

Deuteronomy Overview

- I. Introduction
 - a. Documentary Hypothesis
 - i. J, E, and P amalgamated throughout the first four books
 - ii. D (Deut.) is separate and unique
 - b. Evangelical response: (Kline, Kitchen, Wolf)
 - i. 2nd mill. Suzerain/vassal treaties – esp. Hittite.
 - ii. Preamble (1:1-5), historical prologue (1:6-4:49), stipulations (general [5-11] and specific [12-26]), blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience (27-28), deposit in accessible place (31:26), public reading (31:9-13), witnesses and ratification (30:19; 31:19, 26).
 - c. The Deuteronomic History
 - i. Theory of Martin Noth
 - ii. Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, parts of Deuteronomy
 - iii. Written by one person or a very few people around 550 B.C.
 - iv. Post-exilic composition for the purpose of explaining the exile.
- II. Remember the Past: 1:1-4:40
 - a. Moses review of the past is not just a repeat but an interpretation
 - b. Exhortation
 - i. Beware the temptation of idolatry!
 - ii. Moses lists the sequence of graven images prohibited and it is exactly the opposite of the creation sequence! 4:16-19 and Gen. 1-2:4a. (male and female, beast and animal, bird, creeping things, fish, sun, moon, stars, and host of heaven.
 - iii. Idolatry is equivalent to turning the world upside down.
- III. Be Careful in the Future: 4:41-11:32
 - a. The theme of oneness (chs. 5-6)
 - i. A recitation of God's standards
 - ii. Appropriation of the covenant 4:31 and 5:3. Past history must become present history for the people. They must make the covenant their own.
 - iii. Chapter 6: verse 4 "hear O' Israel the Lord our God is one Lord?"
 1. The Lord is our God, the Lord alone
 2. The Lord is our God the Lord is one
 3. The Lord our God is one Lord.
 4. The Lord our God the Lord is one
 5. Most likely a statement emphasizing the character and nature of God – consistency.
 - a. A god who does one thing in one situation and another thing at a different time leaves us with two gods.

- b. Rom. 3:30 – since God is one: both with Gentiles and Jews!
 - c. God is consistent throughout history – must be kept in mind in terms of the relationship between the testaments.
 - iv. How do we understand 6:5 in light of 6:4?
 - 1. God is consistent, so we can love God and follow His commandments (6:6)
 - 2. We show love for God by following His commandments: one loves God by honoring and obeying Him and by making a commitment to holy living.
 - 3. Relationship that is characterized by loving obedience! John 14:15 – “If you love me, you will obey what I command”
 - 4. 6:6 – put God’s word on your heart. Inner vitality is the key.
 - b. Remembrance – chs. 7-11
 - i. Israel is holy – it is to be separate from everything impure.
 - ii. Chapter 8 – the Israelites would do well to fear their own behavior more than to fear their neighbors. In 8:7-11 God is sending them back into the garden of Eden. Redemption and restoration. But there is a risk. The risk that they will forget and once again break the relationship.
 - 1. 10:16 – circumcise the heart
 - 2. True circumcision is of the heart and not just an external sign.
 - 3. Fits perfectly with the command in 6:6 to put God’s word in your heart! It has to be put on the heart FIRST before it is put on the hands, eyes, gates, etc.
- IV. The Laws Section – Chaps. 12-26
 - a. Series of Laws – some duplicates from other parts of Pentateuch but some are novel.
 - b. Note well: chapters 1-11 indicate that these laws are not given or placed in a vacuum.
 - i. The laws are set against the bountiful blessings of God and in the context of a relationship with Him!
 - ii. Israel is to obey these laws because they are holy, not in order to become holy!
 - iii. The observance of these laws is a result of holiness, not a means by which to attain holiness.
 - iv. The organization of the laws is seemingly meaningless. One possibility is to view the laws as organized roughly parallel to the ten commandments.

