

Deuteronomy Overview

Belcroft Bible Church: (lesson 11)

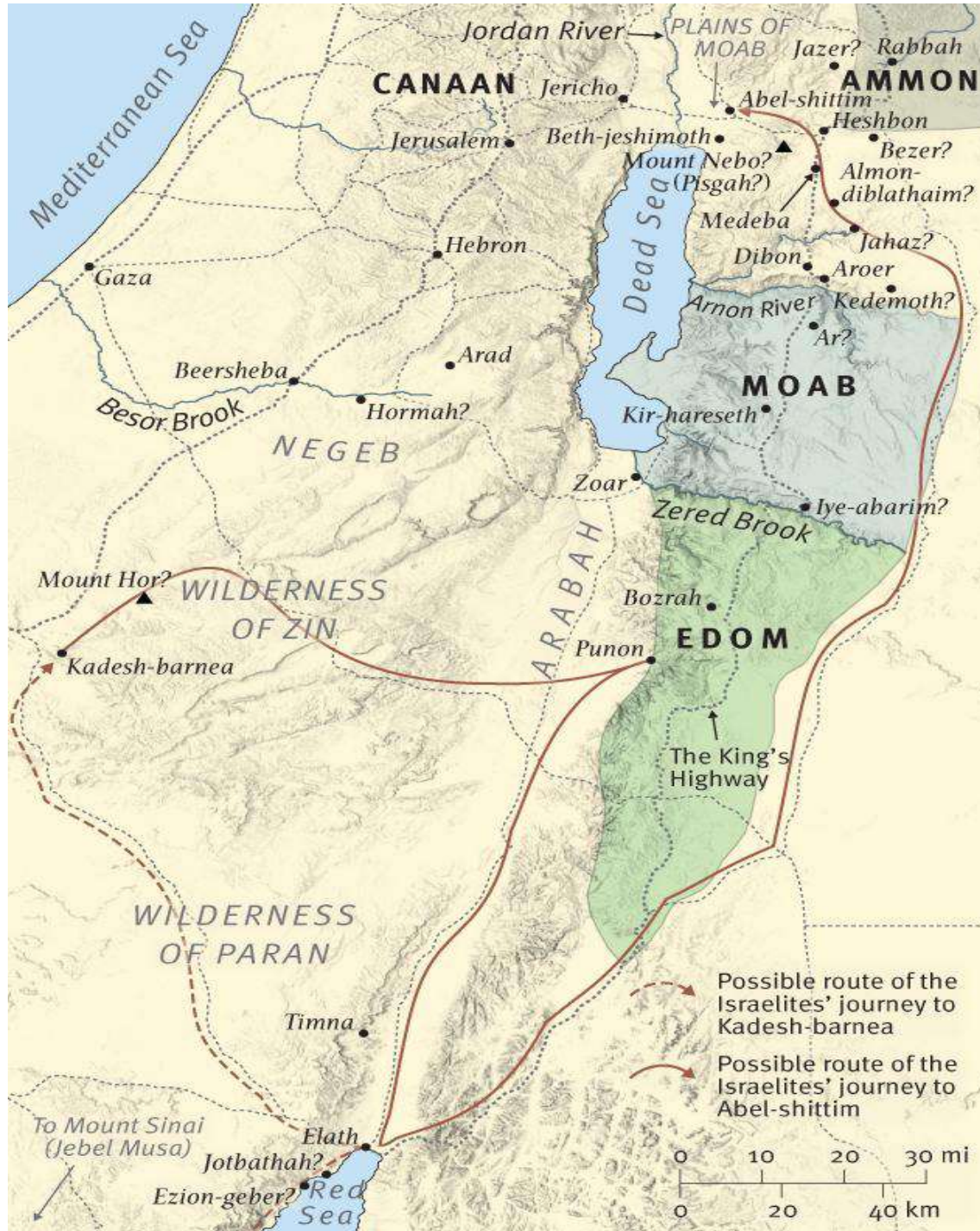


| Lesson Numbers | Wednesday Night Pentateuch Lesson Titles | Class Dates |
|----------------|---|-------------|
| 1 | Pentateuch Introduction: From Paradise to the Promised Land | 2/11 |
| 2 | Primeval Period: Genesis 1-11 and the Noahic Covenant | 2/18 |
| 3 | Primeval Period: Genesis 1-11 and the Noahic Covenant | 2/25 |
| 4 | Patriarchal Period: Genesis 12-25 | 3/4 |
| 5 | The Abrahamic Covenant | 3/11 |
| 6 | Genesis 26-50 and God's Faithfulness | 3/18 |
| 7 | Q & A with Pastor Matt | 3/25 |
| 8 | Exodus Overview | 4/15 |
| 9 | Leviticus Overview | 4/22 |
| 10 | Numbers Overview | 4/29 |
| 11 | Deuteronomy Overview | 5/6 |

This class begins a *Bible Overview Series* where the elders will be systematically teaching us through the Old Testament over the next few years during the Wednesday night winter/spring semester. The goal for this semester will be to gain a clear overview of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. Thus, we will seek to understand the foundational nature of the Pentateuch while also seeing the purpose, main theme, some interpretative issues along with the historical setting of each individual book. This teaching time will also seek to help you better understand the critical nature of some of the primary Biblical covenants and how they fit into God's overall plan for His people in Christ. Have you ever wondered what all those sacrifices were about and why God gave all those laws to Israel? Have you ever been perplexed by God's covenant with Abraham or wondered how God's covenant with Noah fits into God's plan for the ages? Well, it is the goal of this class to wrestle with those questions and many more as we work through the Pentateuch together!

