

Commentary Notes - Deuteronomy

by Walter Beuttler

Walter Beuttler's sermon on Deuteronomy emphasizes the critical importance of obedience to God's law and the consequences of disobedience within the context of Israel's history and covenant relationship with Him.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 5:29, Deuteronomy 7:9, Deuteronomy 11:26, Deuteronomy 28:15, Deuteronomy 30:19, Deuteronomy 31:6, Deuteronomy 32:4, Deuteronomy 33:1, Deuteronomy 34:10

Topics: "Obedience To God", "Covenant Theology"

Description

Walter Beuttler preaches on the book of Deuteronomy, emphasizing its significance as 'The Second Law' given by Moses to the new generation of Israel before entering the promised land. The book serves as a historical and legislative record, highlighting the importance of obedience as a demonstration of love, gratitude, and recognition of God's sovereignty. The key theme of the book is obedience, with Moses urging Israel to keep the covenant of the Lord for their well-being and continued possession of the land.

Transcript

A. THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

1. "Deuteronomy" means "The Second Law" because:

(1) The law of God is applied and demonstrated in the wilderness wanderings of Israel which are summarized in this book

(2) This law is here repeated to a generation which had

grown up in the wilderness and was therefore not adequately familiar with the law given at Sinai, except Caleb and Joshua

2. "The Second Law" was given by Moses in a series of discourses in the plains of Moab at the end of the forty years of wandering, just one month before they entered the promised land

3. The general character of the book is:

(1) Historical, in that it records certain events in Israel's history

(2) Legislative, in that certain statutes, ordinances and regulations were enunciated

4. Jesus evidently had no doubt about the authenticity of this book inasmuch as he quoted from it in his conflict with Satan, Matt. 4:1-11

5. Deuteronomy is not intended as a supplement to the other books of the Pentateuch, but rather as a closing appeal to Israel to keep inviolate the covenant of the Lord in order to insure their continued well-being

6. With this purpose in view, Moses selects those facts in the history of Israel as well as already enacted legislation, which appeared most suited to preserve them in their dependence upon and allegiance to God

7. The entire book is a treatise on obedience which God required because:

(1) They were his children, 14:1

(2) He loved them, 7:7-8

(3) He yearns for his children's obedience, 5:29

(4) He desires obedience as an expression of gratitude, 5:6-7

(5) Obedience is a demonstration of the recognition of his sovereignty, 4:32-40

(6) He wanted them to be honored by the other nations, 4:5-8

(7) Continued possession of the land requires continued obedience, 4:1, 25-26, 40

8. The key word of the book is obedience

B. THE MESSAGE OF THE BOOK

1. The absolute necessity of obedience

2. The true motivation of obedience

3. The sure reward of obedience

4. The inexorable consequences of disobedience

DISCOURSES OF MOSES

A. RETROSPECT, 1:1-4:43

1. To what purpose was the retrospect in 1:1-4:43?

(1) To familiarize all the congregation with the record of the past

(2) To impress the new generation with the failings of the old in order to induce them to keep the covenant of the Lord

(3) To lay the foundation principle of obedience based upon recognition of the sovereignty and attributes of God

2. What does Moses announce in his introduction to the book in:

- (1) 1:1-3? The author of the book and its contents, namely, all the words which God had given to Moses
 - (2) 1:3? The people to whom the book is addressed, namely, the new generation of the children of Israel who were unfamiliar with the law
 - (3) 1:3? The time of these addresses, namely, at the end of the forty years of wandering
 - (4) 1:5? The place of these addresses, namely, "on this side Jordan," i.e., on the east side of Jordan in the plain of Moab
3. Point out the general subject matter of 1:1-46: Israel's failure at Kadesh
 4. Identify "that great and terrible wilderness," 1:19: The desert forming the western side of "Stony Arabia"
 5. How long had Israel dwelt in Mount Horeb, 1:6? From the third month of the first year to the twentieth day of the second year (Ex. 19:1; Num. 10:11)
 6. Enumerate the specific causes of Israel's failure as seen in:
 - (1) 1:26 - Rebellion against God by their refusal to obey his word
 - (2) 1:27 - Murmuring against God by charging him foolishly with having a wrong attitude toward them and a wrong purpose for them
 - (3) 1:28-30 - Discouragement arising from an exaggeration of their difficulties and their minimization of the power of God
 - (4) 1:31-32 - Unbelief in God's promises notwithstanding his past performance
 - (5) 1:33 - Disregard of God's faithfulness so clearly demonstrated in past experience
 7. For what reason was Caleb permitted to enter the land, 1:35-36? "Because he hath wholly followed the Lord," (Heb. "because he hath fulfilled to go after the Lord")
 8. What should 1:39-46 teach us?
 - (1) That presumption is not faith
 - (2) That a later obedience to an earlier command does not necessarily compensate for a prior disobedience
 9. Against what were the Israelites warned in:
 - (1) 2:4-7? Against meddling (interfering) with their brethren, the children of Esau
 - (2) 2:8-12? Against distressing (being hostile to) the Moabites, the children of Lot
 10. Observe some comforting truths from 2:7:
 - (1) God knows our going through the wilderness
 - (2) God is present with us throughout our wilderness experience

