

The Beauty of Obedience

This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. (Deut. 30:19-20)

The Beauty of Obedience

Americans generally dislike obedience, preferring instead to “_____.” Disciples of Jesus know better. We know that obedience to God is true freedom. Because God knows you better than you do, obeying God produces authentic life. *“The ship that will not obey its captain will have to obey the rocks.” (English proverb)*

Quick Facts about Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy is the last of the 5 books of the Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). The stories and laws of the Torah form the cornerstone of Jewish life and the building blocks of the New Testament. “Deuteronomy” means “_____,” and Deuteronomy summarizes the Law. Its authorship goes back to Moses himself (1:1, 5; 31:24; 1 Kings 2:3; 8:53; Matt. 19:7-8; Acts 3:22-23; Rom. 10:19), although in its final form, the book was likely assembled later. Deuteronomy is the _____ most quoted book in the New Testament, and Jesus’ favorite book.



Looking west to the land of Canaan from Mt. Nebo (dmy)

Message of Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy comprises three sermons delivered by Moses north of Mt. Nebo just prior to his death. Its purpose is to reaffirm God’s covenant with Israel and to prepare Israel for life in the promised land. God has adopted Israel, rescued it from bondage, and provided it with land. Israel must now obey the commands of God in order to find real life. In the same way, God has delivered Christians from bondage and made us His people. To find real life we, too, must be obedient to God.

The Beauty of Obedience

- Obedience to God offers life to you and _____. (Deut. 12:28; 30:19-20)
- Obedience to God prevents you from conforming to the values around you. (Deut. 7:1-6)
- Obedience to God sets you free from the false gods of _____, _____, and _____. (Deut. 29:17ff; cf., Romans 6:17)

The Flow of Deuteronomy

Setting (1:1-5)
First Sermon: How God brought us here (1:6-4:40)
 Establishment of refugee cities (4:41-43)
Second Sermon: Terms of God’s Covenant (4:44 – 28:68)
Third Sermon: Exhortation to Obedience (29:1 – 30:20)
 Joshua to Succeed Moses (31:1-29)
Moses’ song (31:30-32:47)
Moses’ blessing (32:48 – 33:29)
 Death of Moses (34:1-12)

- Obedience to God creates the best possible world. (Deut. 7:12ff; 15:4-5; 28:1ff)
- *Thought experiment:* Can you imagine a world where there is no poverty, no violence, no abandoned children, no dishonesty, no crime, no racism, no war, no STIs, no evil. That’s the world God offers humanity—if we will only obey Him.

Strengthen Your Obedience in 2021!

1. Identify three areas where you need to strengthen your obedience:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

Examples: "I need to forgive someone." "I need to disciple a few people." "I need to end this bad habit." "I need to join a small group." "I need stop trying to control others for my happiness." "I need to show more love." "I need to be more generous." "I need to stop being cynical." "I need to trust God more." "I need to work on myself as a parent/spouse." "I need to stop watching unchristian programs/movies." "I need to rejoice in the Lord always." "I need to stop procrastinating/being lazy." "I need to reach across racial lines and make new friends."
2. This week, spend 5 minutes each day asking God to help you prioritize these areas.
3. Ask yourself two questions every single day:

What will happen if I keep living this way? Allow yourself to feel the _____.

What will happen if I choose obedience? Allow yourself to feel the _____.
4. By next Sunday, make the decision to strengthen your obedience in each of the three areas.

To decide is to cut off the options. In some cases, you must go _____. In other cases, start small in order to end big.
5. Move quickly to embrace the resources you need: a discipleship group, a good book, Celebrate Recovery, a new calendar, a trusted friend, etc.
6. Every day, spend time alone with God asking for His Holy Spirit to produce obedience in your life. Since we are broken, we need divine help. The Holy Spirit will give us the power we need.
7. Celebrate every win.
8. Get back up from every fall. If you fall 100 times, _____.
9. Share with others what God is doing in your life.
10. Prepare for a celebration on December 31, 2021!

"It is not hard to obey when we love the one whom we obey." Saint Ignatius

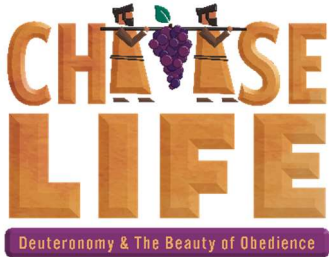
Select Resources for Deuteronomy

For a short video overview, watch the YouTube Bible Project: Overview: Deuteronomy
Daniel Block, *The Gospel According to Moses* (2012)
Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster?* (2011)
Peter Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (1976)
Walter Kaiser and Paul Wegner, *A History of Israel* (2016)
J. G. McConville, *Law and Theology in Deuteronomy* (1984) and *Deuteronomy* (2002)
J. Gary Millar, *Now Choose Life: Theology and Ethics in Deuteronomy* (2015)
David Young, "How is the OT Relevant to Christians," in Holloway, et al, *Theology Matters* (1998) pp. 129-141 and *King Jesus and the Beauty of Obedience Based Discipleship* (2020).

Why Study Deuteronomy?

- It presents life-giving truths about God, humans, and how to live. Deuteronomy is *our* book. (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11; 1 Pet. 1:12)
- It is inspired, holy, right, and good. It will help make us mature. (Psalm 19:7; Rom. 7:12; 2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- It points us to Jesus, who is the God of Deuteronomy. (Luke 24:37, 53; John 1:45; 5:39; Acts 10:42-43; Rom. 10:4; Isa. 6:9; John 1:1-4)
- Jesus believed Deuteronomy and teaches us to obey it. (Matt. 5:17-20; Luke 24:44)
- Failure to teach the whole counsel of God puts us at risk of heresy. (Acts 20:25-27; 2 Tim. 4:2-4)
- It teaches us the beauty of obedience!