The Setting of Deuteronomy

The book of Deuteronomy recounts Moses' words to the Israelites as they waited on the plains of Moab to enter Canaan. Moses begins by reviewing the events of Israel's journey from Mount Sinai (or Mount Horeb) to the plains of Moab.¹



¹ Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (p. 327). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Deuteronomy Introduction:

~ The importance of Deuteronomy can be seen in the frequency with which it was quoted in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the New Testament. When he was tempted Jesus responded to the Devil in each instance with a quotation from Deuteronomy (Matt 4:4, 7, 10). When he was asked which was the first and greatest commandment (Matt 22:37f.), he cited Deuteronomy (6:5). He referred to specific points of the Law as formulated in Deuteronomy on several occasions (e.g., Matt 18:16; 19:8; 22:24).² The importance of Deuteronomy is further seen as one considers how this book is most frequently quoted by Christ and there are many allusions (some say over 80) made to Deuteronomy with over 40 direct quotes in the New Testament! Only Isaiah and Psalms are mentioned more.

English Title: According to the MacArthur Study Bible (MSB, 247), “The English title “Deuteronomy” comes from the Greek Septuagint (LXX) mistranslation of “copy of this law” in 17:18 as “second law,” which was rendered *Deuteronomium* in the Latin version (Vulgate).”

Hebrew Title: The Hebrew title of the book is translated “These are the words,” from the first two Hebrew words of the book. The Hebrew title is a better description of the book since it is not a “second law,” but rather the record of Moses’ words of explanation concerning the law. Deuteronomy completes the five-part literary unit called the Pentateuch. (MSB, 247)

NUMBERS 26:1 - DEUTERONOMY 34:12

| <i>The Final Preparations for Entrance into the Land</i> | |
|--|--|
| Description (Narrative) | Prescription (Exhortation) |
| “the plains of Moab ... Jericho” (Num. 26:3) | “the plains of Moab ... Jericho” (Deut 34:1) |
| “land ... an inheritance” (Num. 26:52) | “land ... an inheritance” (Deut 31:7) |
| “go up to the mountain” (Num. 27:12) | “go up to the mountain” (Deut. 32:49; cf. 34:1) |
| Num 26:1 - Num 36:13 | Deut 1:1 - Deut 34:12 |

Authorship of Deuteronomy:

~ Moses has been traditionally recognized as the author of Deuteronomy, since the book itself testifies that Moses wrote it (1:1, 5; 31:9, 22, 24). Moses is mentioned in Deuteronomy about 40 times of which many point to him as the author of what is being written. Both the OT (1 Kin. 2:3; 8:53; 2 Kin. 14:6; 18:12) and the NT (Acts 3:22, 23; Rom. 10:19) support the claim of

² Smith, J. E. (1993). *The Pentateuch* (2nd ed., pp. 475–476). Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co.

Mosaic authorship. While Deut. 32:48–34:12 was added after Moses’ death (probably by Joshua), the rest of the book came from Moses’ hand just before his death in 1405 B.C.

Key Word: *Restatement* Deuteronomy provides, in many ways, a “restatement” of the Law for the second generation that was not present when the Law was first declared by God at Sinai 40 years earlier. This *restatement* is for the primary purpose of provoking their remembrance of the nation’s sad results of judgement because of their disobedience. Thus, Moses is preparing this new generation for entering promised land and instructing them how to live obediently in light of who God is and what God requires of them. In some ways, the Law is given greater specifics and details than originally given at Sinai as they will no longer be a nomadic people wondering around the wilderness but will be marked by a specific location of worship in their own land! As Dr. Smith says... “To a limited extent, Deuteronomy is a reshaping of the Law. On the eve of entering Canaan, adjustments in certain obligations were necessary. Deuteronomy indicates that some aspects of the Law were intended only for the wilderness period.

Deuteronomy aims at an internalization of God’s Law. Moses was seeking to implant within his people the will to live by God’s Law. The summarization of the Law in terms of loving God with heart, soul and mind (10:12f.) is a major contribution of this book. By this emphasis Deuteronomy was opposing all forms of legalism which might grow up around the Law of God.

The book serves to underscore the necessity of obedience to God’s Law. The abiding lesson of Deuteronomy is that *obedience is essential*—essential to health, happiness and heaven itself.”³ One can see some of these specific details in the requirements about war, cities, kings, tithes and so on.

Date and Chronology of Events:

~ The date of events is about 1406 B.C. (1:3; 34:8; Josh. 1:1; 5:10) “Like Leviticus, Deuteronomy does not advance historically, but takes place entirely in one location over about one month of time (cf. Deut. 1:3 and 34:8 with Josh. 5:6–12). Israel was encamped in the central rift valley to the E of the Jordan River (Deut. 1:1). This location was referred to in Num. 36:13 as “the plains of Moab,” an area N of the Arnon River across the Jordan River from Jericho. It had been almost 40 years since the Israelites had exited Egypt.” (MSB, 247)

~ “The book of Deuteronomy concentrates on events that took place in the final weeks of Moses’ life. The major event was the verbal communication of divine revelation from Moses to the people of Israel (1:1–30:20; 31:30–32:47; 33:1–29). The only other events recorded were: 1) Moses’ recording the law in a book and his commissioning of Joshua as the new leader (31:1–29); 2) Moses’ viewing of the land of Canaan from Mt. Nebo (32:48–52; 34:1–4); and 3) his death (34:5–12).” (MSB, 247)

³ Smith, J. E. (1993). *The Pentateuch* (2nd ed., p. 478). Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co.

| CHRONOLOGY OF DEUTERONOMY | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Deuteronomy 1:3 | Deuteronomy 34:8 | Joshua 4:19 |
| Moses' First Address | Mourning for Moses | Israel Crossed Jordan |
| 40/11/1 | | 41/1/10 |
| | | |

“According to Joshua 4:19 Israel crossed the Jordan river into Canaan in the forty-first year after leaving Egypt, the first month and the tenth day. This would be about seventy days after Moses’ first address. Subtracting the thirty days of mourning following Moses’ death (34:8), leaves roughly forty days for the addresses of Deuteronomy.”⁴

Outline and Structure of Deuteronomy:

~ The English Standard Study Bible (ESVSB) is helpful here as it declares, Deuteronomy, the last installment of Moses’ biography, contains his last three sermons and two prophetic poems about Israel’s future. Reflecting on the nation’s past mistakes, he urges the people not to repeat those mistakes when entering the Promised Land. Israel’s entry fulfills (in part) the promises made to the patriarchs, but if the people fall into idolatry or fail to keep the law, they will be exiled.⁵

