

## Introduction

Deuteronomy is the last of the Torah, the books of Moses. The name Deuteronomy literally means “second law.” This is because the book is similar to Leviticus in that it is mainly comprised with God’s law being given to Israel through Moses and narrates very little history. However, Deuteronomy is distinct from Leviticus in three key ways.

1. Leviticus is given to the first generation after the Exodus at Mount Sinai, Deuteronomy is delivered to the next generation after the 40 years of wilderness wanderings as they are about to enter the Promised Land. This helps us understand one of the reasons why the law would need to be reiterated, because this generation had not heard it directly.
2. In Leviticus, God speaks the law to Moses. In Deuteronomy, Moses speaks to the people about the law. Deuteronomy is a record of three sermons Myoses delivered to Israel before entering the land.
3. Deuteronomy does not contain laws for the priests or tabernacle worship. The laws of Deuteronomy are focused on the common people and their life in the Promised Land.

## The Purpose of the Law

### I. *According to Deuteronomy 4*

- A. The law is set before Israel as the way of life and of blessing. If the people obey the law, they will live and be blessed in the Promised Land, but if they turn from the law, they will be cursed and expelled from the land. These two outcomes are laid out in detail in **Deut. 28**.
- B. The law is a testimony of the wisdom and goodness of God to Israel. It is a means whereby the Gentiles shall be humbled and desire to join themselves to Israel.
- C. Deuteronomy paints the law in a very positive light. This view of the law is often downplayed or outright denied in Christian circles. Do we view the law as a great blessing and a means by which God shows His favor?

### II. *Comparing with Paul on the Law*

- A. Part of the reason many Christians have a negative view of the law is because of the language Paul uses about it. We find such a statement in **Rom. 7:6**: “But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.” Also, in **Gal. 3:10-13** Paul tells us that all under the law are under a curse and that Christ redeems us from the curse of the law. How can the law be positive then?
- B. The answer comes when we read the context of what Paul is saying, rather than merely taking isolated verses. In **Rom. 7**, Paul makes clear that the problem is not the law but our sinfulness that makes us lawbreakers (**7:7-24**). In **Gal. 3**, it is not the law that is a curse but the sanctions of the law upon sinners like us. The law was given to reveal sin in us that we might seize the promise of forgiveness and righteousness in Christ (**3:21-26**).
- C. If we understand Paul correctly, we can say with him that the law is holy and good.

### III. *The 3-Fold Use of the Law*

These passages help us to see what the Reformation called the 3-fold use of the law.

- A. **Pedagogical Use:** the law shows us our sinfulness and inability to keep it so that we flee to Christ.
- B. **Civil Use:** the law restrains us from sinning out of fear or shame.
- C. **Normative Use:** the law shows us what it is to live a blessed life with God.