- A command to obey: Offer sacrifices on God's altar, pour out the blood (Num 15:13-16)
- A command to obey: Don't worship God using pagan religious practices (2Cor 6:14-18)
- A command to obey: Don't add to or take from God's commands (Prv 30:5-6, Rev 22:18-19)
- An error to avoid: Doing what is right in our own eyes (cf. 12:8, 1Sam 15:22-23, Isa 66:2)
- A verse to memorize: Don't add to or take from God's commands (12:32)

Observation

- 13:1 The first test of a prophet: Someone who provides a legitimate supernatural sign
13:2 But, this person also teaches heresy and apostasy (the worship of other gods)
13:3 Key principle: God will allow false prophets to arise to test His people
13:3 Command: Don't listen to a prophet who teaches apostasy (general)
13:6 Command: Don't listen to a friend or relative who advocates apostasy (general)
13:9 Command: Put that false teacher to death (limited)
13:15 Command: Destroy any city that goes into apostasy (limited)
13:16 Command: Don't rebuild an apostate city after destroying it (limited)
13:17 Command: Don't take any plunder from an apostate city (limited)
14:1 Command: Don't cut yourselves or shave your forehead for the dead (example)
14:3 Command: You shall not eat any detestable thing (general)
14:6 You may eat any animal that divides the hoof and chews the cud (cow, sheep, deer)
14:9 You may eat anything in water that has fins and scales (trout, bass, salmon, cod)
14:11 You may eat any clean bird (i.e., not birds of prey or carrion eaters)
14:14 All teeming life (swarming insects) with wings are unclean (flies, bees, beetles)
14:21 Command: You shall not eat anything which dies of itself (general)
14:21 You may give it to an outsider, but you are a holy people (cf. 1Pet 1:14-16, 2:9)
14:21 Command: You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk (example)
14:23 Command: Eat the second tithe, firstborn where God places His name (general)
14:25 You can exchange it for money, and buy any food or (alcoholic) drink you want
14:26 Eat it in the presence of the Lord with your family and rejoice (i.e., God's feasts)
14:27 Command: Don't forget (to provide for) the Levite in your town (limited)
14:28 Command: Every 3rd year, deposit a third (assistance) tithe in your town (example)

Interpretation

Why did people cut themselves or shave for the dead (14:1)?

The precise significance of the rituals mentioned here—laceration and shaving the head for the dead—is unknown today. But cutting oneself was a sign of mourning (cf. Jer. 16:6; 41:5; 47:5; 48:37). However, it is clear that these practices reflected beliefs about the dead that conflicted with faith in the Lord, the ultimate Source of life. Therefore when a loved one died, the Israelites were to demonstrate their faith in the Lord by refraining from these pagan practices.²⁰

Application

- A challenge to face: God allows apostate prophets as a test (Matt 7:15-17, 24:24)
A command to obey: Don't listen to an apostate prophet (Gal 1:6-9, 1John 4:1-3)
A command to obey: Don't listen to anyone advocating apostasy (Isa 8:20, Matt 10:37)
An example to follow: Don't mimic pagan mourning rituals (2Cor 6:14-16, 1Th 4:13)
A command to obey: Don't eat any detestable, unclean animals (2Cor 6:17, Gal 5:19)
A command to obey: Don't eat anything that dies of itself (2Cor 6:17, Gal 5:19)
An example to follow: Don't boil a young goat in its mother's milk (Gal 5:20 sorcery)
A command to obey: Eat the second tithe, firstborn at God's sanctuary (Deut 16:11, 14)
An example to follow: Give the third tithe to the needy (e.g., Social Security, Gal 6:10)

²⁰ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Deuteronomy 14:1-2.

Bible Study: Deuteronomy – Renewing the Covenant

Observation

- 15:1 Command: Cancel all debts owed to other Israelites every 7 years (limited)
- 15:3 Israelites could still collect debts from a foreigner (i.e., an unbeliever, outsider)
- 15:4 If Israel obeyed, God would bless them, and there would be no poor (sin = curses)
- 15:6 They would lend to others and not borrow; they would rule over others, not be ruled
- 15:9 Command: Lend to your needy brother, even if the seventh year is near (example)
- 15:10 Promise: God will bless you if you give generously to your poor brother (general)
- 15:11 There will always be poor people in the land (i.e., Israel will never fully obey)
- 15:12 Command: Release an indentured Israelite servant in the seventh year (limited)
- 15:13 Command: Give an indentured Israelite many gifts in the seventh year (limited)
- 15:14 Be as generous with them as God has been with you (e.g., flocks, grain and wine)
- 15:15 God redeemed you from Egyptian slavery; so pay it forward to others (kindness)
- 15:17 Command: An Israelite could voluntarily become a permanent servant (limited)
- 15:19 Command: Consecrate all firstborn males from your herd or flock (general)
- 15:20 Eat them each year in the place that the Lord chooses (as a festival sacrifice)
- 15:22 If the animal has any serious defect; then eat it at home as regular meat

Interpretation

Cross references

- 15:11 Jesus also taught that Israel would always have poor people (Matt 26:11)
- 15:14 Be as generous to others as God has been to you (Matt 5:48, Luke 16:19-25)
- 15:17 Paul taught Christians not to become the slaves of other men (1Cor 7:23)

Obedience & Prosperity

- Prv 10:4 Lazy hands make for poverty, but diligent hands bring wealth (NIV)
- Mal 3:8-12 Tithing brings overflowing blessings and protection from losses
- Luke 6:38 Give and it will be given to you, by the measure that you use
- 2Cor 8:1ff Macedonian churches donated generously to poor Christians in Judea
- 2Cor 9:10-11 God will supply everything needed for all liberality, gratitude to God
- Heb 11:35-40 God's servants may suffer persecution, poverty and martyrdom

Application

- An example to follow: Lend without expecting repayment (Luke 6:34-35, 1Cor 6:5-7)
- A promise to claim: God blesses those who help the poor (cf. 15:10, Ps 41:1, Prv 19:7)
- A command to obey: Consecrate all firstborn males from your herd or flock (Deut 14:22-27)