~ Dr. Smith reiterates the sermonic structure and nature of Deuteronomy this way, “The Book of Deuteronomy can be summarized in the caption “Preaching and Pleading.” Here Moses poured out his heart in urging Israel to be faithful to the Lord. The book contains thirty-four chapters, 958 verses, and 28,461 words. Almost every verse in the book is filled with exhortation, instruction, warning or promise. Deuteronomy speaks of the past but not with the purpose of presenting a chronicle. Rather Moses reminded his auditors of selected events which then become the basis for exhortation and warning in the present.”⁶

~ While Deuteronomy speaks of the past, it focuses on the future... Deuteronomy looks back to Sinai; it looks forward to the entrance to the Promised Land, and beyond that, to the ultimate salvation of God’s people. The laws set forth here are clearly intended for the settlement period; the warnings point to the dangers which will be faced in the new land. The ultimate goal of the speaker/writer is to ensure that Israel will enjoy a long and prosperous possession of the

⁴ Smith, J. E. (1993). *The Pentateuch* (2nd ed., p. 477). Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co.

⁵ Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (p. 326). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁶ Smith, J. E. (1993). *The Pentateuch* (2nd ed., pp. 478–479). Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co.

Promised Land. The book emphasizes that God’s covenant is offered anew to each generation. Commitment is the key to appropriating the benefits of that covenant.⁷

~ The primary literary form in Deuteronomy is the address. In Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers the Lord spoke to Moses or through Moses to the people. Here Moses himself addressed Israel. The viewpoint of the book is that of a sermon, “a farewell message, by a wise and devoted leader.” Deuteronomy is written in a flowing oratorical style which makes constant appeal to motives and emotions. It is meant to move its readers and its hearers.”^{6 8}

| <i>Moses’ Exhortation to Obedience and His Expectation of Disobedience</i> | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Speech #1 | Speech #2 | Speech #3 | Song | Blessing |
| <i>Narrative</i> 1:1-4 | <i>Narrative</i> 4:44-49 | <i>Narrative</i> 29:1 | <i>Narrative</i> 31:1-29 | <i>Narrative</i> 32:48-52 |
| <i>Speech</i> 1:5 - 4:40 | <i>Speech</i> 5:1 - 28:68 | <i>Speech</i> 29:2 - 30:20 | <i>Speech</i> 31:30 - 32:43 | <i>Speech</i> 33:1-29 |
| <i>Narrative</i> 4:41-43 | | | <i>Narrative</i> 32:44-47 | <i>Narrative</i> 34:1-12 |
| 1:1 - 4:43 | 4:44 - 28:68 | 29:1 - 30:20 | 31:1 - 32:47 | 32:48 - 34:12 |

~ Interestingly, the ESVSB points out the similarity in the structure of Deuteronomy and some “Ancient Near East” documents. “There are a number of similarities between the structure of Deuteronomy and ancient treaty documents. In particular, treaties from the Hittites of the second millennium and treaties from the Assyrians of the eighth century B.C. have clear affinities with the structure of Deuteronomy, though each with differences. Though Deuteronomy does not perfectly match the treaties of the Hittites, it is much closer in structure to them than to the later Assyrian treaties.”⁹

| Ancient Treaty Structure | Deuteronomy |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Preamble | 1:1–5 |
| Historical Prologue | 1:6–4:49 |
| General Stipulations | 5:1–11:32 |

⁷ Ibid., 479.

⁸ Ibid., 479.

⁹ Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (p. 325). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Specific Stipulations | 12:1–26:19 |
| Blessings and Curses | 27:1–28:68 |
| Document Clause | 31:9–29 |
| Witnesses | 32:1–47 ¹⁰ |

DEUTERONOMY AND ANCIENT DOCUMENTS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Law Code: The Code of Hammurabi [RANE, 111-4; ANET, 163-80] ca. 1750 BC | Deuteronomy ca. 1406 BC | Treaty: Hittite Treaties [RANE, 97-100; ANET, 201-6] ca. 1400-1150 BC |
| | 1:1-4 | Preamble |
| Historical Prologue/Epilogue | 1:5-3:29 *4:1-43 | Historical Prologue |
| Laws | *4:44-49 5:1-21 (Basic) *5:22-11:32 12:1-26:15 (Detailed) *26:16-19 | Stipulations |
| | 27:1-14 31:1-29 | Treaty Reading And Storage |
| Blessings and Curses | 27:15-28:68 *29:1-30:20 | Blessings and Curses |
| | 31:30-32:47 *32:48-34:12 | Witnesses |

Simple Outline

1. Introduction and First Discourse: An Historical Review (1-4)
2. The Second Discourse: Stipulations for Life (5-28)
3. The Third Discourse: Another Covenant (29-30)
4. Concluding Events: The Death of Moses (31-34)

