

Deuteronomy

Who, When, Where

Written by Moses. Moses was a Hebrew, born in Egypt towards the end of the 215 years that his people lived there. He was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter as a baby and raised as part of the royal family. He left (ran away) from Egypt when he was 40 and lived in Midian to the east where he married and worked as a shepherd for his father in law. When he was about 80 Yahweh called him to return to Egypt and lead his people back to their promised land. He did, but it was a journey that took another 40 years. Moses himself never entered it, but he died at 120, just before they finally entered the land under the leadership of his disciple, Joshua.

Moses would have written this just before the Israelites entered into the promised land around 1400BC, after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness because they didn't have faith in Yahweh to enter in the first time he brought them here just after the Exodus. In fact, straight after that he went off into the mountains and died.

On the plains of Moab. Across the Jordan River from Jericho.

Summary

The old classic summary for this book is “Do To Honour Me”... And as corny as that is, it is a pretty good summary.

It is basically the final three “pep talks” from Moses to the Israelites before they enter the promised land. He recaps the 40 years of wandering, reminds them to stay faithful to Yahweh and his Law, and finally, that if all else fails... repent and turn back to Yahweh.

Before You Read

You're about to read the rule book. I guess some people like that kind of thing. But actually there is some interesting stuff in here.

A lot of controversial things like homosexuality, unmarried couples, etc... but some weird ones like disobedient children, tattoos, and not wearing clothes made from two kinds of cloth.

Don't forget as you read that these were the rules for Jews. Christians don't have any rules because we have freedom, and the holy spirit. But it's good to keep these in mind as guidelines as you live your life.

Key Verses

Deuteronomy 4:6-9

These words, which I command you this day, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them for a sign on your hand, and they shall be for symbols between your eyes. You shall write them on the door posts of your house, and on your gates.

This is how God says to bring up your children. Talking about him and his ways all the time. When you walk along, when you go to bed, when you get up. Over meals, while doing chores together, all the time. Taking advantage of opportunities as they come up.

It's also the way to disciple people too. It is how Yeshua disciplined 12 men who went on to change the world. It's how we can train others to do the same.

Deuteronomy 6:4

Hear, Israel: Yahweh is our God. Yahweh is one.

We read several times in the Old Testament, that Yahweh in one. Does that seem kind of odd to you? Do you know anyone who is two?

Yeshua said this too... The father and I are one.

What do you think that means?

Sometimes I hear Christians talking about Yahweh being

Deuteronomy 6:5

You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might.

Love Yahweh with...

everything you have, every part of you, every ounce of your energy, and in everything you think and do.

That is a difficult challenge to live up to! And we (Christians) have the holy spirit...

imagine how hard this was for the Israelites back then. Paulus tells us in Romans that when we have a law it makes us want to break it. Can you imagine how hard it is to live under The Law. Regardless of how severe the consequences were, you would just want to break those rules with every fibre of your being.

Deuteronomy 9:10

Yahweh delivered to me the two stone tablets written with God's finger. On them were all the words which Yahweh spoke with you on the mountain out of the middle of the fire in the day of the assembly.

So the stone tablets with the ten commandments were written by Yahweh himself. With his own finger.

But Moses broke them! When he came down to the camp and saw the golden calf.

Can you imagine going back up the mountain to God to ask from some more! This isn't like breaking your mom's favourite vase. Stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God.

So Yahweh made Moses make the second ones himself.

Ouch.

Deuteronomy 17:16-17

... he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he may multiply horses; because Yahweh has said to you, "You shall not go back that way again." He shall not multiply wives to himself, that his heart not turn away. He shall not greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

So the Israelites were told by Yahweh, when you get into this land, and you decide you want a king for yourselves... there are only three things I want that king to be careful not to do:

1. don't acquire horses (especially Egyptian ones)
2. don't acquire women (especially foreign ones)
3. don't acquire wealth (especially silver and gold)

So when you get this king, make sure he makes a copy of this and reads it every day.

So... how did Solomon do? The wisest man who ever lived... You can read it in 1 Kings 10. But you can guess eh.

How about you? If God gave you three rules what do you think they would be?

How long before you broke them?

Deuteronomy 18:10-11

There shall not be found with you anyone who makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices sorcery, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

Don't sacrifice your children in fire. Really? They needed a rule for that!!

But what about the others. I guess we know not to get into black magic, but where does that leave things like Harry Potter movies? What about Halloween?

What if you met Yeshua while you were walking down the street dressed up as a wizard?

Would you be nervous?

Should you be?

Deuteronomy 18:15

Yahweh your God will raise up to you a prophet from among you, of your brothers, like me. You shall listen to him.

Who do you think that is?

Do you think he meant Joshua? (who's real name is Yeshua). Or do you think he meant Yeshua? (who people call Jesus).

Deuteronomy 28:1

It shall happen, if you shall listen diligently to Yahweh your God's voice, to observe to do all his commandments which I command you today, that Yahweh your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.

The whole of chapter 28 is offering a choice to Israel. Follow Yahweh and be blessed beyond imagination. Choose other gods and be cursed with disease, famine, poverty, wars...

You would think it's an easy choice.

But it can also go the other way. Struggling with things never working out? Never have enough? Always sick? No money?

Now, we know that there are stories like Job, where his misfortune were because Satan was attacking him. But generally in the Bible, these things happen to God's people when they are not living in his ways. So maybe it's worth praying about...

After You Read

What verses really stood out to you?

How would you summarize this book in a sentence or two? What is it about? What is God trying to say to us?

So, how many rules did you count? The Jews count 613 rules in the Torah, the first 5 books of the Bible that Christian usually call, The Pentateuch. And then the Pharisees added more and more rules to those.

To the point that by the time Yeshua confronted them about it they were even teaching that it was more important to follow their traditions than it was to keep the rules Yahweh had laid down!

It would be hard to remember 613 rules. Do you think it could be summarised to make it easier? Maybe that bit in Deuteronomy 6 about Yahweh with all of you? Actually the Old Testament seems to focus quite a bit on our role being to “Love God”. While the New Testament seems to focus more on “Love one another”. It's interesting that later on Yeshua combined the two and said if you can do both of those you will fulfil the whole law.

Moses lived a long time. 120 years. And yet he was still fit and healthy right up to the end. He had spent 40 years living in an Egyptian palace as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 40 years living in Midian working as a shephard looking after his father-in-law's flocks., and 40 years leading a bunch of ungrateful grumblers on a world famous-journey of escape to a new beginning in a land promised to them generations ago by the only actual God in the universe.

Wow.

What happened to the body of Moses?

If you search your Bible for “Moses” and “body” you might find some interesting trivia.