Observation

- 16:1 Command: Celebrate the Passover; God brought you out of Egypt by night (limited)
16:2 Command: Sacrifice the Passover where the Lord places His name (limited)
16:4 Command: Remove all leaven from your territory for seven days (general)
16:5 Command: Don't sacrifice the Passover in any of your towns (limited)
16:8 Command: The last day of unleavened bread is an annual Sabbath (general)
16:9 Count 7 weeks from the time you cut the standing grain (i.e., the wave sheaf)
16:10 Command: Celebrate the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) with an offering (general)
16:11 Rejoice before the Lord where He establishes His name (Israelites & foreigners)
16:13 Command: Celebrate the Feast of Booths (Sukkot) after the harvest (general)
16:14 Rejoice before the Lord where He establishes His name (Israelites & foreigners)
16:15 Celebrate the Feast of Booths for 7 days because God will bless you (promise)
16:16 Command: All your males shall appear before the Lord at the 3 feasts (general)
16:16 Command: All your males shall present an offering at the 3 feasts (example)
16:17 The offering shall be proportional to God's blessing (i.e., a percentage)
16:18 Command: Appoint judges in your towns to render righteous decisions (example)
16:19 Command: Don't pervert justice, show partiality or take a bribe (example)
16:21 Command: Don't set up an Asherah tree by the altar of Yahweh (general)
16:21 Command: Don't set up a sacred stone pillar which Yahweh hates (general)

Interpretation

Cross References

- 16:1ff God limited the Passover sacrifice to circumcised Israelites (Ex 12:42-49)
16:16 Hannah did not go to the feasts while she was nursing Samuel (1Sam 1:21-23)
16:18 God established human government to maintain order (Gen 9:1-6, Rom 13:1-6)

Application

- A command to obey: Remove leaven from your dwellings for 7 days (Ex 12:19, 1Cor 5:7-8)
A command to obey: Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Israelites & Gentiles (ibid.)
A command to obey: Celebrate the Feast of Weeks, Israelites & Gentiles (Deut 16:10-11)
A command to obey: Celebrate the Feast of Booths, Israelites & Gentiles (Deut 16:13-14)
A command to obey: Appear before the Lord at the 3 feasts (Zech 14:16-17, 1Cor 5:7-8)
An example to follow: Present an offering to the Lord at the 3 feasts (Deut 8:18, Prv 3:9-10)
An example to follow: Appoint judges who can render righteous decisions (1Cor 6:1-6)
An example to follow: Avoid injustice, partiality or taking a bribe (10:17, 2Chr 19:7)
A command to obey: Don't set up an Asherah tree by God's altar (Deut 12:29-30, Gal 5:19)
A command to obey: Don't set up a sacred stone pillar (Deut 12:29-30, Jer Gal 5:19)

Bible Study: Deuteronomy – Renewing the Covenant

Observation

- 17:1 Command: Don't sacrifice an ox or sheep that has a blemish or defect (general)
- 17:5 Command: Execute an apostate or idolater by stoning (general)
- 17:6 Command: There must be 2 or 3 witnesses for death penalty cases (general)
- 17:8 Command: Escalate difficult cases to the judge at God's sanctuary (example)
- 17:12 Command: Anyone who ignores the verdict of the judge shall die (example)
- 17:15 Command: The king must be an Israelite, not a foreigner (limited)
- 17:16 Command: The king must not multiply horses, return to Egypt (limited)
- 17:17 Command: The king must not multiply wives or money (limited)
- 17:18 Command: The king must write a copy of the law, read it & obey it (limited)

Interpretation

Cross References

- 17:5 The church has no civil authority to execute sinners (John 18:36, 1Cor 5:1-6:6)
- 17:16 Solomon traded with Egypt and multiplied horses (1 Kings 10:26-28)
- 17:17 Solomon multiplied wives & money to his detriment (1 Kings 10:27, 11:1-4)
- 17:18 Christians are a holy nation, a royal priesthood (cf. ex 19:6, 1Pet 2:9, 2Pet 3:18)

What was wrong with multiplying horses (17:16)?

Multiplying horses for chariots of war and cavalry, or for luxury, would increase the splendour of a monarch, and form a ground of confidence distinct from a proper confidence in God, and inconsistent with it, and with considering him as the glory of Israel. Egypt abounded in horses; and the desire of multiplying these would induce the prince to encourage a trade with that kingdom; and this might make way for the Israelites being again subjugated by the Egyptians, or at least corrupted by their idolatries and vices.²¹

Psalm 20:7 Some boast in chariots and some in horses, But we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God.

Isaiah 2:7 Their land has also been filled with silver and gold And there is no end to their treasures; Their land has also been filled with horses And there is no end to their chariots.

Isaiah 31:1 Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help And rely on horses, And trust in chariots because they are many And in horsemen because they are very strong, But they do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the LORD!

Application

- A command to obey: Don't sacrifice a defective animal (Num 15:13-15, Mal 1:6-9)
- A command to obey: Execute an apostate or idolater (Lev 20:2, Rev 9:20)
- A command to obey: 2-3 witnesses for death penalty cases (Matt 18:15-18, 1Tim 5:19)
- An example to follow: Escalate difficult cases to higher court (cf. Ex 18:13-27, 1Cor 6:1-6)
- An example to follow: Punish anyone who ignores a verdict (Matt 18:15-18, 2Cor 13:1-3)

²¹ *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, Deuteronomy 17:16.

