**The Book of Deuteronomy—Study Guide (Chapters 01-04)**

The Bible always takes precedence in our study of God’s Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21). This guide is just a “help” and is compiled from Ambassador College class notes, commentaries and personal study.

“Also it shall be, when he [the king] sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes” (Deuteronomy 17:18-19).

**Chapter 01: Moses summarizes various events Israel experienced from leaving Egypt until Kadesh.**

“Deuteronomy” comes from the Greek word *Deuteronomion*, literally "second law,” but is more aptly understood to be a repetition of the law. Moses basically repeats what God had told Israel previously. The Hebrew title for this book is: *Haddebharim*, meaning “The Words” which are taken from the first verse.

1-2: These words were spoken on the eastern side of the Jordan River in the plains of Moab. The places noted here are not found in Israel’s journeys (Numbers 33), but must have been locations in the plains of Moab. It was only 11 days journey from Mt. Sinai to Kadesh-Barnea (from there they could have entered Canaan).

3: The timing is noted when Moses spoke these words. It was in the 40th year after Israel had come out of Egypt. It took that long to enter the Promised Land because of Israel’s unbelief and lack of trust in God (Numbers 14:34; Hebrews 3:19). These words were given to the generation who was about to enter the Land.

4: Israel had already conquered the Amorite lands belonging to Sihon and Og—on the east side of the Jordan River (Numbers 21:23-26, 33-35). These were the territories that Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh inherited (Numbers 32:33-42).

5: The Hebrew verb translated “began” also expresses a “desire” or a “determination” Moses had when he spoke these words. This verse concludes the introductory remarks.

6-8: After God had given Israel the law at Horeb (Mt. Sinai), He told Israel to go in and possess the Promised Land which had been promised to the Fathers. It included Lebanon and as far as the Euphrates River.

9-12: At that time—in Horeb, Moses was overwhelmed by the numbers in Israel, and asked how he alone could bear them. Moses combines two events here (The advice from Jethro--Exodus 18:18, and God’s command to appoint 70 to serve at the tabernacle--Numbers 11:14-17). Moses asks God to bless and multiply Israel.

12-15: Moses appointed men who were wise and full of understanding to be heads over Israel (Exodus 18:21). The people said this would be good (Israel’s response to Moses is only noted here). The leaders and officers over the tribes were then appointed to serve over 1000s, 100s, 50s, and 10s (Exodus 18:24-26).

16-17: The judges were instructed to judge righteously. They were not to show partiality, and were to hear all cases. They were not to be intimidated by any man. Judgments were to be based on God’s laws; hence any decision would be God’s judgment. Cases that were too hard for them to decide were given to Moses.

18: Moses continued to command Israel in the ways of God. This was Moses’ main responsibility, and he was the only one who presented the hard cases to God (Exodus 18:19-20).

19-21: After Mt. Sinai, they had come to Kadesh Barnea, which was at the southern border of the Promised Land. Moses had told them not to fear or be discouraged because God had given them the Land to possess.

22-23: Moses was asked if some men could be sent to spy out the land, and the plan was pleasing to Moses. So Moses chose one man from each tribe. Moses must have asked God since God ordered this (Numbers 13:1-3).

24-25: The spies went into the Valley of Eshcol which was the place where one large cluster of grapes was found (Numbers 13:23). All the spies acknowledged that the land was plentiful and was good (Numbers 13:27).

26-28: But they rebelled against God’s command to enter the Land. They complained in their tents and accused God of hating them and that He wanted to deliver them to the Amorites. They complained about the greatness of the cities, and the size of the men—the Anakim (giants—Deut. 2:11, 21); sons of Anak (Numbers 13:22).

29-33: Moses pleaded with Israel not to be afraid but to remember how God delivered them from Egypt and how He brought them out, as a man carries his own son, through the wilderness. Yet, they did not believe God, who was obviously leading them by the pillar of fire and by the cloud.

34-36: God was angry with that generation, and vowed that none would enter the Land except for Caleb, who would be given the land on which he walked (as a spy), because he wholly followed God (Judges 1:20).

