



The Bible's Big Story

Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy serves as the capstone of the Pentateuch. It is not only the conclusion of what came before—it is also a crucial doctrinal foundation for all that follows. Its emphasis on the covenant with Israel, the restatement of the law, and the call to wholehearted obedience—along with the promised blessings for faithfulness and curses for rebellion—form the framework within which all subsequent Old Testament revelation operates.

Introductory Information

Title: The name comes from the Greek Δευτερονόμιον, meaning “second law.” The Hebrew title, דִּבְרֵי מֹשֶׁה, means “[spoken] words,” taken from the book’s opening phrase “These are the words...”

Authorship: Moses The book itself contains clear internal references to Moses speaking and writing these words (Deut. 1:1, 3; 31:9, 22). Other biblical authors identify it as “the Book of Moses” (2 Chron. 25:4; Neh. 13:1), and Christ himself confirmed Mosaic authorship on more than one occasion (Matt. 19:7–8; Matt. 22:24). While many secular scholars dispute this, for the Christian the question is settled by the testimony of Scripture and of Christ himself.

Date: ca. 1406 BC. As with Leviticus and Numbers, the dating of Deuteronomy is closely tied to the dating of the Exodus. Holding to a mid-fifteenth-century date for the Exodus, Deuteronomy can be dated approximately forty years later, around 1406 BC.

Theme & Purpose: Deuteronomy is, above all else, a book about *remembering*. Moses calls the new generation to remember with a purpose: to produce covenant faithfulness as they prepare to enter the promised land. This theme of remembering is organized around four areas of focus:

- What they have done
- What God has done
- What God has commanded
- What God has promised

Summary Theme: *Moses calls a new generation to covenant faithfulness as they prepare to enter the promised land by reminding them of God’s past grace and commanding obedience to His law. He emphasizes the need for a circumcised heart, resulting in a love for God demonstrated through wholehearted obedience to all He has commanded.*

Redemption Revealed in Deuteronomy

The foundation of true worship is God himself.

God is both the standard of righteousness and the sole object of true worship. As the infinite, perfect Creator of all

things, he alone is worthy of praise—and as Creator, he alone has the right to define how he is to be approached.

Additionally, it is God who chooses those upon whom he sets his redeeming love, and who provides the means of their atonement. Israel was not chosen because of any merit in them. In the same way, if you are in Christ, you have been not chosen on the basis of your works, but solely by God’s mercy—and the atonement that reconciles you to God is entirely his provision.

The substance of true worship proceeds from the heart. The theme of wholeheartedness pervades Deuteronomy. The formula “with all your heart and with all your soul” appears nine times (Deut. 4:29; 6:5; 10:12; 11:13; 13:3; 26:16; 30:2, 6, 10). While God prescribed specific outward forms of worship, Deuteronomy makes clear that true worship extends far beyond outward observance. God’s claim on his people is total—and the only truly accepted worship is that which flows from a transformed heart.

This is expressed most vividly in the concept of the *circumcision of the heart*. True worship, was never produced by circumcision itself, but by what circumcision represented. Moses therefore calls Israel to something deeper (Deut. 10:16, see also Phil. 3:3).

The actions of true worship pervade every area of life. True worship—rooted in God and proceeding from the heart—will inevitably transform every area of life. Moses makes this concrete in Deuteronomy 10:12 identifying five evidences of a circumcised heart:

- **The Fear of the Lord.** A reverential awareness of who God is and what he has done that shapes every part of life.
- **Walking in His Ways.** To walk in God’s ways is to follow his path as a child walks in his father’s footsteps—not out of mere obligation, but out of a sincere desire to please and imitate him.
- **Loving God.** Placed at the center of the five, this is the pinnacle. It is from Deuteronomy that Jesus draws when he identifies the greatest of all commandments—to love the Lord God with everything within us (Matt. 22:36–38; Mark 12:28–30).
- **Serving the Lord.** This extends beyond the ordinary rhythms of daily living to active, intentional actions that seek to further God’s purposes and bring glory to his name (Col. 3:23).
- **Keeping His Commandments.** This is not merely doing what you already know; it is a hunger for God’s word that drives you to know more (John 14:15).