Observation

- 18:1 Command: The priests and Levites shall receive no inheritance, no farm land (limited)
- 18:1 Command: The priests and Levites shall eat the offerings of the people (limited)
- 18:3 Command: The priest gets the shoulder, the rump & the stomach of an animal (limited)
- 18:4 Command: The priest gets the first fruits of Israel’s grain, wine, oil and wool (limited)
- 18:8 Command: The Levites working in the sanctuary shall receive equal pay (limited)
- 18:10 Command: Don’t allow immolation (human sacrifice), divination or witchcraft (general)
- 18:10 Command: Don’t allow the interpretation of omens or sorcery (general)
- 18:11 Command: Don’t allow casting spells, a medium, a spiritist or necromancy (general)
- 18:12 Promise: God will destroy these people for detestable, occult practices (fulfilled)
- 18:15 Prophecy: God will raise up a prophet like me from among you; listen to him (fulfilled)
- 18:16 Israel was so afraid of God at Horeb that they asked Him not to speak directly to them
- 18:18 So, God uses prophets to reveal His will to His people, who must obey His word
- 18:19 God will hold people accountable if they disobey the word of His prophets (Bible)
- 18:20 Command: Execute a presumptuous prophet if God has not sent Him (limited)
- 18:21 The second test of a prophet: If his predictions fail, he is a false prophet (example)

Interpretation

Cross References

- 18:1 God gave the Levites a tithe within Israel as payment for their ministry (Num 18:21)
- 18:1 God gave the Levites 48 cities & pasture land scattered within Israel (Num 35:1-8)
- 18:10 The worship of Molech involved sacrificing children as a burnt offering (Jer 32:35)
- 18:10 God commanded the death penalty for human sacrifice to Molech (Lev 20:1-6)
- 18:10 God also commanded the death penalty for seeking mediums or spiritists (Lev 20:6)
- 18:15 Jesus is ultimate fulfillment of the prophet like Moses (John 1:45, Acts 3:19-26)
- 18:21 The resurrection of Jesus is the divine sign that He is the Messiah (John 2:18-19)

Who were the priests and the Levites (18:1)?

The tribe of Levi was divided into three families (Gershonites, Kohathites, and Merarites). Each division originally had different responsibilities regarding the tabernacle (Num. 3–4). The Kohathites were further divided into those who were descendants of Aaron (“the priests”) and those who were not (Josh. 21:4–5).²²

Application

- A command to obey: Don’t engage in any occult practices (Gal 5:19-21, Rev 9:20-21)
- A sin to avoid: Astrology, horoscopes, palmistry, I ching & Tarot cards (divination)
- A sin to avoid: Wishing on a star or birthday cake, wishing wells (casting spells)
- A sin to avoid: Good luck charms, amulets, crystals, feng shui or voodoo (sorcery)
- A sin to avoid: Psychics, séances, crystal balls or Ouija boards (medium, necromancy)
- A verse to memorize: God will raise up a prophet like me from among you (18:15)
- An example to follow: Check a prophet for failed predictions (Isa 55:11, John 10:35)

²² *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Deuteronomy 18:1-8.

Bible Study: Deuteronomy – Renewing the Covenant

Observation

- 19:3 Command: Set aside three cities of refuge for cases of manslaughter (example)
19:9 Command: Set aside three more cities of refuge if your territory grows (example)
19:12 Command: The penalty for premeditated murder is death (general)
19:14 Command: Don't steal land by moving a neighbor's boundary marker (general)
19:15 Command: Confirm any accusation based on at least 2-3 witnesses (general)
19:19 Command: Punish a perjurer with the penalty he tried to inflict (general)
19:21 Lex Talionis: Show no pity; life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth...
20:1 Rules for Warfare: Don't fear an enemy army; God will be with you (limited)
20:2 Command: The priest shall exhort the army before battle to have faith, courage (limited)
20:5 The officers dismissed certain men to improve morale; volunteers, not conscription
20:5 Exemptions from military service: (1) anyone with a new, undedicated house
20:6 Exemptions from military service: (2) anyone with a new, un-harvested vineyard
20:7 Exemptions from military service: (3) anyone who was engaged to be married
20:8 Exemptions from military service: (4) anyone who was afraid
20:10 Command: Give your enemies an opportunity to surrender prior to battle (limited)
20:11 Command: If your enemies surrender, take them alive as captives (limited)
20:14 Command: If your enemies fight, annihilate the men and plunder the rest (limited)
20:17 This only applies to distant nations; annihilate all the nearby nations (limited)
20:19 Command: Do not cut down fruit trees when you besiege a city (limited)
20:20 Command: You may cut down non-fruit trees for siege works (limited)

Interpretation

Cross References

- 19:21 Lex Talionis: An eye for an eye (cf. Ex 21:22-25, Lev 24:17-20, Mt 5:38-42)
20:1 The church is not a nation, does not engage in warfare (John 18:36, 2Cor 10:3-4)

What were the regulations regarding cities of refuge (19:1-5)?

Moses set aside three cities of refuge east of the Jordan and required three more west of the Jordan (4:41-43). All six cities were taken from the towns of Levi, so the elders should have been familiar with the Torah and capable judges. Any Israelite or alien could flee to a city of refuge for trial. If the judges convicted him of murder, the victim's nearest kinsman would put him to death. If they decided it was manslaughter, the guilty party was exiled to the city of refuge until the death of the High Priest (Num 35:6-34). This symbolized the death of Jesus Christ, our High Priest, which sets us free from the bondage of sin (cf. John 5:39, Luke 24:25-27, 44-47).

Application

- An example to follow: Establish cities of refuge for manslaughter cases (Num 35:15)
An example to follow: Implement God's law as your territory grows (Isa 9:7, Matt 13:33)
A command to obey: The penalty for premeditated murder is death (Gen 9:3-4)
A command to obey: Don't steal from your neighbor by deceit (1Cor 6:9-10, Eph 4:28)
A command to obey: Judgment based on 2-3 witnesses (17:6, Matt 18:15-18, 1Tim 5:19)
A command to obey: Punish a perjurer with the penalty he tried to inflict (Ex 20:16, Mt 7:2)

