

Deuteronomy

DEUTERONOMY means ‘second law’. The first giving of the Law was at Sinai. Forty years on, a new generation of Israelites was about to enter the Promised Land. This book records Moses’ last words, including a second giving of the Law (1:1).

Moses looks back over the 40 years of wandering, as Israel “*went through all that great and terrible wilderness*” (1:19). He reminds them of their murmurings against God, who nonetheless had blessed them. Then, from 4:44 through to 28:69, he repeats the Law given at Sinai, but puts it in a new perspective. Deuteronomy points to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A Law of Love

In this second reading of the Law, there is special emphasis on love and faith:

Because God loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them; and He brought you out of Egypt ... You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart (4:37; 6:5).

Moses renews the covenant between God and His people (29:1):

I make this covenant ... with him who stands here with us today before the LORD our God, as well as with him who is not here with us today (29:14,15).

Moses foresees distant times ahead when the Jews, suffering for their unfaithfulness,

call upon God in their distress. If they will obey Him, He will have compassion on them “*and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you*” (30:2–3).

The Prophet Like Moses

Deuteronomy contains a very specific prophecy of the Messiah:

The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst ... him you shall hear (18:15).

Jesus was familiar with Deuteronomy and when he was tempted (Matthew 4:1–11), he quickly rebuffed the temptations with quotations from this book (8:3; 6:16; 10:20). In the same way, God’s word can help us overcome temptation.

The Jews – God’s Chosen People

The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt (Deuteronomy 7:7–8).

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