

MOSES' LAST DAYS

Week 10: Moses' Last Days

Deuteronomy comes from *deutero* which means *second* and *nomos* which means *law*—the book of Deuteronomy is about Moses giving the law for a second time to the new generation. The book begins in the final, fortieth year of Israel's wandering in the desert after the escape from Egypt. It occurs with the Israelites stationed just east of the Jordan River above the Dead Sea. The key personalities of Deuteronomy are Moses and Joshua. The genre of the book is narrative history and law, as well as a song from Moses just after he commissions Joshua as the new leader.

Week Ten Reading Plan

Nu. 23:27-24:25	God Desires to Bless Israel
Nu. 34:1-15	The Borders of the Land
Deut. 1:1-8; 2:1-7	Time to Enter Canaan
Deut. 8:1-9:29	The Forty Years Reviewed
Deut. 31:1-9, 14-29	Joshua Made the New Leader
Deut. 33:1-29	Moses' Last Message
Deut. 34:1-12	The Death of Moses

Deuteronomy interrupts the story line between Numbers and Joshua. At the end of Numbers, Israel is 'on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho' (Num. 36:33) and at the end of Deuteronomy, the people are still there (Dt. 34:8-9) waiting to cross the Jordan (Josh. 1:2). All that has happened is, the transition from the ministry of Moses as God's spokesman and official representative to that of Joshua in his place. So while there is little forward movement to the narrative, there is a great deal of preparation as Moses has the people *look back* to the faithfulness of God in history (chs. 1-4), *look up* to the One whom they entered into a covenant with (chs. 5-26), and *look ahead* to possessing the Promised Land (chs. 27-34).

Think of Deuteronomy as a sequel-slash-remake of the first four books which we covered so far in *God's Story Chronological Reading Plan*. Moses final act at this important time of transferring leadership to Joshua, is to deliver his farewell addresses to prepare the people for their entrance into Canaan. In a series of flashbacks and flashforwards, Moses gives a pep talk of reminders and warnings. He wants them to have courage as they prepare to fight for the land they've been promised.

In contrast to the matter-of-fact narratives of Leviticus and Numbers, here the words of Moses come from his heart as he emphasizes God's claims on the Israelites. Moses stresses God's love for Israel, describing God as one who protects orphans, widows, and oppressed people. Israel is to love God intensely in return, with absolute devotion. While Moses predicts that Israel will eventually grow disobedient, he notes that God will welcome Israel back with abundance and blessing whenever Israel returns to obedience.

In chapters 1-4, Moses reviews some of the details of the past history of Israel such as the Exodus and the wandering in the wilderness. He then urges that they obey the laws of God.

In chapters 5-28 Moses restates the Ten Commandments to the Israelites. He explains the principles and instructions for living a godly life as God's chosen nation. These include how to love the Lord, laws of worship, laws regarding relationships, and also the consequences and results if these laws are broken.

In chapters 29-30 there is a move to commit themselves, as a nation, to God. Once the people enter the Promised Land, they must not adopt the customs of the people they are displacing. Moses encourages the people to be loyal to God and to avoid the idols of the Canaanites. "No idols" could almost be the motto of this whole book.

Finally, in chapter 31-34, we see the first change in leadership in Israel. Moses, the one who has been leading them the entire time, hands over his authority to Joshua. Moses leaves the people with a farewell song that extols God's everlasting compassion. He then blesses each of the tribes of Israel (which reminds us of Jacob blessing his sons almost 450 years earlier). In the last chapter, after showing Moses a vision of the Promised Land, Moses dies and is buried by God on Mt. Nebo. Moses is praised as the only prophet in Israel's history who knew God "face to face" (34:10).