Observation

- 21:1 Command: Perform the atonement ritual for an unsolved murder (limited)
- 21:4 The elders of the nearest town take a heifer to a valley stream, break her neck
- 21:5 The Levitical priests had to be present as ministers of God and judges of the people
- 21:8 The elders must wash their hands over the heifer, request atonement for the people
- 21:10 Command: Follow the regulations for marrying a foreign, captive woman (limited)
- 21:12 Bring her into your house, shave her head, and trim her nails (remove her former life)
- 21:13 She must put aside her old clothes and have one month to mourn (humane transition)
- 21:14 If he is not pleased with her (i.e., this is not mutually agreeable), she is free to leave
- 21:14 He can't sell her or treat her as a slave because she had become his wife
- 21:15 The rights of the firstborn son when a man has sons by multiple wives...
- 21:16 A man cannot favor the son of a beloved wife over that of the firstborn son
- 21:17 Command: A man must give a double share to his firstborn son (limited)
- 21:18 Laws for dealing with a stubborn, rebellious son who will not respond to discipline
- 21:20 The parents bring him to the elders (judges) and testify against him (2 witnesses)
- 21:21 Command: Execute a stubborn, rebellious son by stoning (general)
- 21:23 The corpse of a criminal hung on a tree was considered to be cursed by God
- 21:23 Command: Bury the body of an executed criminal by nightfall (limited)

Interpretation

Cross References

- 21:8 Bloodshed pollutes the land, normally requires the death of the murderer (Nu 35:33)
- 21:10 Christians don't marry unbelievers or participate in war (1Cor 7:39, 2Cor 10:3-4)
- 21:12 Shaving off hair is linked with ritual cleansing, changed state (Lev 14:8; Num 8:7)
- 21:18 Rebellious children are synonymous with deep depravity (Rom 1:30-32, 2Tim 3:2)
- 21:20 Disciples must love God more than family or friends (Matt 10:27, Luke 14:26)
- 21:21 Breaking the fifth commandment is a death penalty offense (Ex 20:12, 21:15, 17)
- 21:23 The Jews broke the legs of the criminals to bury them by nightfall (John 19:31)
- 21:23 Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the Law through His crucifixion (Gal 3:13)

Why did the firstborn son receive a double portion (21:15-17)?

The oldest son became the leader of the clan and therefore had extra duties to perform as part of Israelite society in the Bronze Age. As the kinsman redeemer, he was supposed to use the extra income to assist poor relatives and redeem them from indentured servitude (Lev 25:47-55). He also acted as the prosecuting attorney and executioner if someone committed an injustice against a family member (Deut 19:12).

Application

A command to obey: Execute a stubborn, rebellious son (Rom 1:28-32)

Observation

- 22:1 Command: Return lost property (e.g., ox or sheep) if you know the owner (general)
22:2 Command: Store lost property until the owner comes looking for it (general)
22:3 This applies to any lost item that belongs to your neighbor = the golden rule
22:4 Command: Help your countryman raise a donkey or ox that has fallen (example)
22:5 Command: Don't engage in cross-dressing; God detests anyone who does (general)
22:7 Command: Don't take a mother bird with the young; you must release her (example)
22:8 Command: Make a parapet (railing) for your (flat) roof to prevent falling (example)
22:9 Command: Don't sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed (uncertain)*
22:10 Command: Don't plow with an ox and a donkey together (uncertain)*
22:11 Command: Don't wear a material mixed of wool and linen together (uncertain)*
22:12 Command: Make tassels on the four corners of your garment (limited)
22:13 Laws related to marriage and morality; disputes over virginity (limited)
22:17 If a man falsely accuses his bride of fornication, her parents shall present the evidence
22:19 Then, the elders shall chastise (whip) him and fine him; he can never divorce her
22:21 If the accusation is true, the men of the city shall stone her to death
22:22 Command: Execute the man and married woman who commit adultery (general)
22:24 Command: Execute the man and engaged woman who commit adultery (general)
22:27 Command: Execute only the man who rapes an engaged woman (general)
22:29 Command: A rapist must pay 50 shekels (bride price) to the family (limited)
22:29 Command: A rapist must marry her (provide support) & never divorce (limited)
22:30 Command: A man can't have sexual relations with his step-mother (general)

Interpretation

Cross References

- 22:7 This clarifies earlier instruction given to Noah; conservation of nature (cf. Gen 9:1-4)
22:12 Israelites wore tassels with a blue cord to remind them of the Torah (Num 15:37-41)
22:22 Adultery was a capital offense prior to the Torah (Gen 20:3, 39:9, Lev 18:20, 29)

Application

- A command to obey: Return lost property if you know the owner (Rom 13:9, Eph 4:28)
A command to obey: Store lost property until owner comes looking (Rom 13:9, Eph 4:28)
An example to follow: Help a traveler whose animal (vehicle) is disabled (Prv 12:10, Gal 6:10)
A command to obey: Don't engage in cross-dressing; an abomination to God (22:5)
An example to follow: Don't take a mother bird with the young; release her (Gen 1:26, 9:1-4)
An example to follow: Make a railing to prevent someone from falling (Rom 13:9)
A command to obey: Execute the bride who had committed fornication (1Cor 6:9, Gal 5:19)
A command to obey: Execute the man and married woman who commit adultery (Lev 18:29)
A command to obey: Execute the man and engaged woman who commit adultery (Lev 18:29)
A command to obey: Execute only the man who rapes an engaged woman (1Cor 6:9, Gal 5:19)
A command to obey: A man can't have sexual relations with his step-mother (Lev 18:8, 29)

*Expositor's Bible Commentary on Lev 19:19 Forbidden mixtures (cf. Deut 22:9-11)

19 The reason for these provisions is not clear. Allis (p. 153) argues that the first forbids the breeding of mules. But the reason is not given. The noun *behemah* refers to horses in only one passage (Neh 2:12-14). The term could refer to keeping pure a superior breed of cattle brought from Egypt, but details are unknown. The reference to mixed seeds or cloth is difficult to understand without more background. It might be an effort to reduce adulteration of a good product. Mixing wheat and barley would make harvest difficult because of different times of ripening. Or possibly the prohibition is against using good seed mixed with weed seed. See the discussion of mixtures in the Introduction.

Similar laws are given in Deuteronomy 22:9-11. In Deuteronomy the clothing mixtures are specified as wool and linen. Why these should not be mixed is not clear. Flax and wool are spun differently. Whether weaving them together was difficult for people of antiquity we cannot say. Or perhaps different threads in warp and woof would cause difficulties in washing—surely they would shrink differently. They also take dyes differently.