(3) He sustains us even when this wilderness experience is disciplinary through our own fault

B. RETROSPECT, 1:1-4:43 (CONT'D.)

1. Comment on:

(1) 2:13-15 - The length of time required to traverse the distance from Kadesh-Barnea to "this side Jordan," which was only eleven days journey, 1:2, was due to the necessity of awaiting the death of "all the generation of the men of war"

(2) 2:16-24 - The possession of our inheritance in Christ necessitates the death of the man of war in our old nature, who, instead of submitting to the death of the cross, perpetually struggles against it

2. What is described in 2:25-3:11? The conquest of the last of the giants, a conquest which could have been obtained in the very beginning

3. To what purpose are the details in 3:11? To emphasize the size of this giant in order to emphasize the magnitude of God's victory

4. What may be learned from:

(1) 3:1-11? That the promise of God to give victory does not exclude human exertion

(2) 3:2-4? That complete victory can be achieved only by complete obedience

(3) 3:4-5? That God gives victory in the more difficult situations as well as in those that are less difficult

(4) 3:12-17? That the defeat of the enemy is not sufficient; the promised possession must also be claimed and occupied

(5) 3:18? That courage alone is not enough, for we need to be adequately "armed"

(6) 3:19-20? That we are not to rest content with our own conquests without helping others

(7) 3:21-22? That past victories become a source of faith for future conflicts

5. What did God do in 3:23-27? He tempered judgment with mercy by making some concession to Moses

6. What was to be the basis of Joshua's confidence for his future task, 3:28?

(1) Being charged with a divine commission

(2) Being encouraged by God's performance in the past

(3) Being strengthened by God's assurance for the future

7. The continued possession of the land was contingent upon what in:

(1) 4:1-2? On upholding the unchanging integrity of the Word of God

(2) 4:3-14? On holding "fast to the Lord" and maintaining the obedience which brought them into the land

8. What does Moses do in:

(1) 4:15-28? He warns Israel against the dangers of idolatry and its consequences

(2) 4:29-31? He assures Israel of divine mercy upon repentance in the event of God's disfavour on account of their disobedience

(3) 4:32-40? He exhorts Israel to continued faithfulness to God in view of God's past faithfulness to Israel

9. How does 4:41-43 reveal God?

(1) As being fully acquainted with man's emotions and impulses

(2) As making provision for man's injustices to his fellowman

C. REVIEW, 4:44-26:19

1. Moses considered the law originally given at Sinai as being what, 4:44-5:22? As being a covenant between God and Israel binding upon all future generations

2. Comment on 5:22 - God speaks:

(1) Out of the fire

(2) Out of the cloud

(3) Out of thick darkness (deep gloom, R.S.V.)

3. Note two forms of the Word of God from 5:22:

(1) The spoken word

(2) The written word

4. Comment on 5:28-29 in the light of 5:23-27: Fully aware of Israel's future failings, God yearns for their continued response to his word

5. Comment on:

(1) 6:1-3 - Obedience to God's word is both a motivation and a demonstration of the fear of God

(2) 6:4-9 - Love for God's word is inherent in love for God

6. To what is Israel exhorted in:

(1) 6:6-9? To give the word of God a central place in the home

(2) 6:10-12? Not to forget the Lord in time of prosperity

(3) 6:13-19? To continue in the fear of God and order their lives in accordance with God's principles of righteousness

