

DEUTERONOMY

-INTRODUCTION, OUTLINE & SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES¹

INTRODUCTION:

"The Hebrew name of Deuteronomy is 'elleh hadd(e)barim (*'these are the words'*) or more briefly, D(e)barim (*'words'*) --taken from the opening line of 1:1. The LXX called it by the more descriptive term Deuteronomion (*'second law-giving'*), because it consists mostly of a restatement of laws contained in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. In the closing months of his earthly career, Moses addressed the assembled congregation of Israel and impressed upon them their peculiar privileges and obligations as the covenant people of Jehovah. Looking forward to the conquest of Canaan, he set forth the divinely ordained constitution of the new theocracy to be established in the land of promise. He laid the responsibility for the preservation of this theocracy upon the conscience of each individual citizen and worshiper." (Archer, p. 271).

OUTLINE (taken directly from Archer):

1. FIRST DISCOURSE: HISTORICAL PROLOGUE, 1:1-4:49

1. God's gracious guidance from Horeb to Moab, 1:1-3:29
2. The new generation admonished to cherish the law, 4:1-40
3. Appointment of the Transjordanian cities of refuge, 4:41-43
4. Historical setting of this discourse, 4:44-49

2. SECOND DISCOURSE: LAWS BY WHICH ISRAEL IS TO LIVE, 5:1-26:19

1. **Basic commandments, 5:1-11:32**

1. The Decalogue (10 commandments) and the love of God to be taught to posterity, 5:1-6:25
2. Steadfast obedience and constant grateful remembrance of God's dealings, 7:1-11:32

2. **Statutes of worship and a holy life, 12:1-16:22**

1. Genuine worship and needful safeguards against idolatry, 12:1-13:18
2. Rules about food, the Sabbaths, and the feast days, 14:1-16:22

3. **Judgments: the treatment of specific offenses, 17:1-26:19**

1. Death for idolatry; appellate procedure; the responsibilities of a king, 17:1-20
2. Penalties for witchcraft and false prophecy; the prophetic order and the Messiah-Prophet, 18:1-22
3. Cities of refuge for accidental homicides; penalties for fraud and perjury, 19:1-21
4. Rules of battle and siege, 20:1-20
5. Care of the deceased; captive wives; inheritance and family discipline; removal of the corpse from the gallows, 21:1-23

¹ The outline & all quotes contained in these notes are taken verbatim from: "A Survey of Old Testament Introduction," by Gleason Archer, Jr. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 1994 revised edition. Notes compiled by: Mike Edwards, Baptist Chaplain, Univ. of Goroka. Date: 15 July, 1998, bolding, italicizing, etc., added June, 2022.

6. Concerning lost property; no masquerading as opposite sex; no mingling of seeds or yoking of diverse animals, 22:1-12
7. Laws concerning marriage, chastity, care of the body, cleanliness, 22:13-24:5
8. Laws concerning economic and social justice, 24:6-25:19
9. Laws of stewardship, offerings, and tithes, 26:1-19

3. THIRD DISCOURSE: WARNING AND PREDICTION, 27:1-31:30

1. The law to be inscribed and its sanctions recited at Mount Ebal, 27:1-26
2. Conditions for blessing and chastisement of the nation (prediction of future judgments upon Israel), 28:1-68
3. Review of God's benefactions (blessings); exhortations to faithfulness, 29:1-30:20
4. Written law entrusted to the leaders of Israel, 31:1-30

4. SONG OF MOSES: ISRAEL'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE COVENANT, 32:1-43

5. FINAL CHARGE AND FAREWELL, 32:44-33:29

1. Moses' last exhortation 32:44-47
2. Moses warned of approaching death, 32:48-52
3. Moses' final blessing upon Israel, tribe by tribe, 33:1-29

6. DEATH OF MOSES AND HIS OBITUARY (death report/brief biography), 34:1-12

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES & COMMENTS:

"As already indicated, Deuteronomy consists of a restatement and summary of the Law in a compendious (concise but comprehensive summary) form for the guidance of the Israelite nation as a whole. But much of this summary is couched in homiletical or sermonic terms. That is, Moses is not simply explaining what the laws of God are, but he is earnestly enjoining them upon the consciences of his people and urging them to take with utmost seriousness God's call to a holy life.