These three prohibitions of mixtures closely parallel those in Deuteronomy 22:9-11. There the first (v.9) about mixed seeds is parallel with the second of Leviticus. The third of Deuteronomy, mixed cloth materials (v.11), is parallel with the third of Leviticus. One would expect the second of Deuteronomy ("Do not plow with an ox and a donkey yoked together," v.10) to be parallel with the first of Leviticus ("Do not mate different kinds of animals"). The trouble is that Deuteronomy seems to speak of mismatching animals, Leviticus of mismating them.

Is Leviticus, however, so clear? Different kinds of animals just do not mate. The only exception is the horse and donkey, which produce the sterile mule. The mule (*pered*) was not forbidden in Israel. Mules are mentioned seventeen times in the OT, often in a favorable context (e.g., "the king's mule," 1 Kings 1:44). This law can hardly forbid mules. Either the Leviticus law refers to keeping breeds of cattle pure, or the usual translation is faulty. I would argue the latter.

"Do not mate different kinds of animals" is the NIV rendering. The KJV, NASB, and RSV are similar. But the word "mate" is *raba`* ("lie down"; cf. Ps 139:3). It is only used elsewhere in Leviticus 18:23 and 20:16, where it refers to bestial relations. The word is an Aramaic cognate to the common Hebrew *rabas* which many times means "to lie down to rest." Once the word is used for a donkey fallen down under a burden (Exod 23:5). It is never used for copulation.

Is it possible that the figure in Leviticus 19:19 is not sexual at all? More naturally it would forbid causing different animals to bear a load in such a way that it would be an unequal load under which they would fall. If this interpretation is adopted, the law would fit beautifully its parallel in Deuteronomy. Indeed, the LXX on Leviticus 19:19 can be read thus: "You shall not hold down your animals with an unequal yoke." The word "hold down" is rare and is translated here sexually by some, but its derivatives usually refer to "restraint" in general. The word *heterozeugos* ("unequal yoke") is used in the LXX only here and is probably alluded to by Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:14. We would suggest for Leviticus 19:19, therefore, something like, "Do not make your animals fall down with an unequal yoke."

Observation

- 23:1 Laws concerning the religious assembly of Israel, the congregation of Yahweh
23:1 Command: No emasculated person shall enter the congregation of Yahweh (limited)
23:2 Command: No bastard or his descendant shall enter the congregation (limited)
23:3 Command: No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the congregation (limited)
23:4 Because, they did not help Israel during the Exodus & hired Balaam to curse you
23:6 Command: Never seek the peace or prosperity of Ammon or Moab (limited)
23:7 Command: Don't detest the Edomites; they are your relatives (limited)
23:7 Command: Don't detest the Egyptians; you lived in their land (limited)
23:8 Command: A third generation convert from Edom may enter the congregation (limited)
23:8 Command: A third generation convert from Egypt may enter the congregation (limited)
23:9 Laws concerning the conduct of the Israelite army
23:9 Command: The army shall avoid anything evil while going against enemies (limited)
23:10 Command: An unclean soldier shall go outside the camp until sunset (limited)
23:11 Command: An unclean soldier shall bathe before returning to the camp (limited)
23:12 Command: The army shall establish a latrine outside the camp (limited)
23:13 Command: A soldier shall use a digging tool to cover his excrement (limited)
23:14 Command: Your camp shall be holy because God walks among you (example)
23:14 God will turn away from you, not protect you, if He sees anything indecent
23:15 Laws concerning the treatment of run-away slaves
23:15 Command: Don't hand over a runaway slave to his master (example)
23:16 Command: Let a runaway slave live wherever he chooses (example)
23:16 Command: Don't mistreat a runaway slave (example)
23:17 Laws concerning prostitution
23:17 Command: None of the children of Israel shall become a cult prostitute (example)
23:18 Command: Don't offer the wages of a male or female prostitute to God (general)
23:19 Laws concerning money and property
23:19 Command: Don't charge interest to your countrymen, Israelite believers (limited)
23:20 Command: You may charge interest to a foreigner, an unbeliever (limited)
23:21 Command: Don't delay the payment of a vow to God or it is a sin (general)
23:22 A bit of godly advice: It is not a sin to refrain from making a vow
23:24 Command: You may snack on your neighbor's grapes until you are full (limited)
23:24 Command: You may not gather your neighbor's grapes into a basket (general)
23:25 Command: You may snack on your neighbor's grain using your hands (limited)
23:25 Command: You may not gather your neighbor's grain with a sickle (general)

Interpretation

How does the Holiness Code apply to Christians today (23:14)?

The army of Israel would sometimes take the Ark of the Covenant into battle with them (1Sam 4:1-8). Also, the High Priest would accompany the army to provide divine guidance using the Urim and Thummim (1Sam 28:5-6). Thus, the army had to keep the camp free of anything unclean or unholy. Similarly, Paul admonished Christians to avoid contact with uncleanness (2Cor 6:14-18, Gal 5:19-21). Here are some modern examples of household uncleanness that need prompt attention: mouse traps, pet droppings, soiled bandages, diapers, bed sheets, sewage system disasters & puking kids.