(4) 6:20-25? To testify to their posterity of the wonderful works of God, thereby inducing them to continued allegiance to God

(5) 7:1-6? To refrain from intermarriage with other nations to avoid the inevitable result of compromise and conformity with its consequences

7. Of what is Israel reminded in 7:7-8? That their selection by God was because of God's love and faithfulness, not on account of any merit or superiority on their part

8. What is made clear in 7:9-11? That both obedience and disobedience will bring a sure and commensurate reward

9. How is obedience seen rewarded in:

(1) 7:12-16? By the blessing of God on their domestic life

(2) 7:17-26? By victory over naturally impossible difficulties

10. Comment on 7:22: When necessary to avoid other difficulties, God may grant deliverance only gradually

11. What did God do for Israel in 8:2-10?

(1) He led them in the wilderness (v. 2)

(2) He humbled them in the wilderness (v. 2)

(3) He tested them in the wilderness (v. 2)

(4) He fed them in the wilderness (v. 3)

(5) He taught them in the wilderness (v. 3)

(6) He preserved them in the wilderness (v. 4)

(7) He disciplined them in the wilderness (v. 5)

D. REVIEW, 4:44-26:19 (CONT'D.)

1. In 8:11 Israel is reminded to keep what?

(1) The commandments, i.e., the moral law in regards to themselves

(2) The ordinances, i.e., the civil law in regards to others

(3) The statutes, i.e., the ceremonial law in regards to God

2. Against what dangers is Israel warned in:

(1) 8:11-16? Forgetting God notwithstanding his past goodness to them

(2) 8:17-18? Pride of heart in ascribing God's blessing to their own merit and achievement

(3) 8:19-20? Idolatry, displacing the true and omnipotent God with false and impotent deities

3. Of what is Israel assured in 9:1-3? That God will indeed go before them and destroy the giants resisting their entrance into the land

4. Of what is Israel made aware in 9:4-5? That God dispossessed these nations because of their wickedness, not because of Israel's righteousness

5. Why did Moses review Israel's failures in 9:6-29? To leave no uncertainty whatever in their minds that they had no valid reason for attributing their successes to their own merit

6. Specifically, of what are they reminded in:

(1) 9:8? That they had provoked the Lord to wrath at Horeb with the golden calf

(2) 9:12? That they were easily corrupted by idolatrous practices

(3) 9:13? That they were by nature a stubborn and selfwilled people

(4) 9:23? That they were prone to unbelief and disobedience

(5) 9:24? That in fact their entire career was characterized by rebellion against God

7. How is Israel's entire duty to God summarized in 10:12-13?

(1) To fear God and so prolong their days (6:2)

(2) To walk in all the ways of God

(3) To love and serve God with heart and soul

(4) To evidence their love by their obedience

8. How is God revealed in:

(1) 10:17? In his majestic sovereignty

(2) 10:17-18? In his incorruptible justice

(3) 10:18-19? In his compassionate justice

9. Point out the various incentives to obedience given to Israel in:

(1) 11:1-8 - The wonders which God performed on their behalf in the past

(2) 11:8-15 - The prospect of continued prosperity under the continued care of God

(3) 11:16-17 - The evil consequences incurred by turning away from God

(4) 11:18-25 - Assured victory over their enemies regardless of their superiority

10. What does God do in 11:26-32? Having made clear the rewards of obedience and the consequences of disobedience, God leaves the choice to Israel

