

Vineland Park Baptist Church
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Study # 13
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Deuteronomy

“Worship”

This will be the concluding study in this series on the Book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy is the fifth book of the Pentateuch; the first five books in the Bible.

“Deuteronomy” means “second law.” The word itself is a mistranslation of the Greek translation of the OT, the Septuagint, meaning “a copy of this law.”

The Hebrew title is “The Words,” referring to the appeal Moses made to the second generation of covenant people. The titles of the books in the Hebrew bible are usually taken from the first words in the book.

Deut 1:1

These *are* the words which Moses spoke to all Israel on this side of the Jordan in the wilderness,

This book is at the heart of the Bible. Deuteronomy is quoted in all but six New Testament books, almost 200 times altogether.

Deuteronomy 26

Law of the Tithe

We are not under the ceremonial and civil laws of the Israelites. We must, however, be careful not to ignore the principles of justice and mercy that apply to all ages.

The purpose of the tithe was to keep before the minds of the Israelites that everything belonged to God. An integral part of the system of worship was the tithe. The primary feature of worship was the sacrifice and the tithe was part of system.

TITHE

The practice of giving a tenth of one's income or property as an offering to God. The custom of paying a tithe was an ancient practice found among many nations of the ancient world.

The practice of giving a tenth of income or property extends into Hebrew history before the time of the Mosaic Law. The first recorded instance of tithing in the Bible occurs in [Gen 14:17-20](#). After returning from rescuing Lot and defeating his enemies, Abraham met [MELCHIZEDEK](#), the "king of Salem" and "priest of God Most High." The text states simply that Abraham gave Melchizedek a tithe of all the goods he had obtained in battle. The author of the Book of Hebrews, in recounting this episode, considered the Levitical priests who descended from Abraham and who appeared centuries later as having paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham ([Heb 7:1-10](#)). There is no recorded demand of Abraham for a tenth. Neither is an explanation given about why Abraham gave a tithe to Melchizedek. Jacob also, long before the law of Moses, promised that he would give to the Lord a tenth of all he received ([Gen 28:22](#)).

The law of Moses prescribed tithing in some detail. [Lev 27:30-32](#) stated that the tithe of the land would include the seed of the land and the fruit of the tree. In addition the Hebrew people were required to set apart every tenth animal of their herds and flocks to the Lord.

Mosaic legislation on tithing is also found in two other passages. [Num 18:21-32](#) stated that the tithes in Israel would be given to the Levites, because the Levites did not receive a land inheritance like the other tribes of Israel. The Levites, in turn, were to offer a heave offering to the Lord. This would constitute a tithe on their part of the goods which they received.

The rest of the goods which the Levites received would provide their living as the reward for their work in the tabernacle.

The third passage dealing with the tithe is [Deut 12:5-7,11-12,17-18](#). This passage instructed Israel to take their tithes to the place the Lord prescribes, or the city of Jerusalem. In Deuteronomy, only a vegetable tithe is mentioned. In [2 Chron 31:6](#), however, the tithe of cattle is mentioned.

In [Deut 26:12-15](#) the third year is called the year of tithing. This may indicate that the tithes were not collected annually. Apparently in this year only the goods which were given as tithes could be offered and stored locally. The offering of the tithe also took the form of a ritual meal ([Deut 12:7,12](#)). Some suggest that there were three tithes, but this seems unlikely. There is no mention of a tithe in Exodus but only the giving of the [FIRSTFRUITS](#) ([Ezek 44:29-30](#)). Finally, the prophet Malachi indicated that Israel had robbed God in withholding tithes and offerings. Thus the Israelites were exhorted to bring their tithes into the storehouse in order to enjoy the Lord's blessing ([Mal 3:8-12](#)).

In the Old Testament the purpose of the giving of a tenth was to meet the material need of the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless (the orphan), and the widow ([Deut 26:12-13](#)). The tithe was an expression of gratitude to God by His people. Basic to tithing was the acknowledgment of God's ownership of everything in the earth.

In the New Testament the words tithe and tithing appear only eight times ([Matt 23:23](#); [Luke 11:42](#); [18:12](#); [Heb 7:5-6,8-9](#)). All of these passages refer to Old Testament usage and to current Jewish practice. Nowhere does the New Testament expressly command Christians to tithe. However, as believers we are to be generous in sharing our material possessions with the poor and for the support of Christian ministry. Christ Himself is our model in giving. Giving is to be voluntary, willing, cheerful, and given in the light of our accountability to God. Giving should be systematic and by no means limited to a tithe of our incomes. We recognize that all we have is from God. We are called to be faithful stewards of all our possessions ([Rom 14:12](#); [1 Cor 9:3-14](#); [16:1-3](#); [2 Cor 8:1-9:15](#)).

