

Deuteronomy: God's Requirements for Life in the Promised Land

New Covenant Presbyterian Church
Adult Sunday School 7/25/21

WSC question 5: *Are there more Gods than one?*

Answer: *There is but One only, the living and true God. (Deut. 6:4, Jer. 10:10)*

I. Introduction

"In the book of Deuteronomy the story of the Lord's relationship with Israel reaches an important climax. As they stand poised to take possession of the land of Canaan, Moses sets before a new generation of adult Israelites the obligations that they must fulfill in order to enjoy God's blessing in the land of Canaan. This centers on the special covenant relationship that exists between the Lord and Israel. At the heart of this covenant is a commitment by both parties to love the other wholeheartedly and faithfully. Israel's future in the promised land is tied directly to their willingness and ability to fulfill their covenantal duties. Obedience will ensure blessing and disobedience will ensure cursing." (T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 286).

- A. Author: Moses (narrator unnamed)
- B. Date: 1410 B.C.
- C. Name:
 - 1. English name means "second law-giving"
 - 2. It is a mistranslation of 17:18 that actually means "a copy of this law"
 - 3. The Hebrew name of the book follows the ancient custom of using the first words which would be translated "these are the words"
- D. Canonization: last book of the Pentateuch
- E. Audience:
 - 1. Second generation of Israelites to come out of Egypt with exception of Joshua and Caleb
 - 2. Camped east of the Jordan River near the border of Moab

II. Structure and Outline

- A. Deuteronomy reflects ancient Hittite and Assyrian treaty and covenant document structure. Usually between kings of powerful nations and rulers of weaker vassal states
 - I. *Historical Prologue (Deut. 1:1-4:43)*
 - II. *Stipulations (Deut. 4:44-26:19)*
 - III. *Provisions for storing the covenant and reading it periodically (Deut. 31:9-13)*

- IV. *List of Witnesses (no clear parallel though witnesses are mentioned in ceremonial summons Deut. 30:19-20 and the song of Moses Deut. 32:1,43)*
- V. *Blessings and Curses (Deut. 27:1-28:68)*

DQ: What does the covenant structure of Deuteronomy tell us about God's relationship with Israel?

B. Moses' speeches

- 1. Deuteronomy is the only book where Moses addresses the people with his own words
- 2. Deuteronomy reads almost like a sermon as Moses encourages the people to follow the Lord with much repetition
- 3. His words have added significance since they are given shortly before his death
- 4. He gives two main speeches
 - a) 1:6-4:40 begins with remembering Israel's relationship with the Lord since Mt. Sinai 40 years earlier
 - b) 5:1-26:19 is two-thirds of the book and forms the law that Moses sets before the people

C. Outline

- I. *Historical Prologue (1:1-4:43)*
- II. *Stipulations (4:44-26:19)*
 - A. *Ten Commandments (4:44-5:33)*
 - B. *First commandment: Monotheism (6:1-11:32)*
 - C. *Second commandment: Worship (12:1-32)*
 - D. *Third commandment: Honoring the name (13:1-14:21)*
 - E. *Fourth commandment: Sabbath (14:22-16:17)*
 - F. *Fifth commandment: Honoring authority (16:18-18:22)*
 - G. *Sixth commandment: Human dignity (19:1-22:12)*
 - H. *Seventh commandment: Sexual fidelity (22:13-23:18)*
 - I. *Eighth commandment: Personal property (23:19-24:22)*
 - J. *Ninth commandment: Truthfulness (25:1-19)*
 - K. *Tenth commandment: Contentment (26:1-15)*
 - L. *Formal conclusion (26:1-15)*
- III. *Ratification ceremony (27:1-28:68)*
- IV. *Redemptive-Historical Prospectus: Blessings and Curses (29:1-30:20)*
- V. *Historical Epilogue (31:1-34:12)*

III. Message and Theology

A. The basis of God's covenant

- a. God cites His past blessings as the grounds for present faith
- b. "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt" (5:6) is the context in which God requires covenant faithfulness

- c. Ten commandments are given in response to divine benevolence and not as a grounds for divine benevolence

DQ: What is the basis of God's covenant with Israel? What does it teach us about our relationship with God?

- B. The response required by the covenant
 - a. **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength” (Deut 6:5, 11:13, 13:3, 30:6)**
 - b. Loving the Lord is deeply connected to obedience. If they love him they will keep all his commands (5:10, 11:1, 7:9, 10:12)
- C. The blessings and curses of the covenant
 - a. Life- Obedience will result in fruitfulness and prosperity and security in the promised land
 - b. Death- Disobedience will result in defeat by enemies and being led out of the promised land
 - c. A good summary in Moses' final speech is Deut. 30:15-18
 - d. The most common motive used throughout Moses' speech is divine blessing for obedience

DQ: What connections do we see with God's covenant to Israel for us today?

- D. God's election of Israel
 - a. They are his treasured possession (7:6)
 - b. It was not due to their righteousness (9:4-6)
 - c. It was not because of their size or strength (7:7)
 - d. They were meant to be a light to the nations (4:6-8, 28:9-10)
 - e. God in fact knows they will fail and forsake Him (31:16-17)
 - f. Even Israel's punishment is used as a light to the nations (29:25-28)

DQ: Why did God choose to make a covenant with Israel? What does this reveal about our salvation?

- E. God's restoration of Israel
 - a. Blessing still available if they repent (30:1-10)
 - b. **“The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendents, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul and live” (30:6)**

IV. Christ in Deuteronomy

- A. Moses is a type of Christ
 - a. The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—**it is to him you shall listen**—(Deut. 18:15)

- b. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen One; **listen to him!**” (Luke 9:35)
- B. Christ fulfills the covenant on behalf of His people
 - a. Christ takes the curses of the covenant
 - i. *“All who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the book of the law” (Gal. 3:10 quoting Deut. 27:26)*
 - ii. *“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: Cursed is everyone who is hung on tree” (Gal. 3:13 quoting Deut. 21:23)*
 - b. Christ earns the blessings of the covenant
 - i. Law demands perfect righteousness: *“For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:20)*
 - ii. Righteousness is a gift- *“But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. (Rom. 3:21)*
 - c. Christ gives us a new circumcised heart by the Spirit
 - i. *For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. (Rom. 2:28-29)*

Bibliography

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