Bible Study: Deuteronomy – Renewing the Covenant

Cross References

23:1 No priest with a physical defect could offer sacrifices; a type of Jesus (Lev 21:17-21)
23:1 No animal with a physical defect could be a sacrifice; a type of Jesus (Lev 22:17-25)
23:2 If Jesus had been born out of wedlock, He would have been excluded (Mt 1:18-19)
23:3 Moabite women were not excluded; Jesus was descended from Ruth (Mt 1:5)
23:14 Sin and uncleanness create a barrier between humans and God (Isa 59:1-2)
23:14 Peter expected Christians to follow the rules of the holiness code (1Pet 1:15-16)
23:15 A run-away servant was not uncommon (1Sam 25:10, 30:13-15, 1Kgs 2:39-40)
23:15 Roman law required Paul to return Onesimus or face charges (Philemon 1:10-14)
23:22 Scripture encourages believers not to vow or swear an oath (Eccl 5:5, Matt 5:33-37)
23:24 Peter encouraged Christians to be hospitable, which implies generosity (1Pet 4:9)
23:25 Jesus and his disciples were hungry & plucked grain on the Sabbath (Matt 12:1)

Application

An example to follow: Your camp (home) shall be holy; God walks there (2Cor 6:14-18)
An example to follow: Don't hand over a runaway slave to his master (Rom 13:8-10)
An example to follow: Let a runaway slave live wherever he chooses (Rom 13:8-10)
An example to follow: Don't mistreat a runaway slave (Rom 13:8-10)
An example to follow: Children not allowed to become cult prostitutes (Gal 5:19-21)
A command to obey: Don't offer the wages of a prostitute to God (23:18)
A command to obey: Don't delay the payment of a vow to God or it is a sin (Eccl 5:4)
A command to obey: You may not gather your neighbor's grapes into a basket (Rom 13:9)
A command to obey: You may not take your neighbor's grain with a sickle (Rom 13:9)

Bible Study: Deuteronomy – Renewing the Covenant

Observation

24:1 Laws related to marriage and divorce

24:4 Command: A divorced & remarried woman cannot return to her former husband (general)

24:5 Command: A bridegroom is excused from all military, civic duty for one year (limited)

24:5 Command: A bridegroom shall give happiness to the wife he has taken

24:6 Miscellaneous laws

24:6 Command: Don't take a handmill or an upper millstone as a pledge (example)

24:7 Command: Execute an Israelite who kidnaps another Israelite (general)

24:8 Command: Follow Torah instructions regarding leprosy, skin diseases (general)

24:10 Command: Don't enter a man's house to take a pledge, wait outside (example)

24:13 Command: Return a pawned cloak at sunset so the borrower can sleep in it (example)

24:15 Command: Pay your poor, hired servant daily because he needs it (general)

24:16 Command: Don't execute an innocent person for another person's crime (general)

24:17 Command: Don't commit injustice against an alien, fatherless (example)

24:17 Command: Don't take a widow's garment as a pledge, collateral (example)

24:18 Why? Because God redeemed you (Israel) from oppressive Egyptian slavery

24:19 Command: Leave the gleanings of your harvest for the alien, orphan & widow (example)

24:21 Why? Because you (Israel) were slaves in Egypt (i.e., God was good to you)

Interpretation

Cross References

24:7 The Bible condemns kidnapping in general terms elsewhere (Ex 21:16, 1Tim 1:10)

24:8 Skin diseases resulted in uncleanness, which is part of the Holiness Code (Lev 13-14)

Why did God require the Israelites to leave gleanings for the poor (24:19-22)?

This law to leave some grain (barley and wheat), olives, and grapes made it possible for aliens, the fatherless, and widows to glean during harvest time (cf. Lev. 23:22). In this way, the needy were not reduced to the humiliation of begging or seeking welfare. They could still work for their food. Also, farmers were given opportunity to express their gratitude to the Lord for His abundant provision and His love for poorer members in the covenant community.²³

Application

An example to follow: Don't repossess someone's source of income, food (Rom 13:8-10)

An example to follow: Don't enter a man's house to take a pledge (Rom 13:8-10)

An example to follow: Return a pawned coat, blanket to keep warm at night (Rom 13:8-10)

A command to obey: Don't withhold a paycheck from an employee (24:15, James 5:4)

A command to obey: Each person shall die for his sin (24:16, Ezek 18)

An example to follow: Don't commit injustice against an alien, fatherless (Ps 106:3, Prv 21:3)

An example to follow: Don't take a widow's garment as collateral (Rom 13:8-10)

An example to follow: Leave the leftovers of your business for the poor (Rom 13:8-10)

²³ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Deuteronomy 24:19-22.

Bible Study: Deuteronomy – Renewing the Covenant

Observation

25:1 Miscellaneous laws continue...

25:3 Command: Judges can't impose more than 40 lashes on a convict (example)

25:4 Command: Don't muzzle an ox while he is threshing (example)

25:5 Command: A younger brother shall fulfill the duty of Levirate marriage (limited)

25:6 The firstborn son "stands on" the name of the dead, older brother (inheritance)

25:7 Levirate marriage was voluntary for both parties, the widow and the brother

25:11 Context: two men are fighting and the wife of one seizes the opponent's genitals

25:12 Command: Cut off the hand of a woman who seizes a man's genitals (limited)

25:13 Command: You shall not have two sets of measuring weights (general)

25:14 Command: You shall not have two sets of measuring containers (general)

25:15 Command: You shall have just (honest) weights and measures (general)

25:16 God hates everyone who uses false weights or measures; general commands

25:17 Command: Remember what Amalek did to you (Israel) when you left Egypt (limited)

25:19 Command: Blot out (annihilate) the memory of Amalek from under heaven (limited)

26:1 The Law of Offering Firstfruits (after Israel enters the Promised Land)

26:2 Command: Take a basket of Firstfruits to the place God puts His name (limited)

26:3 Command: Recite the Firstfruits declaration to the priest and the Lord (limited)

26:12 The Law of Third Tithe (after paying all of the tithe in the third year)

26:13 Command: Recite the Third Tithe declaration before the Lord (limited)

26:16 Covenant Ratification: Moses has given Israel God's laws, covenant stipulations

26:17 Israel has agreed to obey everything that God requires, to walk in His ways

26:18 As a result, Israel is now God's chosen people, a treasured possession (i.e., loved)

26:19 Promise: God will set Israel high above all nations for praise, fame & honor (fulfilled)

26:19 God has consecrated Israel, set them apart for a holy purpose; a holy people

Interpretation

Cross References

25:3 The Jews typically used 39 lashes to prevent accidentally going over 40 (2 Cor. 11:24)

25:4 Paul argues that if God cares for animals, then much more for ministers (1 Cor. 9:9-10)