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Deuteronomy 26 provides a worship ceremony found nowhere else in the Bible. The worshipper takes some of the firstfruits, puts it in a basket, and in a public expression of gratitude he offers it to the LORD.

Deut 26:1-4 The LORD is good.

Deut 26:5-9 Remember the faithfulness of God.

Deut 26:10 Acknowledge that it is Jehovah and not Baal who provides.

Deut 26:11-15 Obey God

Deut 26:16-19 Affirming the truth of God

THE ALTERNATIVES BEFORE US

Deuteronomy 27-28

All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God. However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all His commands and decrees...all these curses will come upon you and overtake you.

DECISIONS, DECISIONS, DECISIONS....Every day we are called upon to make choices. Some (most) of our choices have few, if any, serious consequences. Does it really matter if you have apple juice or orange juice with breakfast? How many choices have you made since you awoke this morning?

Some of our choices do have major consequences. Should I take a new job and move to another city? What effects will that have on my family; is there a church there that is faithful to the Gospel?

We face a radical choice in elections: Pro-life or pro-abortion?

Yes, I am a single issue voter. If a candidate is wrong on the issue of abortion, nothing else he or she stands for matters enough to me for me to vote for them.

This lesson lays out the choices presented to Israel as they prepared to enter Canaan. They even know the consequences of their choices.

1. SETTING the STAGE

The worship and life of Israel was rich with ceremony and pageantry. Nothing was done for mere entertainment. Every ritual act had a double purpose.

1) It spoke symbolically of Israel's commitments and special relationship to God.

2) It served as a powerful tool of education.

a) Stones of Witness Deuteronomy 27:1-4, 8

The Law of God - the Ten Commandments - had been inscribed on stone tablets at Sinai. On arriving in Canaan the Hebrews were to erect on Mount Ebal large stone pillars, plastered with lime, on which to inscribe the commandments and the covenant for future generations to read.

b) Altar of Dedication Deuteronomy 27:5-7

The altar was to be made with uncut stones. The pagan altars were made with cut stones carved with images of their idols. This altar was to be a place of dedication and thanksgiving.

c) Israel Becomes a Nation Deuteronomy 27:9-10

As the Israelites wandered in the wilderness they were a nation without a land. As they prepared to enter Canaan they were a people with a territory.

d) Positioned for Proclamation Deuteronomy 27:11-13

Two mountains stood opposite each other, looking across a valley through which ran a major caravan route, and about halfway between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean seacoast. Abraham had built his first altar in Canaan and Jacob's well was in this valley.

The pronouncement of the blessings and curses would take place in this historic setting. This is the very center of Canaan and the people would know that God had kept His covenant promise because they were in the center of the Promised Land.

Six tribes were to stand on Mount Gerizim and six on Mount Ebal. The priests with the ark and the furniture of the tabernacle remained below. The theme of this great pageant was obedience to the Law and submission to God. On this would hinge the future of Israel and the testimony of Jehovah to the pagan nations.

2. THE TWELVE CURSES

The sins that would result in curses can be divided into four types:

a) Sins of Idolatry Deuteronomy 27:14-15

The critical distinction between Israel's worship and the idolatry of the surrounding nations was that Israel had no graven image or likeness of Jehovah. What are the modern-day idols?

b) Sins against People Deuteronomy 27:16-19, 24-25

Honoring parents is taken seriously by God. Honesty is required. Mercy is demanded. Life is sacred to God.

c) Sexual Sins Deuteronomy 27:20-23

Acts that "normal" people would abhor are all too common today.

d) Sin of Ignoring God's Directions Deuteronomy 27:26

You can't hide from God.

3. THE TWO ALTERNATIVES

Frequently in Scripture we find the ways of blessing and cursing, life and death, placed side by side and contrasted. Cf. Matthew 7:13-14, 24-27

Matt 7:13-14

¹³"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Matt 7:24-27

²⁴"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

²⁶"But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

Deuteronomy 28

a) The Way of Blessing Deuteronomy 28:1-14

It was simple. In every activity of life, God was always to be honored by keeping His commandments.

b) The Way of Cursing Deuteronomy 28:15-68

This is a terrible list of curses that will befall Israel if the people turn to other gods. What happened?

Deuteronomy 29

Deut 29:1 The Covenant

Deut 29:2-9 Recall how the LORD provided.

Deut 29:10-15 Who made the Covenant and with whom?

Deut 29:16-28 What happens when they go astray.

Deut 29:29 One of the greatest truths in the Word of God.

Deuteronomy 30

- Deut 30:1-2 Forgiveness is conditional.
- Deut 30:3 God is forgiving: repent and obey.
- Deut 30:4-10 God is generous in His forgiveness.
- Deut 30:11-14 God's Word is near.