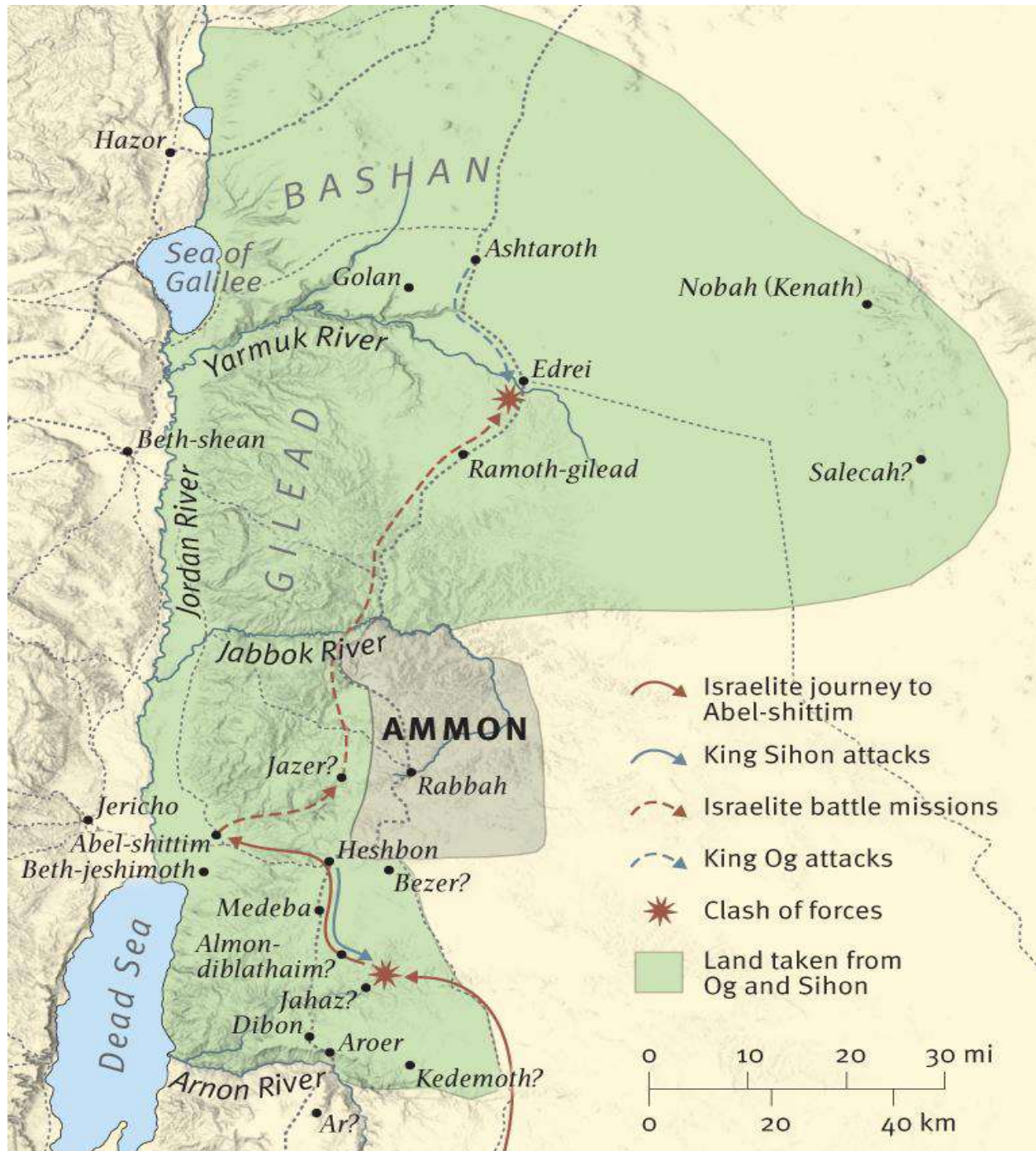
¹⁰ Crossway Bibles. (2008). [The ESV Study Bible](#) (p. 325). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Exegetical Outline

- I. The First Speech of Moses: A Historical Perspective (1:1-4:43)
 - A. The Introduction: The Geographical/Historical Setting of Moses' Speeches (1:1-4)
 - B. A Historical Review of Yahweh's Gracious Acts from Horeb to Beth Peor (1:5-3:29)
 - C. An Exhortation to Obey the Law (4:1-40)
 - D. The Setting Apart of Three Cities of Refuge (4:41-43)
- II. The Second Speech of Moses: The Stipulations of the Mosaic Covenant (4:44-28:68)
 - A. The Introduction: The Law Moses Set before Israel (4:44-49)
 - B. A Further Exhortation to Obey the Law (5:1-11:32)
 - C. The Specific Stipulations for Israel to Obey as they Live in the Land (12:1-26:19)
 - D. The Blessings and the Curses of the Mosaic Covenant (27:1-28:68)
- III. The Third Speech of Moses: The Making of Another Covenant (29:1-30:20)
- IV. The Song of Moses (31:1-32:47)
 - A. The Replacement of Moses by a New Leader and Written Scripture (31:1-29)
 - B. The Witness of the Song of Moses to the Future Failure of Israel to Obey Yahweh in the Land (31:30-32:43)
 - C. The Communication of the Song of Moses to Israel (32:44-47)
- V. The Blessing of Moses (32:48-34:12)
 - A. Yahweh's Directives concerning Moses' Death (32:48-52)
 - B. The Blessing of Moses on the Sons of Israel (33:1-29)
 - C. The Death of Moses (34:1-12)

Israel Defeats Og and Sihon

Deuteronomy reviews how the Israelites defeated King Sihon when he refused them passage through his land and attacked them at Jahaz. Soon afterward, the Israelites spied out Jazer and captured it. As they headed north from Jazer, the Israelites were attacked by King Og's forces at Edrei, but they defeated him and took control of his land as well.¹¹



¹¹ Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (p. 335). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Purpose of Deuteronomy:

~ To provide a restatement of the Law by Moses after the wilderness wanderings to a new generation of Israelites who had not been present at its initial reception at Mount Sinai, in order to remind them of the promises made to them, their responsibilities as God's special people, and the consequences of obedience and disobedience, as well as to prepare them to enter the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua.

~ "In the Book of Numbers the people finally arrived at the border of the Promised Land after forty years in the wilderness. In Deuteronomy Moses prepared them to enter that land. Seven factors made Deuteronomy necessary. (1) A new generation had arisen. (2) A new land filled with gross religious corruption was before them. (3) New dangers confronted them. (4) The new prospects, however, were for settlement at last in a homeland. (5) Militarily, economically and spiritually, new challenges faced God's people. (6) The transition from semi-nomadic to agricultural life necessitated the promulgation of new duties. (7) A new leader was about to emerge.¹²

Major Themes in Deuteronomy:

