



Getting started with Deuteronomy

There is great wisdom in learning from the mistakes of the past.

Deuteronomy is a call to covenant faithfulness – an exhortation to live lives of love – which is at the heart of God’s good law and purposes for His people.

It’s a book on the boundary – the Israelites are once again on the edge of the Promised Land. Moses is about to die, so this is his last sermon, his famous last words.

Deuteronomy looks **backwards** and **forwards**.

It looks **back** on the faithless generation who failed to enter the Promised Land, with a warning not to be like them and a reminder of God’s unfailing faithfulness.

It looks **forward** to the challenges of entering the land, with all the war, enemies and idolatry they will face. In this book, Moses explains the Torah, and calls this new generation to be faithful to God and His law.

It’s important to remember that obedience to the law is not the means of salvation – the Exodus has already happened, the people have already been rescued – this is how God’s saved people are to live, to be distinctive from the world and a light to the world – showing the nations around them just how wise and just and good God is.

Structure

Chapters 1-4 – A look at the past

Moses recalls the failure of the previous generation – there are lessons we must learn so that we don’t repeat their mistakes!

Chapters 5-11 – Choose love

“⁴Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one.^[a] ⁵Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” This is the heart of the book. In many ways, the rest of the book is just unpacking and reflecting on these verses.

Chapters 12-26 – What love looks like

The large middle section is a more detailed unpacking of what it looks like to live lives of love, in all sorts of areas of life. Some of this is repeated, some of it is new. See below for “if you’re struggling!”

Chapters 27-30 – Choose life

Having showed the Israelites what it looks like to walk in obedience to God, Moses now calls them to respond in the right way, laying before them two options and their consequences...

Chapters 31-34 – A look at the future

The final sections look forward as Moses appoints a new leader, recites some prophetic poems, and then dies. The scene is set for the Israelites as they enter the promised land... leading on to the book of Joshua.

Jesus in Deuteronomy

Jesus knew how relevant Deuteronomy is – repeatedly quoting from it during His wilderness temptations (Matthew 4). Jesus is the one who succeeds where Israel failed; sticking to God’s Word and obeying His Father.

Not only does He perfectly fulfil the law, but that same central principle of love becomes the heart of His teaching (Mark 12v30).

The OT law went alongside a sacrificial system – necessary for all the inevitable times that Israel failed. Jesus fulfils this by becoming the perfect sacrifice, paying the price for all the ways we fail to live as God calls us to live.

It’s through Jesus that the hope of a new heart is finally fulfilled. (Rom 2v25-29, Col 2v11-14)

If you’re struggling

Sometimes it’s hard to see how Israelite laws from 3500 years ago have relevance to us today. If you’re stumped, try thinking about...

Purpose – how does what you read help Israel love the LORD & stand out?

Principle – what’s the underlying issue being addressed?

Purity – what does this have to say about holy living?

Psalm – if you’re still getting nowhere, why not read a Psalm to give you words to help you pray!

Reading schedule:

34 chapters in 31 days – one a day, and two when you can manage it!



Here are some questions the Bible wants you to ask of itself. Use these to help you as you read your way through this month's book: (please don't feel like you have to fill in every question in loads of detail. These are a guide to help you learn from what you are reading.)

- What did you learn about Jesus and what it means to trust him? (Luke 24:45-47)
- What did you learn about yourself? (James 1:23 & 2 Tim 3:16-17)
- How were you corrected or rebuked or equipped for every good work? (2 Tim 3:16-17)
- What did you learn from the book that will help you keep going as a follower of Jesus? (Romans 15:4)
- What did you learn that will help you serve and build up the church? (Eph 4:11-16)
- What have you learnt that helps you love the Lord your God with all your heart & with all your soul & with all your mind? (Matt 22:37-40)
- What has helped you love your neighbour as yourself? (Matt 22:37-40)



RBT Grow Group is on Tuesday 2nd April

Bring along some things from your reading of Deuteronomy to share with others.

Some RBT reading ideas:

- Meet up once a week to read it with a friend.
- Listen online at Biblegateway.com
- Write down a verse that struck you that day.
- Encourage someone by texting them a thought from what you've read.
-

Grow 1:1 questions to unlock the passage:

What does this teach me about God?

How does this point me to the Lord Jesus and His cross?

What does this teach me about myself?

How does this help me to pray?

What difference will this make to my week?