

Adam Clarke:

Preface to the Book of Deuteronomy

We have borrowed the name of this book, as in former cases, from the Vulgate Latin, Deuteronomium, as the Vulgate has done from the Greek version of the Septuagint, $\delta\epsilon\upsilon\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\mu\omicron\nu\mu$, which is a compound term literally signifying the second law, because it seems to contain a repetition of the preceding laws, from which circumstance it has been termed by the rabbins mishneh , the iteration or doubling.

It appears that both these names are borrowed from Deuteronomy 17:18, where the king is commanded to write him a copy of this law; the original is mishneh hattorah , a repetition or doubling of the law, which the Septuagint have translated $\delta\epsilon\upsilon\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\mu\omicron\nu\mu$, this second law, which we, properly enough, translate a copy of the law: but in Hebrew, like the preceding books, it takes its name from its commencement, Elleh Haddebarim , these are the words; and in the best rabbinical Bibles its running title is Sepher Debarim , the book of debarim, or the book of the words. Our Saxon ancestors termed it the after law.

The Book of Deuteronomy contains an account of what passed in the wilderness from the first day of the eleventh month of the fortieth year after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt to the seventh day of the twelfth month of the same; making in the whole a history of the transactions of exactly five weeks, the months of the Jews being lunar. The history is continued about seven days after the death of Moses; for he began to deliver his first discourse to the people in the plains of Moab the first day of the eleventh month of the fortieth year, Deuteronomy 1:3, and died on the first day of the twelfth month of the same year, aged 120 years.

As the Israelites were now about to enter into the promised land, and many of them had not witnessed the different transactions in the wilderness, the former generations having been all destroyed except Joshua and Caleb; to impress their hearts with a deep sense of their obligation to God, and to prepare them for the inheritance which God had prepared for them. Moses here repeats the principal occurrences of the forty years, now almost elapsed; shows them the absolute necessity of fearing, loving, and obeying God; repeats the ten commandments, and particularly explains each, and the ordinances belonging to them, adding others which he had not delivered before; confirms the whole law in a most solemn manner, with exceeding great and precious promises to them that keep it, and a denunciation of the most awful judgments against those who should break it; renews the covenant between God and the people; prophecies of things which should come to pass in the latter days; blesses each of the tribes, prophetically, with the choicest spiritual and temporal blessings; and then, having viewed the whole extent of the land, from the top of Mount Nebo or Pisgah, he yielded up the ghost, and was privately buried by God, leaving Joshua the son of Nun for his successor.

The Book of Deuteronomy and the Epistle to the Hebrews contain the best comment on the nature, design, and use of the law; the former may be considered as an evangelical commentary on the four preceding books, in which the spiritual reference and signification of the different parts of the law are given, and given in such a manner as none could give who had not a clear discovery of the glory which was to be revealed. It may be safely asserted that very few parts of the Old Testament Scriptures can be read with greater profit by the genuine Christian than the Book of Deuteronomy.

The contents of the different chapters may be thus briefly summed up: -

On the first day of the eleventh month of the fortieth year, after the departure from Egypt, the Israelites being then on the east side of Jordan, in the land of the Moabites, Moses gives them a brief recapitulation of what took place in the wilderness, from their leaving Mount Horeb till they came to Kadesh; Deuteronomy 1.

Their travels from Kadesh till they come to the country of the Amorites, with the defeat of Sihon their king; Deuteronomy 2. The war with Og, king of Bashan, with the dividing his land and that of Sihon among the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; Deuteronomy 3.

Moses exhorts them to observe the Divine precepts; threatens those who should violate them; and appoints Bezer, Ramoth, and Golan, to be the cities of refuge on the east side of Jordan; Deuteronomy 4.

Repeats the decalogue, and tells the people what effect the publication of it had on their fathers, when God spoke to them from the mount; Deuteronomy 5.

Exhorts them to love God with all their heart, and promises them an abundance of good things; Deuteronomy 6.

Repeats the command to exterminate the Canaanites, and all vestiges of their idolatry; Deuteronomy 7.

Recites the many interpositions of God's kindness which they had received during their forty years' travel in the wilderness, and strongly exhorts them to remember those mercies, and not to forfeit a continuance of his favors by ingratitude and disobedience; Deuteronomy 8.

Shows them that they were to pass Jordan in a short time, and that God was about to bring them in, not on account of their goodness, but of his mercy; Deuteronomy 9.

Gives an account of the second tables of the law, which he made at the command of God; mentions their journey from Beeroth to Jotbath, the choosing of the Levites, and the necessity of having the heart

circumcised; Deuteronomy 10.

Continues an account of God's mighty acts in their behalf, and shows the blessings which should come on them who kept his law, and the curse on those who were disobedient. The blessings to be pronounced on Mount Gerizim, and the curses on Mount Ebal; Deuteronomy 11.

Commands them to destroy all monuments of idolatry in the land, to offer the different offerings and sacrifices, and to avoid eating of blood; Deuteronomy 12.