1. The Election of Israel
 - a. "Yahweh your [our] God" (1-31)
 - b. The Choice of Yahweh (4, 7, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 23, 26, 31)
 - 1) Israel (4:37; 7:6-8; 10:15; 14:2)
 - 2) "The place . . . for His name to dwell" (12:5, 11, 14, 18, 21, 26; 4:23-25; 15:20; 16:2, 6, 7, 11, 15, 16; 17:8, 10; 18:6; 26:2; 31:11)
 - 3) The King (17:15)
 - 4) The Priests (18:5; 21:5)
 - c. "All Israel" (1:1; 5:1; 11:6; 13:11; 18:6; 21:21; 27:9; 29:2; 31:1, 7, 11; 32:45; 34:12; cf. Ex. 18:25; Num. 16:24)"All the men of Israel" (27:14; 29:10)"All the tribes of Israel" (29:21)"All the assembly of Israel" (31:30)"All the elders of Israel" (31:9)
2. The Attributes of Yahweh
 - a. Unique & Jealous (4:24; 5:9; 6:4-9, 15; 13:2-10; 29:20; 32:16, 21)
 - b. Faithful (1:38-39; 2:7; 3:1-3; 7:9, 12; 31:6, 8; 32:4)

¹² Smith, J. E. (1993). *The Pentateuch* (2nd ed., p. 478). Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co.

- c. Loving (1:31; 4:37; 7:7-8, 13; 13:18; 23:5; 30:5; 33:12)
 - d. Gracious (1:8, 10, 11, 20-21, 25, 35; 2:7; 3:18, 20-21; 4:31; 6:10; 7:8, 13-16; 8:10, 18; 9:5, 27-28; 10:15, 22; 11:9, 14-17, 21; 12:1, 21; 14:24, 29; 28:9; 29:13)
 - e. Judging (1:37; 3:26; 4:21, 25; 6:15; 7:4; 9:18-20, 22; 11:17; 13:17; 29:20, 23, 25, 27-28; 31:29; 32:21-22)
1. The Requirements of Israel (10:12-13) [MSB, 265; ESVSB, 347]
 - a. Fear Yahweh (1:29; 3:22; 4:10; 5:29; 6:2, 13, 24; 8:6; 10:12, 20; 13:4; 14:23; 17:19; 28:58; 31:12, 13)
 - b. Love Yahweh (5:10; 6:5; 7:9, 13; 10:12, 15, 18; 19; 11:1, 13, 22; 13:3; 19:9; 30:16)
 - c. Keep Yahweh's Commands (4:2, 40; 5:10, 29; 6:2, 17; 7:9, 11, 12; 8:2; 10:13; 11:1, 8, 22; 13:4; 26:17, 18; 27:1; 28:9, 45; 29:19; 30:16)
 - d. Walk in Yahweh's Ways (5:33; 8:6; 10:12; 11:22; 13:5; 19:9; 26:17; 28:9; 29:19; 30:16)
 - e. Serve Yahweh (10:12, 20; 11:13; 13:4; 28:47-48)
 - f. Hear/Obey Yahweh (4:1; 5:1; 6:4; 9:1; 11:13; 27:9; 28:1, 15; 30:2; 31:12, 13)
 2. Heart (1:28; 2:30; 4:9, 29, 39; 5:29; 6:5, 6; 7:17; 8:2, 5, 14, 17; 9:4, 5; 10:12, 16; 11:13, 16, 18; 13:3; 15:7, 9, 10; 17:17, 20; 18:21; 19:6; 20:3, 8; 26:16; 28:28, 47, 65, 67; 29:4, 18, 19; 30:1, 2, 6, 10, 14, 17; 32:46)
 3. The Possession of the Land (1-12, 15-19, 21, 23, 25, 26, 28, 30, 31, 32)
 4. The Death of Moses (1:37; 3:23-27; 31:2, 14, 16, 27, 29; 32:48-52; 34:1-8; cf. Num. 20:12; 27:12-14)/The Future Leadership of Joshua (1:38; 3:28; 31:3, 7-8, 14, 23; 32:44; cf. Num. 27:15-23)

Selected Interpretative Issues in Deuteronomy:

- a. A Covenant Renewal Document [Craigie; EBC; BKC]
- b. An Exhortation to Covenant Faithfulness within a Covenant Renewal Framework [Merrill]
- c. A Narrative Establishing a Pattern of Grace after Failure that Reaches to the Eschaton [McConville]
- d. A Record of the Speeches of Moses that Explain and Call for Obedience to the Mosaic Covenant [KD]

2. *yhwh elohenu yhwh ehad* – Yahweh our God Yahweh one (6:4) [MSB, 260; ESVSB, 341]
- “Yahweh is our God, Yahweh alone” {uniqueness}
 - “Yahweh our God, Yahweh is one” {wholeness, unity} [Craigie]
 - “Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one” [Merrill]
 - “Yahweh our God is one Yahweh”

YOUR GOD,” OUR GOD” IN DEUTERONOMY

| “YOUR GOD” | | “OUR GOD” | |
|---|------------|---------------------|-----------|
| Verse | Frequency | Verse | Frequency |
| 1:10, 21, 26, 30, 31, 32 | 6 | 1:6, 19, 20, 25, 41 | 5 |
| 2:7, 30 | 3 | 2:29, 33, 36, 37 | 4 |
| 3:18, 20, 21, 22 | 4 | 3:3 | 1 |
| 4:2, 3, 4, 10, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30, 31, 34, 40 | 15 | 4:7 | 1 |
| Total | 28 | Total | 11 |
| 5:6-28:62 | 227 | 5:2, 24, 25, 27 | 5 |
| | | 6:4, 20, 24, 25 | 5 |
| Total | 227 | Total | 10 |
| 29:6, 10, 12 | 4 | 29:15, 18, 29 | 3 |
| 30:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 16, 20 | 15 | | |
| Total | 19 | Total | 3 |
| 31:3, 6, 11, 12, 26 | 6 | | |
| Total | 6 | Total | 0 |

3. The Structure of the Laws Given in Deuteronomy 12:1-25:16
- A Disparate Collection of Legal Stipulations without any Structure, Unity, or Order
 - A Structure Dictated by the Order of the Commandments in the Decalogue [CBCOT, 24; Merrill]
4. The Nature of the Law [see DOTP, 497-515; 530-1; Strickland, ed., *Five Views on Law and Gospel*; Rooker, *Leviticus* (NAC), 65-77]
- Divided
 - Moral Law
 - Ceremonial Law
 - Civil Law
 - Unified