37-38: Even Moses was not going to enter the land because of his disobedience to God for hitting the rock (Numbers 20:11-12). Joshua was to be chosen to lead Israel, and Moses was to encourage him to cause Israel to inherit the land (Deuteronomy 31:7).

39-40: The children, however, whom Israel had believed would be victims, would enter the land, but the adults would not enter and would have to journey in the wilderness.

41-43: Israel then had a change of heart and planned to battle against the Amorites. God warned them not to fight because He wouldn’t be with them and they’d be defeated, but they presumptuously went up anyway.

44-46: Israel was driven back—likened to being chased by bees (This was similar to how God promised to get rid of the Canaanites—with hornets (Exodus 23:27-29). Israel wept, but they were not repentant. God wouldn’t listen and they were to wander in the land 40 years (Numbers 14:34).

**Chapter 02: A recounting of the years in the wilderness to the conquest of Sihon.**

1-3: After refusing to believe God to enter the Promised Land, Israel ultimately turned south and wandered in the wilderness adjacent to the Red Sea, and after many years, at the appointed time, they turned northward.

4-9: After 40 years of wandering, during which God provided for them, He directed them through the territory of Mount Seir--the possession of Esau. Israel was not to take any of their land and were to pay for food & water. They also were not to harass or contend with Moab, as it was a possession of Lot’s descendants.

10-12: (A parenthetical addition). The Emim, giants, had inhabited the land of Moab earlier. They were Rephaim (Genesis 15:20), whose land God promised to Abraham--possessed by Lot’s descendants. The Horites (Hivites—Genesis 10:17), had dwelt in Mt. Seir, but they too were displaced by the descendants of Esau.

13-15: By the time Israel had left Kadesh Barnea and came back, 38 years had passed, and all the men who had rebelled against God died. Israel crossed the Valley (brook) of Zered (the border region of Moab and Edom).

16-19: After traveling past Moab, Israel then crossed over at Ar, which was the northern border of Moab—the Arnon River. By doing so, they entered new territory--the land of Ammon, but they were not to take possession of that land either because it too was a possession for the descendants of Lot.

20-23: (A parenthetical addition). Giants (Zamzummim) also inhabited that land, but God removed them and gave the land to Ammon’s descendants. As an aside, God also allowed the Caphtorim, from Crete, an Egyptian people, to come in and destroy the Avim (related to the Hivites), who dwelt as far away as Gaza (Philistia).

24-25: God began to bring Israel into their possession by giving them Sihon and the Amorites. God was going to cause a fear of Israel throughout the territories as they began to conquer the Promised Land.

26-29: Moses had offered an agreement with Sihon first--to pass through Sihon’s territory and purchase food and water on their way to the crossing of Jordan—as Israel did with Moab and Esau.

30-31: God had hardened Sihon’s heart (as God had done with Pharaoh—Exodus 11:10), so that Israel’s request of peaceful passage would be refused. God wanted Israel to possess that land.

32-35: Israel destroyed the entire nation of the Amorites including the cities. No human was spared. The spoils of conquest included the livestock and the wealth from the destroyed cities.

36-37: God allowed Israel to conquer all the cities in that region from the border of Moab to the border of Ammon. God did not allow Israel to spread out further into the areas of Moab or Ammon.

**Chapter 03: The conquest of Og and the distribution of the conquered lands to three tribes of Israel.**

1-7: Og had come down to attack as Israel entered their land. God informed Moses that He was giving Og and his nation into Israel’s hands. Israel captured 60 cities and destroyed all the inhabitants. The cities were heavily fortified, and were utterly destroyed. As with Sihon, Israel took all the livestock and the wealth of the cities.

8-11: The description is given of the territory Israel conquered. Mt. Hermon was called either Sirion or Senir, and both meant snow. Og had been a giant. His bedstead was about 14-15 feet long, and its width about 7 feet.