Ordinances against false prophets, idolatrous cities, etc.; Deuteronomy 13.

Forbids their cutting themselves at funerals, recapitulates the law concerning clean and unclean animals, and exhorts them to remember the Levites; Deuteronomy 14.

Every seventh year shall be a year of release for the poor of usury; first-born, etc.; Deuteronomy 15.

Concerning the annual feasts, passover, pentecost, and tabernacles; the establishment of judges and officers; no groves to be planted near the altar of God; Deuteronomy 16.

Idolaters are to be put to death; difficult cases in equity to be referred to the superior judges; of a king and his duties; Deuteronomy 17.

All divination is prohibited. The grand promise of an Extraordinary Prophet. How false prophets are to be distinguished; Deuteronomy 18.

The laws relative to the cities of refuge, and how the intentional murderer is to be treated; Deuteronomy 19.

Laws relative to the carrying on of war; who should be sent back from the army, how they are to treat the Canaanites, and how they are to commence sieges, Deuteronomy 20.

How to make expiation for an uncertain murder; marriages with captives; rights of the first-born, etc.; Deuteronomy 21.

Things lost or strayed are to be restored to their right owners; men and women must not interchange apparel; improper mixtures to be avoided; of the tokens of virginity; adulterers and adulteresses to be put to death; Deuteronomy 22.

Eunuchs, bastards, Moabites, and Ammonites, are not to be permitted to enter into the congregation of the Lord. Harlots not to be tolerated; Deuteronomy 23.

Laws relative to divorce; privileges of the newly-married man: concerning pledges, wages, gleanings, etc.; Deuteronomy 24.

More than forty stripes shall not be given. If a man die childless, his brother shall take his wife. Of weights, measures, etc.; Deuteronomy 25. Different ceremonies to be used in offering the first-fruits; tithes. Of full self-consecration to God; Deuteronomy 26.

The words of the law to be written on stones, and to be set up on Mount Ebal. The tribes which stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the obedient, and those which should stand on Mount Ebal to curse the disobedient. Who they are that are to be cursed; Deuteronomy 27.

The blessings of those who are faithful; curses against the disobedient; Deuteronomy 28.

A recital of the covenant of God, made not only with them, but for their posterity; Deuteronomy 29.

Promises of pardon to the penitent; good and evil, life and death, are set before them; Deuteronomy 30.

Moses, being now 120 years old, delivers a copy of the law which he had written into the hands of the priests, to be laid up in the ark, and to be publicly read every seventh year; a charge is given to Joshua; Deuteronomy 31.

The prophetic and historical song of Moses: he is commanded to go up to Mount Nebo that he may see the promised land; Deuteronomy 32.

The prophetic blessing of the twelve tribes. The indescribable happiness of Israel; Deuteronomy 33.

Moses views the promised land from the top of Mount Nebo, dies, and is privately buried by the Lord. The Israelites mourn for him thirty days.

Joshua's command of the people. The character of Moses; Deuteronomy 34:1-12.

At the close of this book I have added a number of useful Tables, such as no edition of the Bible ever could boast, viz.:

Table I. A perpetual table, showing through the course of 13 lunar cycles (which embrace every possible variation) the day of the week with which the Jewish year begins, and on which the passover is held; as also the lengths of the months Marchesvan and Cisleu.

Table II. Containing the whole variations in the reading of the Pareshioth or sections of the law for every year of the Jewish cycle of 247 years.

Table III. To find, with the help of Table IV., the day of the week upon which any Jewish new moon or festival happens.

Table IV. To determine upon what day of the week any Jewish month commences for any given year; as also the day of the week upon which the Jews celebrate their principal fasts and festivals.

Table V. Containing the order of reading the Pareshioth and Haphtaroth for 90 Jewish years, i. e., from A. M. 5572 to A. M. 5661, both inclusive, connected with the corresponding dates in the Christian Era, according to the Gregorian or new style.

Table VI. Containing the year of the Jewish lunar cycle, the golden number, the first day of the Jewish pass over, Easter Sunday, and the commencement of each Jewish year according to the Gregorian Calendar, a. d. 1812 to a. d. 1900, both inclusive. All concluded with an explanation of the preceding tables. To them succeeds A Chronology of the Pentateuch, with the Book of Joshua; or a Systematic Arrangement of Events from the creation of Adam, A. M. 1, to the birth of Peleg, A. M. 1757, and thence to the death of Joshua, A. M. 2561. This chronology includes two tables, viz.: Table I. The birth and death of all the patriarchs, from Adam, A. M. 1, to Rhea, son of Peleg, A. M. 1787. Table II. A chronology of ancient kingdoms synchronized with the sacred history, from A. M. 1757, B. C. 2247, to A. M. 2561, B. C. 1443. The whole so calculated as to prevent the necessity of having recourse to systems of chronology for historic facts in anywise connected with those mentioned in the Sacred Writings.

The great utility of these tables will, I think, be at once evident to every Biblical critic, chronologist, and antiquary; and for the immense labor employed in their construction the editor, no doubt, will have their hearty thanks.

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