E. REVIEW, 4:44-26:19 (CONT'D.)

1. What was the purpose of the requirements in 12:1-32? To prevent Israel from corrupting the worship of God with idolatrous practices
2. Comment on 12:8, 28: The criterion for determining that which is right or wrong is established by God and not by man
3. Israel is cautioned against responding to idolatrous influences likely to arise from various sources. Point them out from:
 - (1) 13:1-5 - Religious influences, such as the pretence of false prophets
 - (2) 13:6-11 - Social influences, such as the persuasion of friends and relatives
 - (3) 13:12-18 - Group influences, such as the collective power inherent in the consensus of large numbers
4. What principle is demonstrated in 13:6-11? Allegiance to God takes precedence over allegiance to kin
5. To what, in general, is Israel exhorted in:
 - (1) 14:1-21? To distinguish themselves from the neighboring nations by a different mode of life in separation from idols
 - (2) 14:22-29? To distinguish themselves from the neighboring nations by a different mode of worship in dedication to God
6. For whom is provision made in:
 - (1) 15:1-11? For the poor and needy whose debt to their lenders should not be recovered by legal process
 - (2) 15:12-18? For a servant's release with adequate provision after six years of service
7. What is pointed out in 15:19-23? The sanctity of worship
8. The repetition of the laws concerning what feasts is given in:
 - (1) 16:1-8? The feast of Passover, commemorative of their deliverance from Egypt
 - (2) 16:9-12? The feast of Pentecost, an expression of thankfulness for the fruits of the earth
 - (3) 16:13-15? The feast of Tabernacles, a memorial to their pilgrimage in the wilderness
9. How is the righteousness of God shown in:
 - (1) 16:16-17? In that God's requirements are in accordance with man's ability
 - (2) 16:18-20? In that God requires righteousness from men toward each other
10. What does God intend in 16:21-22? The avoidance of any resemblance and tendency toward idolatry
11. How is God's righteousness revealed in:
 - (1) 17:2-7? In providing safeguards against false witnessing

(2) 17:8-13? In upholding the authority of his appointees

12. What, in principle, is required of Israel's future king in:

(1) 17:14-17? He must safeguard himself against influences which would divert him from God

(2) 17:18-19? He must give the word of God the controlling place in his life

(3) 17:20? He must guard against pride and an undue sense of superiority over his brethren

(4) 17:20? He must insure the continuity of his reign by continued compliance with the precepts of the word of God

F. REVIEW, 4:44-28:19 (CONT'D.)

1. Wherein do the Levites differ from the other tribes in 18:1-8?

(1) In that they received no inheritance

(2) In that God was to be their inheritance

(3) In that they were supported by the offerings

2. Against what is Israel warned in 18:9-14? Against practicing the abominable customs of heathen nations which resulted in their ruin of which the Israelites themselves were both the witnesses and the instruments

3. How does 18:15-22 relate to 18:9-14? In place of the false arts and divinations pretending knowledge of things to come, God will give Israel a true prophet speaking as the oracle of God, Acts 3:22

4. Against what does God caution in:

(1) 18:19? Rejection of God's prophets for which the hearer will be held responsible

(2) 18:20-22? Presumptive prophecy which constituted an imitation of God's attribute of foreknowledge

5. To what purpose are the detailed instructions in 19:1-26:19? To reveal to them the nature of God and to bring them into conformity to that nature in every aspect of their individual and national life

6. The retribution meted out for false witnessing would have what effect, 19:16-21? It would be a strong deterrent against false witnessing

G. WARNING, 27:1-28:68

1. What, concerning the law of God, is indicated in:

(1) 27:1, 9? The authority of the law of God

(2) 27:2-8? The importance of the law of God

(3) 27:9-10? The importance of obedience to the law of God

(4) 27:11-26? The consequences of disobedience to the law of God

(5) 28:1-14? The sure reward of obedience to the law of God

(6) 28:15-47? The impossibility of violating the law of God with impunity

2. Why does God reiterate the consequences of disobedience in 28:15-68?

(1) To emphasize God's previous warning in the hope that Israel might take heed

(2) To convince Israel that the consequences of disobedience are not a mere threat

(3) Because of the propensity of man's sinful nature to late the law of God

3. Observe various possible symptoms of being out of the will of God as suggested in:

(1) 28:65 - Uneasiness, restlessness, anguish of heart and mind

(2) 28:66 - Uncertainty, fearfulness, lack of assurance and confidence

(3) 28:67 - Apprehensiveness, disillusionment, a lingering sense of insecurity

(4) 28:68 - Alienation, bondage, hopelessness and despair

H. COVENANT, 29:1-30:20

1. What is meant by "the covenant" in 29:1-29? The conditions under which Israel entered and was to remain in the promised land

2. Comment on 29:29: God does not reveal everything, but what is revealed obliges man to response

3. What does God do in 30:1-10?

(1) He anticipates Israel's failure as a consequence of their disobedience

(2) He makes provision for this failure in anticipation of their repentance and return

4. Comment on:

(1) 30:11-14: God brings his truth within the reach of man and his ability to conform

(2) 30:15-20: God makes clear the consequences of disobedience and the rewards of obedience, then leaves the choice to man