- v. At times this may be forced but seems to be the best possibility behind the organization of the material. Following the Deuteronomy version of the Ten Words:
 1. Commandments 1 and 2 – no other gods and no idols = 12:1-28
 2. Commandment 3 – no misuse of divine name = 13:1-14:27
 3. Commandment 4 – keep the Sabbath = 14:28-16:17
 4. Commandment 5 – honor parents = 16:18-18:22
 5. Commandment 6 – no homicide = 19:1-22:8
 6. Commandment 7 – no adultery (illicit mixtures) = 22:9-23:18
 7. Commandment 8 – no theft (property violation) = 23:19-24:7
 8. Commandment 9 – no false testimony against a neighbor = 24:8-25:4
 9. Commandment 10A – no coveting a neighbor’s wife = 25:5-12
 10. Commandment 10B – no coveting a neighbor’s house = 25:13-16
- c. Chap. 12 – proper worship
 - i. There is a strong contrast in the chapter between “their gods” and “your God,” between “their name” and “His name,” and between the “places” of false worship and the “place God will choose.”
 - ii. The real focus is not a concern about one sanctuary versus many but rather pure worship versus false worship. After all the chapter begins and ends with observations about pagan icons and religious practices!
- d. Chap. 15 – Sabbatical year and the remission of debts
 - i. Verse 4 – ideal – no poor among you
 - ii. Verse 7 – reality – what to do with the poor among you
 - iii. Verse 11 – crystal reality – there will always be poor among you!
 - iv. Dealing with people where they are instead of where they ought to be = biblical law.
 - v. Release of slaves in the sabbatical year: focused on Israelite slaves – those who had to enslave themselves to pay off debt.
- e. Chap. 17 – Public officials
 - i. What are the instructions for a king?
 - ii. Treated as an office in which the holder is at extreme peril because he is tempted by wealth and women to consider himself better than his fellow Israelites and to turn away from Yahweh.
 - iii. His job description is focused on his relationship with the Lord.
- V. Blessings and Curses (Chapters 27-30)
 - a. No neutrality with respect to the Law, you must accept it or reject it.
 - b. A Simple formula: Obedience = blessing; disobedience = curses

- i. Curse = exile (Exile was considered a given! It was not a matter of if but when exile would happen. Therefore, the text focuses not only on what is required to stay in the land but also what is required to regain the land).
 - ii. More space devoted to curses than blessing: typical of ANE treaties but also a foreshadowing of Israel's future?
 - c. Deuteronomistic theology:
 - i. Those who follow the Lord's covenant can anticipate blessing
 - ii. Those who do not can expect curses. Black and white, right?
 - iii. But Pss. 22, 73, 109 – good things don't always come to good people. But, the assumption in these psalms is that they should (Deuteronomistic theology)!
 - iv. The question in John 9:2 illustrates deuteronomistic theology: "Who did wrong to cause the curse of blindness?"
 - v. Matt. 19:23-24 – hard for a rich man to squeeze into heaven – resulting question: "Who can be saved?" (The assumption behind this question is that wealth is a sign of covenantal blessing!)
 - vi. Historical books – mixed picture (2 Sam. 11:25 – innocent suffer with the guilty) There are times when death has nothing to do with retributive justice. Also, wicked kings who basked in wealth and prosperity. Hosea and Habakkuk – God's people prosper despite their obvious wickedness and rejection of the covenant.
 - vii. Job's friends told him that he was suffering because he sinned but they were wrong!
 - viii. Dt. 28:12 and Matt. 5:45 rain as a blessing but it comes on believers and unbelievers!
 - ix. Dt. emphasizes that God does not give blessing because of any virtue on the part of the Israelites. They are not any more righteous than the other nations. They avoid the wrath of God by virtue of another (Moses) (9:25-29).
 - x. The main point: God honors obedience and abhors disobedience. The new covenant indicates that reward may be delayed until the establishment of the new Jerusalem.
- VI. Moses Farewell (Chapters 31-34)
 - a. Ch. 31 – Joshua the successor
 - i. God speaks of the inevitability of Israel's apostasy.
 - ii. Be strong and courageous Joshua!
 - b. Chapter 32 – the Song of Moses
 - i. A graphic depiction of how different God and His people are from one another.
 - c. Chapter 34 – the Death of Moses
 - i. Buried by God in a grave of which only the general area is known.

- ii. Emphasis is not on Moses' knowledge of the LORD but rather on the LORD's knowledge of Moses.
- iii. Deuteronomy, and thus the whole Pentateuch, ends as an incomplete story.
 - 1. The people are not yet in the land.
 - 2. People are not yet where God wants them to be
 - 3. Soon will be where God wants them to be.
 - 4. Ends with the promise that God will lead them into the land and not settle for the wilderness, exile, or displacement.