25:5 Boaz marries Ruth to fulfill the duty of Levirate marriage (Ruth 4:1-10)

25:7 Ruth voluntary requested Levirate marriage to an alternate relative; her choice (Ruth 3)

26:2 Offer a basket of Firstfruits to the priest at God's sanctuary (cf. Num 18:12-13, Deut 18:4)

Application

An example to follow: God endorses corporal punishment for sin (Prv 19:29, Lk 12:48)

An example to follow: Show God's kindness, fairness to draft animals (Prv 12:10)

A command to obey: Don't steal by using dishonest weights or measures (Eph 4:28)

Observation

27:2 The Witness Stones: Israel must set up large stones after they cross the Jordan
27:3 Command: Write a copy of the law on large stones plastered with lime (limited)
27:4 Command: Set up this plastered witness heap on top of Mount Ebal (limited)
27:5 Command: Set up an altar on top of Mount Ebal; use no iron tools (limited)
27:12 Command Six tribes shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people (limited)
27:13 Command Six tribes shall stand on Mount Ebal to invoke the curses (limited)
27:15 The Levites invoke 12 curses for various sins; the tribes say “amen” (so be it)
28:1 Promise: If Israel obeys, God will set them above all the other nations (not yet)
28:2 The following blessings will “overtake them” (as if being chased by them)
28:3 God will bless Israel in the cities and in the country (wide scope of blessings)
28:4 God will bless Israel with fertility (fields, flocks, herds, and families)
28:5 God will bless their basket and kneading bowl (abundant food supply)
28:6 God will bless them coming and going (successful activity and ventures)
28:7 God will cause their enemies to run away in terror of them (peace, safety)
28:11 All nations will see that Israel is God’s chosen people, fear them (kerygma)
28:15 If Israel disobeys, all the blessings are taken away in reverse order
28:16 God will curse Israel in the cities and in the country (curses everywhere)
28:17 God will curse their basket and kneading bowl (food shortages)
28:18 God will curse Israel with infertility (fields, flocks, herds, and families)
28:19 God will curse them coming and going (failure and frustration)
28:25 God will cause their enemies to chase and terrorize them (fear, insecurity)
28:28 God will curse Israel with sickness and madness (pain, suffering, death)
28:43 The Gentiles will impoverish them and rule over them (poverty, bondage)
28:65 They will end up back in Egyptian slavery where they began (fulfilled)

Interpretation

Why did God tell Israel to build the plastered witness stones (27:2-4)?

The writing of laws on large stones coated with plaster was common in Egypt. The meaning of the phrase all the words of this Law (cf. v. 8) is a little uncertain, but in light of Egyptian custom the reference probably was to the entire Book of Deuteronomy rather than just parts of it.

The significance of this act was twofold. First, it commemorated God’s faithfulness in giving them the land (just as the Lord, the God of your fathers, promised you). (“God of your fathers” occurs six times in Deut.; see comments on 1:11.) The stones were to be set up ... on Mount Ebal (about 35 miles north of Jerusalem) at the base of which lay the city of Shechem. It was at Shechem that the Lord first “appeared” to Abraham, and there Abraham built his first altar to the Lord (Gen. 12:6–7). The choice of this location emphasized God’s faithfulness to the original Abrahamic promises and hinted that the time for their complete fulfillment might be near if only Israel would obey Him. Second, the writing of the Law when they entered the Promised Land symbolized the nation’s mission to bring Canaan under the dominance of the Lord’s Word.²⁴

Application

A challenge to face: We all reap what we sow; obedience = blessings, sin = curses (Gal 6:7)

²⁴ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Deuteronomy 24:19-22.

Bible Study: Deuteronomy – Renewing the Covenant

Observation

29:1 Deuteronomy is a recapitulation of the covenant made at Horeb, similar yet reworded
29:2 Moses summoned all Israel to give them his final summation and exhortation
29:4 After 40 years, God still had not given Israel eyes to see, ears to hear (conversion)
29:11 There were foreigners in their camp, doing their manual labor (firewood, water)
29:12 They were to enter into a covenant with Yahweh and into His oath (promise)
29:13 This would establish Israel as His people as He had sworn to the Patriarchs
29:18 So that no one would turn away to any other god, a root bearing poisoned fruit
29:20 Yahweh will not forgive that apostate; every curse in this book will rest on him
29:22 Prophecy: Their descendents & foreigners will see the desolation of the land
29:24 They will ask why God cursed it like Sodom & Gomorrah, a wasteland (fulfilled)
29:25 Answer: Because Israel forsook the covenant of Yahweh, the God of their fathers
29:28 Prophecy: Yahweh will uproot them from the land, cast them into exile (fulfilled)
30:2 Prophecy: The blessings & curses will come to pass, and Israel will repent (fulfilled)
30:4 Prophecy: God will restore them from captivity and bring them back (fulfilled 2x)
30:5 Prophecy: Israel will possess the Promised Land; God will prosper them (fulfilled 2x)
30:6 Prophecy: God will circumcise Israel's heart and their descendents (now & future)
30:7 Prophecy: God will put these curses on Israel's enemies who hate, persecute them (future)
30:8 Prophecy: Israel will obey God and observe all His commandments (future)
30:9 Prophecy: God will give Israel abundant prosperity in every aspect of life (future)
30:14 The Law is not incomprehensible or inaccessible; it is near, in your mouth, heart
30:19 God called heaven and earth as His witnesses to this covenant (anthropomorphism)
30:19 God forced Israel to make a choice, no waffling: life or death, blessing or curse

Interpretation

Cross References

29:4 Paul uses this verse when discussing God's sovereignty and election (Rom 11:8)
29:29 Revealed things belong to God's people (Amos 3:7, Acts 2:38-39, 1Cor 2:9-10)
30:11 The Law is not incomprehensible or inaccessible; it is in your heart (Rom 10:6-8)

Did God give ancient Israel the Holy Spirit (29:4)?

