

Preview of Deuteronomy

In our study of this book, we soon discover that the title (which means "second law") refers not to a new law but to a repeated giving of the former Law. The book is not, however, a mere repetition of the Law given at Sinai. Rather, it is a restating of the Law with a new emphasis and a new dimension to a new generation.

The new emphasis is love, which is evident in the numerous usages of the word love, as well as in the overall warmth of the book. Deuteronomy's message rings with God's matchless love for His chosen people. His calling is the calling of love (Deut. 4:37; 7:7, 8); His law is the law of love (Deut. 10:12-13—"for thy good"). His warnings are the warnings of love (Deut. 30:19); His discipline is the discipline of love (Deut. 32:11-12). Moses further emphasizes that man's wholehearted love for God is the only proper response to God and the only acceptable motivation for keeping His commandments.

The new generation addressed was the offspring of the rebellious people who, forty years earlier, were at the borders of the same Promised Land. A large part of this generation was at Sinai when the Law was given, but they had been too young to grasp the significance of that event. Therefore they were in great need of having their fathers' experience and the commandments of the Lord vividly and forcibly brought to their attention. Moses endeavored to fortify them against stumbling as they moved away from the miraculous and into the rigorous warfare in Canaan.

Several basic concerns are repeated throughout the book: (1) the call to remember God's past dealings—that they might profit from the experiences and lessons of the past; (2) the challenge not to forget God's requirements—lest they should lose His blessing; (3) the command to "observe and do," or to obey—that they might truly possess the land as God intended; (4) the need for a complete commitment to "fear the LORD thy God"—that it might be well with them and with their children forever.

The Book of Deuteronomy has a vital message for us today. Let us heed its precepts.

Divine Exhortation to Obedience

Lesson Scope: [Deuteronomy 1-11](#)

Lesson Focus

Deuteronomy is a series of Moses' discourses given shortly before Israel entered the Promised Land. After a brief recounting of their history, Moses reminded them of the laws God had given them at Mount Sinai. Moses was not giving Israel new laws; he was rehearsing what they already knew. He appealed to them to obey God and receive the blessings of obedience. He also reminded them of the consequences of disobedience. Israel could have completed the journey from Egypt to Canaan in less than two years, but because of their disobedience, their journey lasted forty years. During all that time, God continued to provide for Israel and to lead them in spite of their failures.

This lesson scope is large and cannot be covered thoroughly in a single lesson. Try to follow the thoughts of the selected passages. Read the verses surrounding the selected passages. Bible obedience cannot be stressed too much. Finish the lesson by emphasizing the future blessing of the faithful. God deserves and requires obedience. On the basis of His loving provision, God calls His followers to move forward in obedience to His voice.

Lesson Aim: To identify incentives for willing obedience.

Theme Verse: [Deuteronomy 5:29](#). 0 that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!

Lesson Text

"That Ye May Live"

[Deuteronomy 4:1-6](#)¹ Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do *them*, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you.² Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.³ Your eyes have seen what the

LORD did because of Baalpeor: for all the men that followed Baalpeor, the LORD thy God hath destroyed them from among you. ⁴ But ye that did cleave unto the LORD your God *are* alive every one of you this day. ⁵ Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. ⁶ Keep therefore and do *them*; for this *is* your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.

"That It May Be Well With Thee"

Deuteronomy 6:3-5 ³ Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do *it*; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. ⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: ⁵ And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

Deuteronomy 7:6-9 ⁶ For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that *are* upon the face of the earth. ⁷ The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye *were* the fewest of all people: ⁸ But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. ⁹ Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he *is* God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;

"That Your Days May Be Multiplied"

Deuteronomy 11:18-23 ¹⁸ Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. ¹⁹ And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. ²⁰ And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: ²¹ That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth. ²² For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your

God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; ²³ Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves.

Deuteronomy 11:26-28 ²⁶ Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; ²⁷ A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: ²⁸ And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.

Questions for Study

"That Ye May Live"

1. What did the incident of Baal-peor illustrate?
2. How could Israel's obedience bless other nations?
3. How does the law of sowing and reaping apply today?