THE DECALOGUE AND DEUTERONOMY

| Deuteronomy 5 | Commandment | Deuteronomy 12-25 | Description |
|---------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------|
| 5:6-10 | 1-2 | 12:1-31 | Worship |
| 5:11 | 3 | 13:1-14:27 | Name of God |
| 5:12-15 | 4 | 14:28-16:17 | Sabbath |
| 5:16 | 5 | 16:18-18:22 | Authority |
| 5:17 | 6 | 19:1-22:8 | Homicide |
| 5:18 | 7 | 22:9-23:19 | Adultery |
| 5:19 | 8 | 23:20-24:7 | Theft |
| 5:20 | 9 | 24:8-25:4 | False Charges |
| 5:21 | 10 | 25:5-16 | Coveting |

5. The Covenant(s) of 29:1(2)-30:20 [MSB, 248, 293; ESVSB, 372; DOTP, 152-5]
 - a. The Palestinian Covenant
 - a. The Sinaitic Covenant [Merrill; EBC; KD]
 - b. The Sinaitic and the New Covenants [Craigie; McConville]
 - a. The New Covenant

~ Speaking about what was the covenant made in the land of Moab (29:1) the MSB says, “The majority opinion posits this covenant as a renewal of the Sinaitic Covenant made nearly 40 years before with the first generation. Here, Moses supposedly updated and renewed this same covenant with the second generation of Israel. The second view sees this covenant as a Palestinian Covenant which guarantees the nation of Israel’s right to the land, both at that time and in the future. A third position is that Moses in chaps. 29, 30 anticipated the New Covenant, since he knew Israel would fail to keep the Sinaitic Covenant. The third view seems the best.” (MSB 248)

Renewing the Covenant at Mount Ebal

Looking ahead to the day when the Israelites would occupy Canaan, Moses commanded the people to renew the covenant after they entered the land by placing a new copy of the terms of the covenant on Mount Ebal and reciting the blessings and curses to each other on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal.¹³



¹³ Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (p. 369). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Overview of Deuteronomy:

The final book of the Torah explains what happened on the plains of Moab where Israel was encamped, poised to cross the Jordan to take the land God had promised. Deuteronomy does not detail any geographical movement, and it only covers a time span of about one month; however, Deuteronomy powerfully closes the Pentateuch as it consists of a series of sermons Moses preaches to the people of Israel where he calls them to meditate on all that God has done in their deliverance. He also reminds them of their blatant disobedience so that the failures of the past do not become realities in the present, and he exhorts them about what God requires of them as they begin to possess the land. Therefore, this fifth book of the Law unfolds with great clarity the character and attributes of God, and it delineates His expectations and requirements for His holy people.

Live in Light of Yahweh's Faithfulness

There are seven specific attributes that are revealed about Yahweh in this book which were given to the second generation so that they would have a clearer understanding of who their God was and why He had specific requirements for how they should live within the new land. The first characteristic, to be examined, deals with the faithfulness of God as He interacted with His faithless people. While the faithful nature of Yahweh is specifically declared as a description of who He is in certain passages (Deut.7:9; 32:4), it is demonstrated quite vividly in the way Israel was cared for as she wandered in the wilderness (Deut.2:7). God remained faithful to her in that she lacked nothing—even the shoes on their feet and the clothes on their backs did not wear out (Deut.8:4). Furthermore, God's faithfulness was revealed in that Joshua and Caleb were allowed to enter the land because of their obedience and they were not rejected like the rest of their generation (Deut.1:38-39). The clearest way God's faithfulness was displayed was in His constant remembrance of the Abrahamic Covenant which was ultimately why Israel was delivered (Deut.7:8) and why they would eventually enter the land (Deut.4:31).

Live in Light of Yahweh's Love and Grace

A second attribute that is declared emphatically is the loving nature of God as He tenderly

provides for and protects His people (Deut.32:12). The reality of God's love for Israel is proclaimed directly in several different verses of Scripture (Deut.4:37;7:7,13;10:15;23:5), and it is illustrated in the way God cared for and carried His people from Egypt to the Plains of Moab like a father lovingly cradles his son (Deut.1:31). Another trait of Yahweh that is found throughout this book is the graciousness of God that is dramatically displayed through the way He blesses His people (Deut.7:13-14). Just consider the land that God was giving to His people. The land was rich and good where sustenance and natural resources abounded (Deut.8:7-10). Furthermore, this land was filled with great cities and furnished houses that they did not need to build, but in which they would enjoy and live (Deut.6:10-11). It is a clear declaration of God's graciousness that any Israelite ever went into the land and that the nation of Israel even existed (Deut.1:26-35; 7:6-11).

Live in Light of Yahweh's Holy Wrath

The fourth way in which God's character was revealed and experienced by His people was through the judgments and wrath given to the people. There are many examples of this, but one of the clearest is seen through the reality of how, because of their sin, the first generation was forbidden to enter the land and forced to wander in the wilderness until they all died (Deut.1:39-40). Also, consider how God declared he would judge them, if they did not wholly follow the Law, by removing the rain from the land so that everything would dry up and they would be perish (Deut.11:17). These judgments because of sin continued and escalated as one contemplates how God would heap tremendous wrath on the idolatrous person so that his name completely blotted out of heaven (Duet.29:17-21). Furthermore, God's righteous wrath as seen through His judgments was also displayed in the way He dealt with the other nations Israel would expel from the land (Duet.9:5).

Live in Light of Yahweh's Righteous Requirements: Fear Me

After now considering how God's attributes are revealed in Deuteronomy one is ready to examine what Yahweh required of Israel. The summary statement of what would be expected of this new generation as they entered their new land was proclaimed clearly by Moses (Deut.10:12-13) with the first requirement—that they should fear Yahweh. One of the main

reasons Moses reviewed for the second generation all that the Lord had done for their fathers was to display Yahweh's supremacy over all so that they would learn to fear Him and thus submit to Him (Deut.4:10; 5:29). Yahweh declared this truth as He repeatedly reminded them not to fear the other nations whom they would face but to fear the Lord who would fight for them (Deut.1:29; 3:22). This reality was so critical to their continued commitment to Yahweh that He demanded the reading of the Law in the presence of all the people every seven years so that they would learn to fear the Lord (Deut.31:9-13).