Rom 10:5-13

⁵ For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "*The man who does those things shall live by them.*" ⁶ But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "*Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'*" (that is, to bring Christ down from above) ⁷ or, "*Who will descend into the abyss?'*" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸ But what does it say? "*The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart*" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, "*Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.*" ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³ For "*whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.*"

- Deut 30:15-18 God's Word challenges the intents of the heart.
- Deut 30:19-20 God's Word encourages obedience.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD LEADER?

Deuteronomy 31-34

No prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face.

MOSES IS THE MOST PROMINENT character of the Old Testament. With rare exceptions, he did as the LORD commanded him all the days of his life. Moses is called the most teachable (meekest) man.

Is that what made Moses the great leader that he was?

1. FAREWELL CHARGES of MOSES

Deuteronomy 31:1-13; 24-29

Because Moses did not honor the LORD at Kadesh (Numbers 20:8-12), he would not be allowed to lead the people into Canaan. Moses tells the people that it is the presence of the LORD, not Moses, which will give them the victory.

Hoshea (salvation) was born in slavery. Soon after they departed from Egypt, he was appointed commander of the Hebrew army. Moses changed Hoshea's name to Joshua (Numbers 13:16), meaning "Jehovah is salvation."

Jesus is the Greek word for Joshua.

Moses instructs the elders to keep the word of God before the people. What is our responsibility as teachers and parents regarding God's word?

2. COMMISSION of JOSHUA

Deuteronomy 31:14-23

Moses had informed Joshua that he would be the new leader of Israel. Now God confirms his appointment.

The people will rebel and follow other gods. Can you imagine Joshua's excitement at the prospect of leading these people?

God never leaves His people without a leader.

3. The SONG of MOSES

Deuteronomy 31:30-32:43

Moses sings his poetic and prophetic song. This is not a chronicle of history, but a broad view of Israel's past. God chose Israel from among all the nations and cared for them.

Rev 15

Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.

² And I saw *something* like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark *and* over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. ³ They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying:

"Great and marvelous *are* Your works,

Lord God Almighty!

Just and true *are* Your ways,

O King of the saints!

⁴ Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?

For *You* alone *are* holy.

For all nations shall come and worship before You,

For Your judgments have been manifested."

⁵ After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. ⁶ And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. ⁷ Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. ⁸ The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

Instead of responding in love, the Israelites rebelled over and over.

"Jeshurun" is a title for Israel meaning the "upright one."

The implication is that of self-righteousness and arrogance.

This type forgets his origins and becomes self-important and pompous.

1 Cor 10:12

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

Prov 16:18-19

¹⁸ Pride goes before destruction,

And a haughty spirit before a fall.

¹⁹ Better *to be* of a humble spirit with the lowly,

Than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Israel's rebellion did not go unpunished (32:19).

There is a note of hope in 32:26-27.

4. The BLESSINGS of MOSES

Deuteronomy 33

It was customary for a dying father to bless his children (Gen 27:26-29; 39-40; 49:1-28).

The blessings gave legal acknowledgement of sonship and prophetic insight into the future.

Moses was the spiritual father of twelve tribes. He could rightly pronounce a blessing on each one and provide a testament of the spiritual inheritance and promises he was passing on under the leadership of Joshua.

The blessings represent God's purpose, as expressed through Moses, for each tribe. Joseph represents two tribes, named for his sons Ephraim and Manasseh

(17). The omission of Simeon is a puzzle. The Jewish commentator Rashi suggests that he came under the inheritance of Judah.

5. The DEATH of MOSES

Deuteronomy 34

At God's command, Moses left Joshua and the people on the plains and ascended to Pisgah, by way of Mount Nebo.

Deut 34:1-4

What song that has the line, "from Pisgah's lofty height?"

"Sweet Hour of Prayer" [The New Church Hymnal - 305]

3. Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, May I thy consolation share,
Till, from Mount Pisgah's lofty height, I view my home, and take my flight:
This robe of flesh I'll drop, and rise To seize the everlasting prize;
And shout, while passing through the air, Farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer!

Deut 34:5-8

What better epitaph can be written than, "the servant of the LORD?"

Why did God bury Moses in a secret grave?

“Moses eyes were not weak.”

He could see in the far distance the land of Canaan that was promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Deut 34:9

Moses had ordained Joshua to succeed him.

Deut 34:10-12

No one else like Moses.

The last of Deuteronomy is a summary of the life of Moses. He held all the offices of Israel, ruler, prophet, judge, and priest. He knew God, “face to face.”

Moses lived 120 years. Someone has observed that he spent 40 years learning how to be a somebody; 40 years in a desert learning how to be a nobody; and 40 years learning how God can use a nobody.