No. The gift of the Holy Spirit was not one of the covenant blessings; throughout Israel's history, only a few individuals had God's Holy Spirit (e.g., Num 11:16-17, 24-29). Instead, Scripture repeatedly describes Israel as being spiritually blind (Is 6:9-10, Ezek 12:2, Mt 13:14, Acts 28:26-27, Rom 11:8). As a result, Israel continued to rebel and sin against God (Rom 8:7).

This is confirmed in Deut 30:6, where God predicts that after Israel returns from exile, He will then circumcise their hearts, an analogy for conversion (Rom 2:29). Jesus described the religious leaders of His day as blind guides of the blind (Matt 15:12-14) and stated that no one can come to Him unless the Father draws him (John 6:44). When asked how many will be saved, He replied that the way to life is narrow and few will find it (Matt 7:13-14, Luke 13:23-24).

Application

A verse to memorize: Secrets belong to God; the revealed things belong to us (29:29)
A verse to memorize: I set before you life & death; so choose life (30:19)

Bible Study: Deuteronomy – Renewing the Covenant

Observation

31:1 Moses begins his final instructions and exhortation to the people of Israel
31:3 Joshua will lead Israel into the Promised Land, and God will destroy the Canaanites
31:6 Be strong and courageous, don't fear; God will not fail you or forsake you (example)
31:9 Moses wrote a copy of this law, gave it to the priests (religious) and elders (civil)
31:11 Command: Every 7 years, read this law at the sanctuary during Sukkot (general)
31:12 Assemble everyone (men, women & aliens) to hear and learn the Torah
31:14 God transfers leadership of Israel from Moses to Joshua at the sanctuary
31:16 Prophecy: Israel will fall away, play the harlot (metaphor) with other gods (fulfilled)
31:17 Prophecy: God will forsake them, and Israel will be consumed (fulfilled)
31:19 Command: Write this song, teach it to them, as a witness against Israel (fulfilled)
31:22 So Moses wrote this song (Deut 32) and taught it to Israel
31:26 Moses gave the book of the law to the Levites to put beside the Ark of the Covenant
31:30 Moses assembled all Israel and taught them the words of the song
32:8 The Most High determined the boundaries of nations, the inheritance of the nations
32:17 By worshipping other gods, Israel was sacrificing to demons (Satan=false religion)
32:50 Moses was to ascend Mount Nebo and die there as Aaron had on Mount Hor

Interpretation

Why read the law every seven years (31:11-12)?

As the vassal treaties of the ancient Near East contained provisions for their reading in public so did the Mosaic Covenant. This Law (v. 9) probably means the entire Book of Deuteronomy, though the translation of the phrase has been debated....

This experience was important for two reasons. First, it was rare for an individual to possess a copy of the Scriptures. A person gained a knowledge of the Scriptures through being taught by his parents and the priests and through its public reading at times like this. So the public reading of the Law was of great significance.

Second, the experience of the pilgrimage to the central sanctuary—which meant trusting God for their homes left behind and for the journey ahead—reenacted something of the original Exodus from Egypt. It was an ideal time to receive the Word in a spirit of faith so that they might learn to fear the Lord (see comments on 4:10) and to follow carefully all the Law.²⁵

What is the meaning of the term “Jeshurun” (32:15, 33:5)?

Most moderns take it as a poetical or ideal title of Israel, derived from *yashar*, "upright"; it is held to contain a tacit reference to the word *Israel* (*yisra'el*), of which the first three consonants are almost the same as those of "Jeshurun"; in Numbers 23:10 the term "the righteous ones" (*yesharim*) is supposed to contain a similar reference.

Application

A command to obey: Read the Torah during Sukkot (cf. Neh 8:1-8, James 1:25)

²⁵ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Deuteronomy 31:9-13.

Bible Study: Deuteronomy – Renewing the Covenant

Observation

- 33:1 The Blessing of Moses, the man of God, on the son of Israel
- 33:6 Reuben: May he live and not die, nor his men be few (unremarkable)
- 33:7 Judah: Lord, hear his voice, be a help against his adversaries (struggle, conflict)
- 33:10 Levi: He will teach the Torah to Israel, offer incense & burnt offerings to God
- 33:12 Benjamin: May the beloved of the Lord dwell in security (favor, protection)
- 33:13 Joseph: Blessed by God in every area, he will push the Gentiles (wealth, power)
- 33:18 Zebulun & Issachar: Rejoice at home and abroad, mountain & sea (blessed, happy)
- 33:20 Gad: He lies down like a lioness to eat an arm or head (ferocious, warrior)
- 33:22 Dan: A lion's cub (ferocious) who leaps from Bashan (northern Israel)
- 33:23 Naphtali: Full of Yahweh's blessing, he takes the sea (Galilee) and south (Lebanon?)
- 33:24 Asher: Highly blessed, favored with (olive) oil, iron door locks (wealthy, secure)
- 34:1 Moses climbs Mount Nebo and God shows him Gilead as far as Dan (anachronism)
- 34:2 He sees all Judah to the Mediterranean Sea, over the top of the mountains (miracle?)
- 34:4 God is giving Israel the land He promised to Abraham, Isaac & Jacob (faithful)
- 34:6 Moses died in the land of Moab and God buried him in an unknown location
- 34:9 Joshua was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him
- 34:10 Since that time, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses (i.e., written long after Moses)

Interpretation

Cross References

- Deut 33 Compare this blessing with Jacob's prophecy for his sons before his death (Gen 49)
- 33:8 The High Priest carried Thummim and Urim (lots) in the sacred breast piece (Ex 28:30)
- 33:17 The ten thousands of Ephraim (the younger), the thousands of Manasseh (Gen 48:13-20)
- 33:20 Gad lived in Gilead, east of the Jordan, opposite the hostile Ammonites (Deut 3:16)
- 34:9 Joshua was filled with God's Spirit because Moses laid his hands on him (Acts 8:18)

Where were Zebulun & Issachar located (33:18)?

They lived in the hilly region of the lower Galilee between the Mediterranean and the Sea of Galilee; Barak fought Sisera at Mount Tabor and the Philistines defeated Saul at Mount Gilboa.

Application

An example to follow: The laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Spirit (34:9)