Live in Light of Yahweh's Righteous Requirements: Love Me

The next requirement given by God to His chosen people was that they should love Him with an all-consuming passion that moved beyond simple, sentimental emotion because it flowed from the core of their being (Deut.6:5). Again, what God required of Israel was rooted in what He has already revealed as Yahweh Himself demonstrated that kind of love and devotion in the way He chose, delivered, and cared for them (Deut.7:6-11;11:1-7). Therefore, it was critical for Moses to review and impress upon the people the steadfast love of their Lord so that they would not only be motivated to love him in return, but so they would also learn how to love the Lord (Deut.1:31; 4:37-40). Furthermore, this requirement was critical to their commitment as it would lay a foundation and motivation for their continued obedience to Yahweh which is clearly demonstrated by the way in which the love for Yahweh was connected to obeying Yahweh (Deut.19:9; 30:16).

Live in Light of Yahweh's Righteous Requirements: Serve Me

Another requirement demanded by God for the Israelites was that they would serve Him faithfully with all their hearts, minds, and souls (Deut.10:12). God had a divine purpose for them, and it would be practically worked out before the nations through the way in which they would serve Yahweh. One of the ways they served God was by being His tool to bring judgment upon the wicked nations they destroyed and deported (Deut.7:5; 9:5). They also were used by God to be a light to the nations around them as they reflected the glory of God and the holiness of God through the way they worshiped and interacted with Yahweh (Deut.4:6-8;12). Serving God also consisted of teaching the younger generation of who Yahweh was, what He had done and what He required (Deut.6:4-9). Furthermore, it was God's requirement that they keep all of

His commandments all the time so that it would go well for them and their children (Deut.4:40; 11:1, 8, 22; 27).

Live in Light of Yahweh's Righteous Requirements: Obey Me

The final requirements that Yahweh had for His chosen people as they entered the promise land was that they would walk in all His ways and that they would hear and obey Him. Israel was not to live according to what they thought was right or convenient, but they were to conduct themselves according to the divine requirements God established (Deut.10:12). Walking in all His ways consisted of what they would eat (Deut.14), how they would worship (Deut.16:21-17:7), and how they would treat one another (Deut.19:14). Furthermore, God required that they hear Him which consisted of listening for what God demanded and then doing what God demanded (Deut.5:1). However, all these requirements were not to flow from a hard, unrepentant heart, or they would be unacceptable to Yahweh (Deut.10:16). God was not looking for some ritualistic conformity to what he required, but He demanded a people who followed, worshipped, and served Him completely from hearts that were broken and submissive to His will (Deut.6:5).

**STRUCTURE OF DEUTERONOMY
("The Instruction of the Nation")**

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| First Discourse | Second Discourse | Third Discourse | Fourth Discourse | Final Words |
| Review of the Journey | Restatement of the Law | Reemphasis of Responsibility | Renewal of Commitment | Reminder of Duty |
| Chs. 1–4 | Chs. 5–26 | Chs. 27–28 | Chs. 29–30 | Chs. 31–34 ¹⁴ |

¹⁴ Smith, J. E. (1993). [*The Pentateuch*](#) (2nd ed., p. 483). Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co.

Dr. James Smith is helpful in summarizing some key truths highlighted in Deuteronomy...

~ “Three fundamental truths are taught in Deuteronomy. The first is that Yahweh is unique. “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord” (6:4). Besides him there is no other (4:35). Yahweh is God of gods, and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome (10:17). Therefore, he detests images (7:25).

~ The second fundamental truth is that Israel is a unique people. “For you are a holy people unto the Lord your God: the Lord your God has chosen you to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth” (7:6). God would not abandon nor destroy this people for he had made a commitment to their forefathers by an oath (4:31). “He brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers” (6:23).

~ A third fundamental truth is that a unique relationship existed between God and Israel. Israel had entered into a covenant with Yahweh (29:13). Yahweh was their father (32:6). Israel must therefore love and not merely fear him (6:5) “And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command you this day for your good” (10:12f).

~ Analyzing the emphasis on obedience in Deuteronomy, Griffith Thomas offers the following:

1. The necessity of obedience: the Law of God.
2. The motive for obedience: the goodness of God.
3. The standard of obedience: the word of God.
4. The incentive to obedience: the faithfulness of God.
5. The alternative to obedience: the justice of God.

~ Christologically, Deuteronomy presents one outstanding personal Messianic prediction. God indicated to Moses that he would raise up a prophet like unto Moses (Dt 18:14–20). Peter and Stephen both saw in this prophecy a reference to Jesus (Acts 3:22, 23; 7:37). The cities of refuge (19:1–13) and the kinsman redeemer (25:1–10) are regarded by some as types of Christ.”¹⁵

¹⁵ Smith, J. E. (1993). *The Pentateuch* (2nd ed., pp. 483–484). Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co.