Numbers Lecture

- I. Introduction
 - a. Title comes from the Latin (via the LXX)
- II. 1:1-10:10
 - a. Chapters 1-2 Census and Tribal Arrangement
 - i. Census takes into account all males who are 20 or older (eligible for warfare):
 - 1. The reality of what Israel faces.
 - 2. God works through His people rather than outside of them.
 - 3. Initiative for census is from God!
 - ii. Levitical assignments: three duties
 - 1. Transporting the Tabernacle
 - 2. Dismantling it
 - 3. Reassembling it
 - iii. The Levites function almost as guards for the Tabernacle which may go back to the golden calf incident.
 - 1. Their job is to protect the sacred space from violation
 - 2. If they fail, then the whole community falls under judgment
 - iv. Tribal Arrangement:
 - 1. three tribes on each side of the Tabernacle
 - 2. Levites in the middle with the Tabernacle
 - 3. God is the middle of the tribes!
 - b. Levitical Censuses – chapters 3-4
 - i. Levitical responsibilities.
 - 1. Kohathites – (4:4-20) carry the holy things of the Tabernacle
 - a. Aaron and sons are responsible for dismantling these items though.
 - b. Kohathites will die if they overstep their bounds

2. Gershonites (vs. 21-28) -
 - a. carry the Tabernacle curtains
 - b. no additional warning as in the case of the Kohathites (one step removed from the holy things)
3. Merarites (vv. 29-33)
 - a. Wooden frames and pillars
 - b. No additional warning (just like Gershonites)
- c. Keeping the Camp Holy – chapter 5
 - i. Remove those who may defile the camp (vs. 1-4).
 - ii. Deliberate sin (vs. 5-10)
 1. Oral confession must be made
 2. Full restitution plus 20 percent – even if the victim is dead (it goes to the Tabernacle/priests)
- d. The Nazirite (Chapter 6)

- i. Samson, Samuel, John the Baptist
 - ii. Three restrictions:
 - 1. No drinking of wine, strong drink, vinegar, grape juice, grapes.
 - 2. Don't cut the hair – the original hippies. Hippies for God!
 - 3. Avoid contact with the deceased period.
 - iii. Open to man or woman!
 - iv. Bless and keep. (Benediction)
 - 1. Only God blesses and keeps.
 - 2. Make His face to shine OR Lift up His countenance: acceptance from God – He looks on with favor.
 - e. Offerings to the Lord (7:1-10:10)
 - i. Chapter 7 is the longest chapter in the Pentateuch.
 - 1. Gifts are brought from the tribes
 - 2. Sacrifices in the order of cereal, burnt, sin, and peace/fellowship.
 - 3. Worship is an act of sacrifice.
 - 4. God speaks with Moses from the holy of holies
 - ii. Chapter 8 – consecration of the Levites
 - 1. Levites are substitute for the first born so the people lay their hands on them.
 - 2. Their function is to avert divine wrath. A barrier between the holy and the profane.
- III. 10:11-20:21 From Sinai to Kadesh
- a. Complaints about the menu/food
 - i. God honors the request for a change in menu but there is a price to be paid. God acquiesces but does not acquit!
 - b. Chs. 13-14 Shall we go up or Not?
 - i. God gives the plan: send twelve spies
 - ii. What the people wanted they got! Compare the following verses:
 - 1. 14:28 – “I will do to you the very things I heard you say.”
 - 2. 14:2 and 14:32
 - 3. 14:3 and 14:30
 - iii. Korah's rebellion
 - 1. Levite of the privileged Kohathites, Moses first cousin.
 - 2. Korah is correct – all of God's people are holy.
 - 3. Moses lets God take care of it and does not seek to defend himself.
 - 4. 16:8-10 Korah's motivation – ambition for a better post.
 - 5. Irony that the Levites, who were supposed to keep God's wrath at bay have become the object of that wrath.
 - 6. Korah's sin: attitude and coming near (usurping another's place)

- c. Complaint about lack of water.
 - i. People are not punished for this complaint
 - ii. Moses is! Why?
 - 1. He did not trust God
 - 2. People did not trust – 40 years and no land – same with Moses
 - 3. Moses continues to lead the people – he has not been relieved of his responsibilities and does not shirk from them.
- IV. From Kadesh to Moab 20:22-36:13
- a. Aaron's death (20:22-29)
 - i. Moses is informed of Aaron's death
 - ii. Transfer from Exodus generation to their children – Aaron to Eleazar
 - b. Opposition and victory (20:22-21:35)
 - i. People gripe about food, water, and progress
 - 1. Fiery serpents.
 - 2. We have sinned
 - 3. Ex. 8:8 and Num. 21:7 take the frogs/snakes away! – God does not take away the snakes
 - 4. Bronze serpent – not a prevention from being bitten but a cure. Why? Dependence.
 - ii. The concern of the people is respite rather than reformation. King Hezekiah had to destroy the serpent because it had become an idol. What God provides needs to be appropriated but not venerated.
 - c. Balaam the Diviner (22-24)
 - i. Balak, Moab's head of state.
 - ii. Shares Pharaoh's concern – the numbers of the Israelites. Military action does not seem to be an option.
 - iii. Seeks to hire Balaam – religious power can be purchased; it is a commodity. Simon the Magus in Acts 8:18-19
 - iv. Balaam rejects the offer at first because God said no! (22:12)
 - v. Balak offers a sweeter deal and God says okay go with them! (22:20)
 - vi. The talking ass – Balaam falls on his face to worship when he finds out and says "I have sinned"
 - vii. The donkey and the serpent
 - 1. Both open with a question
 - 2. Gen – blessing to curse; Num. – curse to blessing
 - viii. Two tongues are divinely touched – the donkey and Balaam! Balaam's tongue is touched so that he utters blessing instead of curse.
 - ix. Balaam seems to know more about Israel's future than Israel does!
 - x. Balaam makes no reference to any other gods.