12-17: Reuben (firstborn of Leah) and Gad (firstborn of Zilpah/Leah) inherited the land of Sihon, and the half tribe of Manasseh inherited mainly the areas of Og. The territory of Bashan was renamed Havoth Jair meaning towns of Jair, son of Manasseh. Gilead went to Machir, another son of Manasseh. Boundaries are defined.

18-20: The women and children would stay behind in these areas and care for the livestock, while the men of war would cross over and help the rest of Israel conquer the land west of the Jordan.

21-22: Moses told Joshua at the time that just as God destroyed Sihon and Og, God would defeat the kingdoms through which he would pass through. He was not to fear them-“For the Lord your God Himself fights for you.”

23-26: Moses pleaded again with God to enter the land even to see Lebanon, but God had told him previously that he would not go enter the land (Numbers 20:12). God also told Moses not to bring the subject up again.

27-29: God allowed Moses to view the land from Mt. Pisgah (NW of Mt. Nebo), east of the Jordan. Moses was commanded to encourage and strengthen Joshua, who would lead Israel into the land (Numbers 27:18-23).

**Chapter 4: Moses commands Israel to obey and never forget God.**

1-2: Israel was to keep all of God’s laws. We are not to add or take away from the words that God had given Moses. Notice a similar warning about adding to or taking away from Christ’s words in Revelation 22:18-19.

3-4: Those who held fast to God were still alive because they hadn’t forsaken God for Baal. The rebels died at Baal Peor (Numbers 25:1-3). The harlotry with the Moabites happened *after* Israel conquered Sihon and Og.

5-8: Moses taught Israel as God had commanded. We are to be careful to obey. The laws of God will be our wisdom and understanding. Peoples surrounding Israel would acknowledge that God was with Israel, and He was near to them, and they would be impressed with their wisdom, and with God’s laws and judgments.

9-10: Diligently keep from forgetting the things we learned, lest they depart from our heart all the days of our lives. Teach them to our children and grandchildren. Israel was especially to remember when they heard the words of God at Mt. Sinai, so that they would learn to fear God every day of their lives and teach their children.

11-14: Israel saw no form of God, but heard a voice. God declared His covenant which included the Ten Commandments—His vocal words. God also gave Moses statutes (additional laws such as tithing, clean meats), and the judgments (consequences, penalties when a law or statute was broken). Israel was to obey all of these.

15-19: Israel was to take heed not to make any carved image or any likeness of physical life to represent God, since they saw no form of God (Romans 1:25). Idols are actually a distortion of the truth about who God really is. Israel was especially told not to feel driven to worship the sun, moon or stars—which God has given to all.

20-24: God took Israel out of Egypt—an iron furnace. Moses reminded them again he was not able to enter the land because of his disobedience. Again, a strong reminder is given that Israel was to take heed not to worship images or other gods as God is a consuming fire--a jealous God.

25-28: A prophecy that when, not if, Israel would disobey and worship other gods. They would not prolong their days in the land, and would be few in number (as a minority) in the nations where they will be scattered.

29-31: And, in the end times, in the latter days, when Israel will be in captivity, they will turn back to God, and He will have mercy on them and won’t forsake them (Zephaniah 3:19-20).

32-34: Moses then asks Israel if any other nation heard God speak, or if any other nation was taken out of a country with the signs and miracles as what happened in Egypt. It was unique in all human history.

35-40: There is no other God! Only Israel heard God’s words at Mt. Sinai. And since God loved their fathers, Israel was brought out of Egypt and given the Promised Land to possess. Therefore, Israel was to keep His commandments so that it will go well with them and their children in the land.

41-43: Three cities of refuge (Exodus 21:13; Numbers 35:9-15) were set apart at that time in which the manslayer may flee: Bezer, Ramoth, and Golan. These were on the east side of Jordan. The other three cities of refuge are noted in Joshua 20:1-9.

44-49: This law, and the words (as was stated in Chapter 1) were spoken to Israel on the east side of Jordan in the conquered territories of the Amorite kings—Sihon and Og. These territories (the boundaries are noted here), were now the possession of Israel.