

Introduction to Deuteronomy

I. The Context of Deuteronomy

A. Beginning the end of our study of the Pentateuch

1. The first 5 books (literally 5 scrolls), of Moses.
2. It is the foundation of all the rest of the biblical storyline...
3. It is the story of redemption: God's people, God's place, under God's rule.

B. Previously in the Pentateuch

1. **Genesis (1-2; 3:15; 17:4-8)** – Creation, Fall, Promised Redemption, Abraham et. al.
2. **Exodus (4:22-23; 20:1-2)** – Redeemed from slavery in Egypt, given a covenant law
3. **Leviticus (16:20-22)** – How the holy God can dwell among His sinful people – atonement.
4. **Numbers (14:8-9; 31-32)** – The people fail to trust but God remains faithful to His promise.
5. **Deuteronomy** – The new generation must trust God and be faithful to the covenant
 - a. Two major historical events lie just around the corner and help us see why Deuteronomy is here.
 - i. The people are about to enter the land of Canaan.
 - ii. Moses is about to die.
 - b. The covenant made by God with the nation of Israel being preached to a new generation.

II. Introducing Deuteronomy

A. Set the Scene (Deut. 1:1-5): Who, Where, When, What

B. Theme of the Book

1. Calling the new generation to a new commitment to live as God's covenant people
2. Passages: Deut. 6:1-6, 10:12-13, 27:9, 30:19-20

C. Outlining Deuteronomy¹

1. Three Speeches (1-30)
 - a. Speech 1: Looking Back at What God has Done (1-4)
 - b. Speech 2: The Covenant Law & The People's Need to Obey (4:44-28)
 - c. Speech 3: A Call to Keep the Covenant (29-30)
2. Looking Ahead: The last words of Moses (31-34)

D. Why study Deuteronomy?

1. We see shadows of Jesus (Luke 24:27)

- a. Prophet (Deut. 18:15-18, John 1:1-2, 14, 17-18)
- b. Redeemer – The one who will bear our curse (Deut. 27:26; Gal 3:10; Deut. 21:23; Gal 3:13)

2. It is similar to the way the book of Roman's functions in the New Covenant (NC)

- a. In New Testament (NT) we have Gospels describing the redeeming work for the NC
 - i. Then, we have the birth of the people of church /people (Acts)
 - ii. Then we have Romans giving an in depth theological treatise on those covenant realities.

¹ For another outline based on the vassal treaties of Israel's day, see Peter C. Craigie, [The Book of Deuteronomy](#), The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), 24.

- b. In OT we have first books giving us the history of the initial, redeeming work and the OC
 - i. The people of God are redeemed
 - ii. In Deut., we have the outworking of how future generations will live under the OC.

III. Major Theological Themes in Deuteronomy

A. God's Uniqueness (Deut. 4:32-39; 32:29)

B. God's sovereign and loving choice of Israel as his people (Deut. 9:6, 4:37-38, 7:6-8)

C. Israel's duty to love and obey God (Deut. 6:4-6, 27:1)

1. "In the modern world, a distinction may often be made between the religious and the secular, or the sacred and the profane. To Israel, such a distinction would be artificial, not because there was no distinction made in the spheres of life within which the law was operative, but because all of life was under the dominion of God, the Lord of the covenant"²

IV. Conclusion

A. The Book is Analogous to Romans

1. God is the one true God (Rom. 1-2)
2. He redeems a people not because they are good but based on his sovereign grace (Rom. 3-11)
3. His redeemed people must live in light of these realities (Rom. 12-ff)

B. Deuteronomy is a Sermon at Israel's Crossroads that Points the Way Forward

1. "Success in possessing the promised land lay not in military prowess and strength, but in an unbroken covenant relationship with the Lord, who alone could bring further victories like those over Sihon and Og (1:4)."³
2. "Deuteronomy is marked throughout by a spirit of urgency. The book comes even to the modern reader in much the same way as a challenging sermon, for it is directed towards moving the minds and wills of the hearers to decision: *choose life, that you and your descendants may live* (30:19)."⁴

² Craigie, [The Book of Deuteronomy](#), 42.

³ Craigie, [The Book of Deuteronomy](#), 92.

⁴ J. A. Thompson, [Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 5, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1974), 17.