Key Theological Distinctions Between Israel and Her Neighbors

| ISSUE | ISRAEL IDEAL | PAGAN POLYTHEISM |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Ultimacy of deity | Yahweh is the ultimate power in the universe. He answers to no one and there are no limitations on his jurisdiction. | The gods have competing agendas and limited jurisdiction. Even as a corporate body they do not exercise ultimate sovereignty. |
| Manifestation of deity | Yahweh cannot be represented in material form or in the form of any natural phenomena. | Deities represented iconically, anthropomorphically, or in natural phenomena. |
| Disposition of deity | Yahweh is consistent in character and has bound himself by his attributes. | Deity is not bound by any code of conduct. Inconsistent, unpredictable and accountable only marginally to the divine assembly. |
| Autonomy of deity | Yahweh is not dependent on people for the provision of any needs. | People provided food and housing for deity (sacrifices and temples). |
| Requirements of deity | Made known in detail through the giving of the law. | Not revealed; could only be inferred from one's fortunes. |
| Response to deity | Yahweh expects conformity to the Law and to his holiness and justice. | Ritualistic, though maintaining an ordered society was important. |
| Creation of the cosmos | Yahweh undertook and sovereignly executed a cohesive plan of creation. | Accomplished by procreation of the gods, with no directing influence and was organized and established through conflict between the gods. |
| Human dignity | Derived from being created in the image of God and placed over creation. Yahweh created for people and with people in mind. | Since humans were a bother and an afterthought, created as slaves, dignity derived from the belief that they provided the needs of the gods. |
| Revelation | Yahweh's will, purposes, and nature were a matter of public record provided by Yahweh. | The will, purposes, and nature of deity could only be inferred. |
| Election | Israel understood herself to be the elect people of God. | Occasionally a king or dynasty was considered elect, but no sustained doctrine of election existed. |
| Historiography | History recorded as a means of Yahweh's revelation and therefore didactic. | History recorded as a means of propagandistic justification and certification of the current regime. |
| Divine intervention | Directed toward an established and consistent goal in keeping with Yahweh's intention of revealing himself and his attributes. | Directed toward maintaining a <i>status quo</i> or returning to a previous <i>status quo</i> and is primarily <i>ad hoc</i> . |
| Omens | Worldview of Israel rejected omen mentality. | Viewed as indicating whether the gods were bringing favorable or unfavorable circumstances. |
| Incantations | Worldview of Israel rejected manipulation of deity by incantations. | Incantations used as a magical means of coercing deity to respond in desired ways. |

Jewish Calendar

| RELI-GIOUS YEAR | CIVIL YEAR | HEBREW MONTH | WESTERN CORRELATION | FARM SEASONS | CLI-MATE | SPECIAL DAYS |
|-----------------|------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| 1 | 7 | Nisan | March-April | Barley harvest | Latter Rains (Mal-qosh) | 14 — Passover 21 — First Fruits |
| 2 | 8 | Iyyar | April-May | General harvest | | |
| 3 | 9 | Sivan | May-June | Wheat harvest Vine tending | D R Y S E A S O N | 6 — Pentecost |
| 4 | 10 | Tammuz | June-July | First grapes | | |
| 5 | 11 | Ab | July-August | Grapes, figs, olives | | 9 — Destruction of Temple |
| 6 | 12 | Elul | August-September | Vintage | | |
| 7 | 1 | Tishri | September-October | Ploughing | | 1 — New Year 10 — Day of Atonement 15-21 — Feast of Tabernacles |
| 8 | 2 | Marchesvan | October-November | Grain planting | | |
| 9 | 3 | Kislev | November-December | | Early Rains (Yoreh) | 25 — Dedication |
| 10 | 4 | Tebet | December-January | Spring growth | | |
| 11 | 5 | Shebat | January-February | Winter figs | Rain Season | |
| 12 | 6 | Adar | February-March | Pulling flax Almonds bloom | | 13-14 — Purim |
| | | Adar Sheni | Intercalary Month | | | |

19

(Zondervan Charts: Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament, 1994; John Walton)

Jewish Special Days

| SPECIAL DAYS | HEBREW NAME | DAY | REFERENCE | READING (MEGILLOTH) | COMMEMORATION |
|---|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Passover (Feast of Unleavened Bread) | Pesach | 14 Nisan | Exod. 12 (Lev. 23:4-8) | Song of Solomon | Deliverance from Egypt |
| Pentecost | Shavuoth | 6 Sivan | Deut. 16:9-12 (Lev. 23:9-14) | Ruth | Celebration of the harvest |
| 9th of Ab | Tish'ah be'ab | 9 Ab | No direct reference | Lamentations | Destruction of temple 586 B.C., A.D. 70 |
| Day of Atonement | Yom Kippur | 10 Tishri | Lev. 16 (23:26-32) | | Sacrifices for sins of the nation |
| Feast of Tabernacles | Succoth | 15-21 Tishri | Neh. 8 (Lev. 23:33-36) | Ecclesiastes | Wanderings in the wilderness |
| Dedication | Chanukah | 25 Kislev | John 10:22 | | Restoration of temple in 164 B.C. |
| Lots | Purim | 13-14 Adar | Esth. 9 | Esther | Failure of plot against Jews by Haman |

20

(Zondervan Charts: Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament, 1994; John Walton)

The Decalogue and Deuteronomy

| DIVINE | | MAIN ISSUES | HUMAN | |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Ex. 20:2-3 Deut. 5:6,7 | Authority | 5 | Ex. 20:12 Deut. 5:16 |
| God should be our top priority and final authority. We owe Him preference and obedience. Deut. 6-11 | | | Human authority must not sidetrack God's authority. Deut. 16:18-18:22 | |
| 2 | Ex. 20:4-6 Deut. 5:8-10 | Dignity | 6 7 8 | Ex. 20:13-14-15 Deut. 5:17-18-19 |
| Worship must reflect a proper view of God. It cannot be manipulative or self-serving. It cannot accommodate to the world's standards. Deut. 12 | | | The dignity of man must be preserved—involves his life, his family and his status. Deut. 19:1-21:23 Deut. 22:1-23:14 Deut. 23:15-24:7 | |
| 3 | Ex. 20:7 Deut. 5:11 | Commitment | 9 | Ex. 20:16 Deut. 5:20 |
| Must take our commitment to God seriously by remaining above reproach and avoiding anything that will lead astray. Deut. 13:1-14:21 | | | Must take our commitments to fellow man seriously. Deut. 24:8-24:16 | |
| 4 | Ex. 20:8-11 Deut. 5:12-15 | Rights and Privileges | 10 | Ex. 20:17 Deut. 5:21 |
| God has a right to our gratitude shown by dedicating things to Him; and a right to ask compassion in His name. Deut. 14:22-16:17 | | | Must understand the limits to our rights and must not violate the rights of others. Deut. 24:17-26:15 | |

Note: For fuller discussion of the relationship between the laws of Deuteronomy and the Decalogue, see Hill and Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament*.