Answers: color outside the lines; second law; third; your descendants; sin, sensuality, self; pain of disobedience; blessing of obedience; cold turkey; get up 100 times.



Chronology of the Land of Israel

See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land the LORD swore he would give to your fathers—to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and to their descendants after them. (Deut. 1:8)

Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? (Isa. 66:8)

Prehistoric Period _____ After Creation
Creation, Adam and Eve, Noah.

Chalcolithic (5,000 - 3,000 B.C.) _____ After Tower of Babel
Stone and copper the dominant technologies. Beginnings of large settlements in Mesopotamia and along the Nile; farming becomes more advanced; civilization emerging among the Sumerians.

Early Bronze (3,000 – 2,000 B.C.) _____ Before Abraham
Bronze the dominant technology. Egyptian civilization flourishes (Old Kingdom, pyramids), city-states in Canaan, widespread trade in Mesopotamia, Hittite empire in Turkey.

Middle Bronze (2,000 – 1,500 B.C.) _____ Time of Abraham
Hyksos period in Egypt, Minoan civilization in Crete, city-states in Canaan, Old Babylonian Kingdom. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph.

Late Bronze (1,500 – 1,200 B.C.) _____ Time of Exodus
Magnificent 18th dynasty in Egypt, fall of cities in Canaan, rise of Mycenaean civilization in Greece, Trojan War, collapse of Hittites. Moses leads the Exodus, Joshua captures Israel.

Iron Age (1,200 – 850 B.C.) _____ Emergence of Israel
Iron the dominant technology. Decline of Egypt, Rise of Assyria, arrival of Philistines, dark ages in Greece. Israel emerges as a nation in Palestine. Saul, David, Solomon.

Assyrian Period (850 – 605 B.C.) _____ Divided Kingdom
Assyria dominates Near East, Archaic Period in Greece, Lydian and Phrygian Empires in Turkey, founding of Rome, North and South Kingdoms in Israel, destruction of Northern Israel in 721. Many kings of Israel and Judah, and time of the great prophets: Elijah, Amos, Isaiah.

Babylonian Period (605 – 539 B.C.) _____ Captivity
Collapse of Assyria in 605, spectacular building of Babylon, rise of democracy in Greece. Southern Kingdom of Israel destroyed in 586 B.C. by Babylon. Jeremiah, Daniel.

Persian Period (539 – 332 B.C.) _____ Rebuilding Jerusalem
Fall of Babylon in 539, Cyrus the Great sends remnant back to Jerusalem, Persian wars with Greece, battle of Thermopylae Pass, Classical Greece. Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.

Hellenistic Period (332 – 63 B.C.) _____ Intertestamental World
Alexander the Great conquers East, Greek civilization spreads, Punic Wars (Rome v. Carthage), Maccabeus overthrows Seleucids, founding of Pharisees, synagogues, rabbinic culture.

Roman Period (63 B.C. – A.D. 135) _____ New Testament World

Jesus Christ. Roman Empire conquers the Mediterranean. Appointment of Herod, second Temple built, destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70). Founding of church, writing of the New Testament. Peter, Paul, Apostolic Fathers.

Late Roman Period (A.D. 135 – 324) _____ Spread of Christianity

Israel destroyed a second time (135). Jews banished, various people groups move to Israel. Constantine became emperor in 320's, and begins to build Christian shrines in Israel, with his mother, Helena, leading the process. Christianity becomes a legal religion.

Byzantine Period (324 – 638) _____ Israel largely Christian

Byzantium (also called Constantinople or Istanbul) becomes the seat of the Roman Empire and of Christianity. Church Fathers flourish in Israel. Many churches, shrines, and monasteries built in Israel.

Arab Period (638 – 1099) _____ Israel largely Muslim

Mohammed establishes Islam, Muslims overrun Israel and North Africa. Various caliphates rule in Israel, including the Umayyad Caliphate, the Abbasid Caliphate, and the Fatimid Caliphate. Jerusalem important, but much of Israel poorly populated.

Crusader Period (1099 – 1260) _____ Christians try to retake Israel

European Christians mount repeated attacks on the Muslim occupants of Israel in an effort to retake the land. Era of Saladin and Richard the Lion Heart. The Crusades capture sections of Israel for periods, but were largely unsuccessful.

Mamluk Period (1260 – 1517) _____ Muslims regain control

Egyptian Mamluks wrest control of Israel. Eventually virtually all Crusader gains are lost.

Ottoman Period (1517-1917) _____ Turks control the Middle East

Ottoman Turks control Israel and the Middle East. Suleiman the Great builds the walls currently surrounding the Old City. Israel has a mixed population during this time, but not much wealth.

Mandate Period (1917 – 1948) _____ British control Israel

The British army captures Israel from the Turks in World War 1, under the inspiration of Lawrence of Arabia, and exercise a "mandate" to rule Israel. Jews begin returning as Zionists. With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Middle East is carved up into the various nations that exist today. Many skirmishes between the British, the Jews, and the Arabs for control of Israel.

Modern Period (1948 – today) _____ Israel and Palestinians

After the Holocaust, Jews return to Israel in massive numbers, and in 1948 the U.N. recognizes Israel as a sovereign nation, dividing it from Palestinian areas, which are also offered statehood. Wars break out between Israelis and Arabs. In 1967 and 73, Israel's modern borders become relatively stable, though Arabs have a claim on much of Israel's land.