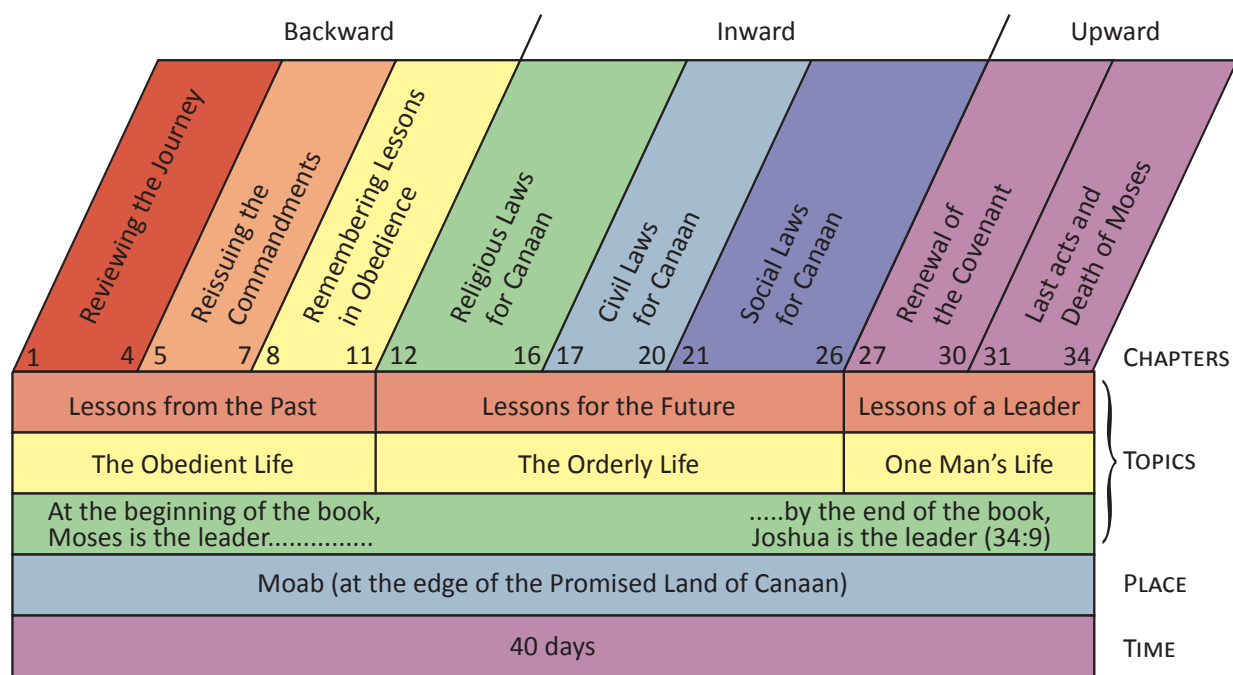
1-4 1ST SERMON: HISTORY History of the first generation: Sinai to Kadesh History of the new generation: Kadesh to Moab	5-26 2ND SERMON: LAW Second telling of the law (5) with exposition on them (12-26)	12-25 3RD SERMON: FUTURE Keep records of God's law Consequences of Disobedience Cursing - Ebal Blessing - Gerizim	27-28 4TH SERMON: LIFE Disobedience leads to being driven out of land Repentance leads to restoration of the land	31-33 FINAL WORDS OF MOSES Joshua new leader Song of Moses Blessings of Moses	34 DEATH OF MOSES Moses' entrance to the Promised Land delayed Divine Burial
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DEUTERONOMY AS A WHOLE BOOK

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your strength.

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.



10 COMMANDMENTS

THE DECALOGUE AND THE DEUTERONOMIC LAWS

1. No other gods before Me
2. Do not make an idol
3. Do not misuse the name of Yhwh
4. Observe the Sabbath
5. Honor father and mother
6. Do not murder
7. Do not commit adultery
8. Do not steal
9. Do not give false testimony
10. Do not covet

1 - 3	Right worship 12:1 - 13:18 One temple and the one God of Israel
4	Sabbath 14:1 - 15:18 Sabbath moratoria, pilgrimage festivals and the Lord's holy people in its ritual difference from the peoples of other gods
5	Authority 16:18 - 18:22 Offices in Israel (judges, kings, priests and prophets)
6	Preserving life 10:1 - 21:23 Accidental and deliberate killing (with digressions)
7	Adultery and illicit mixtures 22:13 - 23:14 Rape and improper sexual relations (concerntrates completely on the area of sexuality)
8	Theft and propety violations 23:15 - 24:7
9	Justice 24:8 - 25:4 Truth in the face of judgement
10	Coveting 25:5-16

THE DECALOGUE IN CANONICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Ten commandments are set apart from the other laws in the Pentateuch by a variety of factors:

By Placement: In Deuteronomy (and Exodus) the decalogue is placed at the head of all the other laws; and the other laws in Deut. 12 - 26 are organized according to it. In this way the decalogue is the key to the rest of the law, while at the same time the rest of law is an interpretive expansion of it.

By Promulgation: Only the Ten Commandments are spoken directly from God to the people. All other laws are mediated through Moses.

By Perspective: The Ten Commandments are absolute (apodictic), most other laws are case law that is focused on life in the land (and consequently casuistic)

Prepared by Tyler F. Williams (2002). Sources: Georg Braulik, "The Sequence of the Laws in Deuteronomy 12-26 and in the Decalogue," in *A Song of Power and the Power of Song: Essays on the Book of Deuteronomy* (Duane I. Christensen, ed.; Winona Lane, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1993) 313-35; Alexander Rofe, "The Arrangement of the Laws in Deuteronomy," in *Studies in the Bible: M.D. Cassuto Centennial Volume* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1987) 217-35.