"That It May Be Well With Thee"

4. Why did God choose Israel?
5. How should we respond in light of the fact that God has chosen us?

"That Your Days May Be Multiplied"

6. Why did God's Word need a place of prominence in Israel's daily life?
7. Explain the importance of the word diligently in Deut. 11:22.
8. How important is diligence for the Christian today?
9. What gods pose a threat to us?

Analyzing the Passage

"The LORD thy God" is an expression that appears many times in the Book of Deuteronomy. Although God is sovereign ruler of the whole earth, He wants men to claim Him as their personal Lord. To be His people, we must give Him our undivided loyalty.

The words statutes (Deuteronomy 4:1, 6), judgments (Deuteronomy 4:1), and commandments (Deuteronomy 7:9) are synonyms for God's laws. Statutes emphasize what is decreed or appointed. Judgments signify a judicial verdict that distinguishes between right and wrong. Commandments emphasize the authority behind them.

Baal-peor was a Moabitish god worshiped on mount Peor. There the Moabites, at the advice of Balaam, mingled with the Israelites and seduced them to idol worship, mixed marriages, and immorality (Revelation 2:14). Frontlets (Deuteronomy 11:18) were worn on a headband. In Jesus' day

some of the Jews wore portions of Scripture on their forehead and on their arms to fulfill this Scripture. The purpose was to maintain constant awareness of personal responsibility toward God's requirements.

Principles and Applications

"That Ye May Live"

1. Obedience to God brings life (Deuteronomy 4:1, 4). This principle, that obedience to God brings life but disobedience brings death, was instituted for Adam and Eve at the beginning. It applies to all time. Moses reminded Israel of what happened when some of them followed Baal-peor. More serious than the physical death these men experienced was the second death; they were eternally separated from God. We often refer to this as the law of sowing and reaping.

2. Obeying God helps us to gain ground spiritually (Deuteronomy 4:1). God blessed the Israelites with victory and an inheritance in the Promised Land as they obeyed Him. When we step out in obedience to God, He gives grace to meet the challenges on this journey of life toward heaven. The only alternative to spiritual growth is spiritual decline (2 Peter 3:13-18).

3. Those who obey the Lord are a Gospel to the world (Deuteronomy 4:6). Our obedience to God reminds the ungodly of their accountability. God gives His people wisdom, not for their own glory, but to point others to the source of salvation. Rahab cast her lot with the people of God because she saw His power and wisdom among them (Joshua 2:11). God chooses to work through weak, fallible men so that others comprehend His great power (2 Corinthians 4:6-7).

"That It May Be Well With Thee"

4. Loving the Lord with our whole being inspires obedience to Him (Deut.6:4-5). Obedience is love's expression. We can say that we love God, but if our love does not produce loving obedience, we are expressing contempt. When we choose to be God's servant, we assign lesser value to everyone and everything else. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16).

5. God's love for us should inspire our love and obedience to Him (Deuteronomy 7:6-7). It was God's love for man that motivated Him to send Jesus into this world to live as an example for us and to give his life for our redemption (Romans 5:7-9; 1 John 3:16). The heart's response to that love

should be a compelling desire to serve Him. Jesus now asks us to love others as He loves us (John 13:34; 15:12).

6. God is always faithful to those who love and obey Him (Deuteronomy 7:9). He remembered His promises to Abram; He will remember His promises to His faithful children. We humans are prone to forget, but God never forgets (Isaiah 49:15; Hebrews 6:10).

"That Your Days May Be Multiplied"

7. Laying up God's Word in our hearts should inspire us to obey it (Deuteronomy 11:18). Filling our mind with God's Word provides us with the knowledge of His will. God's Word also provides us with good thoughts to displace the devil's evil suggestions. To have God's Word in our heart, in our soul, and between our eyes seems to be more than a simple memorization of the Bible. It must become part of our thinking, affecting every choice and action.

8. A Bible-centered teaching program is vital to inspiring obedience (Deuteronomy 11:19). The Bible offers the only secure foundation for life. Teaching truth to the rising generation happens not only in family worship but also in the daily tasks of life. We show our children how to live, and we teach them how to apply the Bible's principles. We do our families a great disservice if we fail to make a clear connection between the Bible and our practice.