5. Point out the implication of 30:15 in the light of 30:11-20: Their future history was entirely the consequence of their own decision and not determined by the foreknowledge of God

I. COUNSELS, 31:1-29

1. Of what did Moses assure Israel and Joshua in 31:1-8?

(1) Of the accompanying presence of God

(2) Of assured victory over the enemy

(3) Of God's unfailing faithfulness

2. What last instructions did the priests receive, 31:9-13? To be responsible for the instruction of the people in the law of God

3. What does God do in:

(1) 31:14-15? He prepares for changing the leadership of Israel from Moses to Joshua

(2) 31:16-22? He prepares for Israel's anticipated defection from God

(3) 31:23? He commissions Joshua and reassures him of the divine presence and aid

4. God provides for a two-fold witness against Israel. Point it out from:

(1) 31:24-29 - The book of the Law placed in the ark of the covenant as a perpetual witness to all future generations whose apostasy and rebellion are foreseen

(2) 31:19-22 - The song of Moses, a poetic form of a divine deterrent which shall not be forgotten, intended as another expedient to dissuade Israel from her abandonment of God

5. What does 31:24-30 reveal? That the rebellion later manifested in the land was already in their hearts before they entered

J. SONG, 31:30-32:47

1. What is the general subject matter of this song, 32:1-47? A contrast between the unchanging faithfulness of God and the anticipated perversity and unfaithfulness of his people

2. Point out the appropriateness of the epithet "Rock" applied to God in 32:4:

(1) It is a natural image of the permanence and immutability of the divine attributes

(2) It was a suitable reminder of what God had been to them in the wilderness

(3) It was an appropriate figure of the unchangeable refuge and stronghold of his people in God

3. List the specific contents of this song from:

(1) 32:1-4 - The greatness of God

(2) 32:5-6 - The ungratefulness of his people

(3) 32:7-14 - The kindness of God to his people

(4) 32:15-18 - The substitution of God by his people

(5) 32:19-22 - The provocation of God by his people

(6) 32:23-43 - The vengeance of God upon his people

4. What does 32:47 show? That trifling with the law of God is no trifling matter

K. BLESSING, 33:1-29

1. In general, what is the content of Moses' Blessing in 33:1-29? The benefits that were to be enjoyed by the various tribes through God's favor

2. What, in 33:1, evidences the fact that Moses was a man of God? The fact that Moses left his people with a benediction of blessing unmarred by personal grievances and malice for their ill treatment of him

3. Note the remarkable revelation of God in:

(1) 33:2 - The new disclosure of God was as a bright light in the midst of darkness flooding the surrounding regions

(2) 33:2 - In this display of the glory of his truth, Jehovah was surrounded by a multitude of angels awaiting his orders to serve God's people

(3) 33:2-3 - The law which went forth in such majesty was the expression of his love

(4) 33:4-5 - This revelation became Israel's inheritance and the affirmation of his sovereignty

4. Ascertain the essence of the blessing of each tribe as found in:

(1) 33:6 - Reuben, preservation from extinction and impoverishment

(2) 33:7 - Judah, divine aid in the fulfillment of a divine destiny

(3) 33:8-11 - Levi, the service of God at the cost of hostility and hatred through jealousy

(4) 33:12 - Benjamin, personal safety through the sheltering care of Jehovah

(5) 33:13-17 - Joseph, temporal blessings through "the good will of him that dwelt in the bush"

(6) 33:18-19 - Zebulun and Issachar, successful enterprise and domestic tranquility

(7) 33:20-21 - Gad, courageous leadership and tenacious determination

(8) 33:22 - Dan, courageous in battle though small in size

(9) 33:23 - Naphtali, devout satisfaction arising from acceptance before God

(10) 33:24-25 - Asher, strength as the days and a source of blessing to others

L. DEATH, 34:1-12

1. To what purpose did God show Moses the land, 34:14

(1) To gratify a legitimate natural desire

(2) To let him witness the fulfillment of his promise

2. Why did God tell Moses again that "he shall not go over there," 34:4? Moses had still entertained a lingering hope that God in mercy might yet relent

3. Why did God not disclose the burial place of Moses, 34:6? To prevent Israel from using it as a shrine leading to idolatry

4. What great compliment to Moses is found in 34:10? That God knew Moses "face to face," i.e., God had an intimate acquaintance with Moses

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