"Certain characteristic emphases or leading thoughts dominate the various discourses. Among these are the following:

1. **The spirituality of God (4:12, 15, 16) and His uniqueness and unity are set forth (4:35, 39; 6:4; 7:9; 10:17).**
2. **God's relationship to His people under the covenant is one of personal love rather than of merit-earning legalism (4:37; 7:13; 33:3).**
3. **For the believer the basic requirement is love for God, and this love is to be the dynamic principle for his life (6:5; 7:8; 10:12, 15; 11:1, 13, 22; 13:3; 19:9; 30:6, 16,20).**

4. **Israel's greatest peril is idolatry, which is to be resisted and suppressed with uncompromising severity (6:14, 15; 7:4; 8:19, 20; 11:16, 17, 20; 13:2-12; 30:17-18).**
5. **Because of their close relation to the holy One, the Israelites must live as a holy people (7:6; 26:19; 28:9).** This holiness entails abstinence from unclean foods, safeguarded by restricting sacrificial worship to a chosen central sanctuary; it finds expression in love toward the neighbor and charity to the poor and underprivileged (widows, orphans, Levites, and foreigners).
6. **Faithfulness to the covenant is to be rewarded by material benefits; violation and disregard of the covenant will be punished by material disaster, loss and ultimate exile (chapters 28-30).**
7. **The characteristic admonition is: 'Remember, and forget not!'** Rather than embarking on some quest for 'new truth' to replace the old, **Israel is to retain and to obey the revealed truth which it has once and for all received from the absolute and unchanging Source of truth.**" (all above, Archer, 272-273).

AUTHORSHIP: As usual, the liberals, rationalists & skeptics try to attack the idea of Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy, as they do the other books of the Pentateuch. However, as Archer comments: "**So far as this writer (Archer) is aware, there are no expressions on the text of Deuteronomy which are not perfectly reconcilable with Mosaic authorship.** Only chapter 34 is demonstrably post-Mosaic, since it contains a short account of Moses' decease. But this does not endanger in the slightest the Mosaic authenticity of the other thirty-three chapters, for the closing chapter furnishes only that type of obituary which is often appended to the final work of great men of letters. An author's final work is often published posthumously [i. e. after his death] [provided he has been writing up to the time of his death]. Since Joshua is recorded to have been a faithful and zealous custodian of the Torah (law) ...it is quite unthinkable that he would have published it without appending such a notice of the decease of his great predecessor.²

SUZERAINTY TREATIES. These were treaties signed between two different parties, and **Deuteronomy is written in the form of a suzerainty treaty, specifically a suzerainty treaty of the 2nd millennium B.C., not the first millennium, as liberal, rationalistic critics often assert.** In other words, with the newer information we possess about suzerainty treaties, **it is clear that the book of Deuteronomy was written at the time of Moses, NOT 6-7 centuries later, as the skeptics incorrectly have often tried to advocate!** Archer's comments on this are helpful:

"In the last two decades... considerable study has been directed toward the structure of the suzerainty treaties drawn up between vassal kings and their imperial overlords in the days of the Hittite ascendancy, in the latter half of the second millennium.

(cont.)

² In a footnote, Archer aptly notes that the liberal critics themselves practice the same procedure! He writes: "Interestingly enough the same phenomenon occurs in the terminal writings of some of the modern higher critics themselves. For example, at the end of Roland de Vaux's Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls, published by Oxford in 1973 there is a brief comment by Kathleen Kenyon: 'It is sad that Roland deVaux did not live to see the translation of his Schweich Lectures appear.' But obviously this does not prove that de Vaux was not the real author of the rest of the book." (Archer, p. 276)

As Meredith Kline points out, **the typical suzerainty treaty of the Hittite period consisted of the following parts:** (1) Preamble (Deut. 1:1-5); (2) Historical Prologue (Deut. 1:6-4:49); (3) the Stipulations or main provisions of the treaty (Deut. 5-26); (4) Curses and Blessings, or covenant-ratification (Deut. 27-30); (5) Arrangements for Succession, or continuation of the covenant (with invocation of witnesses and disposition of the text, and the periodic reading of the treaty before the public -cf. Deut. 31:33).³

"As contrasted with the second millennium treaties, those of the first millennium tend to vary in the order of the sections above specified, and they generally lacked section 2 (the historical prologue), or the blessings for covenant-faithfulness in section 4. G.E. Mendenhall remarks ("Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition" in *Biblical Archaeologist* 17:3 (May 1954) :50-76) that **it has been established that Deuteronomy conforms to the treaty structure of the second millennium**, and hence this 'covenant type is even more important as a starting point, because it cannot be proven to have survived the downfall of the great empires of the second millennium B.C. The older form of the covenant was no longer widely known after the United Monarchy.'" (Archer, p. 274)

"On Conservative presuppositions it is possible to establish a very strong case for the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy. By the test of agreement with known historical conditions and by careful literary analysis, it is not difficult to show that only the pre-Davidic period can successfully be reconciled with the data of the Hebrew text. It can be shown by a fair handling of the evidence: **(a)** that Deuteronomy must have been written prior to the rise of the writing prophets in the eighth century B.C.; **(b)** that it also antedates the division of the Hebrew monarchy into Judah and Israel in 931 B.C.; **(c)** that it best agrees with a period near the conquest under Joshua." (Archer, p. 275)

³ Archer, citing Kline, *Treaty of the Great King* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), p. 28