9. Those who walk in God's ways will have spiritual victory (Deuteronomy 11:22-23). Just as it was impossible for Israel to disobey God and gain victory over their enemies, it is presumptuous to think we can enjoy spiritual victory apart from obedience. Our enemy is stronger than we are; to engage him alone is certain defeat. We can be assured of victory if God is fighting for us, because He is stronger than any foe.

10. Obedience to the Lord brings blessing, but disobedience brings a curse (Deuteronomy 11:26-28). "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matthew 16:27). God knows the hearts of all men; He has all the facts. Whether it is good or evil, every deed will be accurately rewarded. Our God will judge without mistake and without respect of persons.

Important Teachings

1. Obedience to God brings life (Deut. 4:1, 4).
2. Obeying God helps us to gain ground spiritually (Deut. 4:1).

3. Those who obey the Lord are a Gospel to the world (Deut. 4:6).
4. Loving the Lord with our whole being inspires obedience to Him (Deut. 6:4-5).
5. God's love for us should inspire love and obedience to Him (Deut. 7:6-7).
6. God is always faithful to those who love and obey Him (7:9).
7. Laying up God's Word in our hearts should inspire us to obey it (Deut. 11:18).
8. A Bible-centered teaching program is vital to inspiring obedience (Deut. 11:19).
9. Those who walk in God's ways will have spiritual victory (Deut. 11:22-23).
10. Obedience to the Lord brings blessing, but disobedience brings a curse (Deut. 11:26-28).

Answers to Questions

1. What did the incident of Baal-peon illustrate?

This illustrates man's proneness to sin and the lingering effects of sin. God sent a plague and destroyed twenty-four thousand Israelites, but they were not totally free of that sin six or seven years later (Joshua 22:17).

2. How could Israel's obedience bless other nations?

As Israel obeyed the Lord and reaped the blessings that followed, the nations around them would learn about the God of heaven. Some of their people would be drawn to Him.

3. How does the law of sowing and reaping apply today?

God blesses faithfulness today and punishes evil. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:7-8).

4. Why did God choose Israel?

God chose Israel because He loved them and because He had made a covenant with their faithful fathers (Deut. 7:8). He did not choose them because of their numbers. And He would not continue to bless them if they forsook Him (Deut. 7:9-11).

5. How should we respond in light of the fact that God has chosen us?

We should obey the Lord. The fact that we do not deserve God's favor

should cause us to cherish and diligently maintain our relationship with Him.

6. Why did God's Word need a place of prominence in Israel's daily life? God well knew how easily His Word can be taken for granted and forgotten. Without the diligence that God commanded, His people would not be able to pass the faith to the rising generation.

7. Explain the importance of the word diligently in Deut. 11-22. Keeping God's Word requires work. A halfhearted attempt to obey will not be enough.

8. How important is diligence for the Christian today? Diligence is the difference between receiving the blessing or receiving the curse. Unless we strive to enter the kingdom, we will not enter (Luke 13:24). Unless we watch and pray, we will be unprepared (Mark 13:33). Without diligence, we will fall (2 Peter 1:10). Satan's efforts, along with the downward tendencies of our fallen nature, militate against faithfulness.

9. What gods pose a threat to us?

We are ever threatened by the gods of the people around us—personal abilities and achievements, possessions, status, and education. Most of these exalt self in some way. Anything that we value more than God is an idol (see Romans 6:16-23).

Summarizing the Lesson

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever" (Psalm 111:10).

Research Guide

1. See Deuteronomy 1:3; 34:8; Joshua 4:19 to understand the time of these discourses.

2. Look up the word frontlets in Unger's Bible Dictionary.

3. Study the implications of Baal-peor. See Numbers 25:1-9; Psalm 106:28-30; Hosea 9:10; Revelation 2:14.

4. Joshua 2:9-11 gives an example that may be useful in explaining Deuteronomy 4:6.

5. First Corinthians 6:19-20; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:5, 9 give the New Testament teaching on God's special people.