- xi. The main point of the Balaam story: Israel need not fear the incantations of an international wizard. They should fear their own critical, fault-finding and backbiting spirit. The latter is much more dangerous to them than the former!
- d. Baal-Peor – ch. 25
 - i. Israelites began to have illicit relations with Moabite women.
 - ii. Balaam’s role 31:16 – successful here where he had failed earlier.
 - iii. The incident comes on the heels of fantastic blessing from Balaam!
 - iv. God gets angry – plague
 - 1. Instructions to Moses: hang the chiefs.
 - 2. Moses response: kill those who have yoked themselves to Baal of Peor – Moses does not follow God’s instructions!
 - 3. No sign that the plague is stopped. Many die – perhaps because Moses did not follow directions?
 - a. Phineas – spears the Israelite and his lover.
 - b. Moses is unsuccessful in making atonement for Israel but Phineas succeeds.
 - c. A rebuke to Moses? 25:11 “Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath from the people of Israel”
 - v. Joshua as successor: Moses suggestion. Main qualification of Joshua = spirit is in him. (27:18)

Why is Deuteronomy different from Genesis through Numbers?

Deuteronomy differs from the first four books of the Pentateuch in several ways. First it is framed at the beginning and ending by four speeches on the plains of Moab rather than in the Sinai. These speeches are parting words of Moses as he will soon leave the scene. These speeches are found in Deuteronomy 1:6-4:40, 5:1-26:19, 27:1-28:68, and 29:1-30:20. Second the covenant shifts from God and Moses as the parties to the covenant to God and all Israel as the parties. (Deut.26:17-19) Third the landscape shifts from Israel in the Sinai desert to Israel in Moab on the door step of the promised land. Fourth it records the death of Moses in Moab whereas the three prior books record the deaths of rebellious Israelites in the Sinai. Fifth the writing style is sermonic which is similar to other ANE treaty structures. Sixth Leviticus allowed

multiple sites for worship (Lev. 17-26) whereas Deuteronomy speaks of centralizing worship in Jerusalem. (II Kings 23:4-14) Seventh Deuteronomy concerns regulations not found in the first four books which are similar to governmental law. There are regulations for officials and rules for the king's behavior. (Deut. 16:18-18:22) Eighth Deuteronomy is a reinterpretation of the Decalogue. Ninth the emphasis shifts from the obligations of holiness by each individual to the obligations of the people as a nation in a brotherhood relationship with each other. Finally the all- important concept of Israel obeying the law was meant to be a witness to all the (Gentile) nations. (Deut. 4:6-8). Halleluiah that includes us.

How does the theology relate to Genesis through Numbers?

The theology in Deuteronomy relates to the first four books in many ways. First the concept of covenant is central to all five of the books. Second the concept of law as a Decalogue is incorporated in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. Third the concept of *herem* is reflected in all four of the books (excluding Genesis). In Exodus *herem* entails bans on sacrificing to foreign gods, in Leviticus it entails vows to set aside something of value, in Numbers it entails offerings set aside for the priests, and in Deuteronomy it entails warfare in securing the nation's welfare. Fourth the sovereignty of God carrying out His purposes and plans is manifested in all five books (land, blessings, cursings, promises, nationhood, population increase, and the genealogical line of the promised seed to bring about redemption. Fifth the mediator role is resident in Noah, Moses, Aaron, and Joshua in all five books by at least one of these persons. Sixth Yahweh's presence is manifested in all five books in the Garden, the Pillars, the burning bush, the tabernacle, and so many theophanies. Seventh Yahweh's holiness and separation from sin is manifested in all five books in the offerings, the sacrifices, and the rituals.