

# Deuteronomy: Foundations of Godly Living (for God's Chosen People)

## Study Concept

- *Modern misconceptions of salvation*: Commonly focus on ourselves and what we get out of it, whether in this life or the next, thereby reducing God to a fixer (servant) for us
- *Better conception of salvation*: Whereas sin brought death and destruction, including damage to our relationship with God, salvation gives life and restores relationships
  - *In sum*: We get a new opportunity to be what we were intended to be and to live as we were intended to live (with some limitations because of the Fall)
- *Resulting Question*: **What does it mean to live in a right relationship with God?**
  - Deuteronomy helps us answer that
- While recognizing that this was written to Israel and that certain dispensational differences must be recognized and considered:
  - God's nature does not change
  - Man's nature has not changed: we have the same propensities, the proneness to wander
  - The key aspects of a right relationship with God have not changed
- Further, we stand in a position similar to Israel:
  - Chosen by a sovereign God
  - Redeemed by His grace
  - Called unto holiness

## Historical Context and Book Background

- *As to the nation of Israel* (the recipient): After years of wandering in the wilderness because of its rebellion, the nation consisted of a new generation who had not seen/experienced Egypt, the Exodus, or Sinai and who needed to be prepared for what was to come
- *As to Moses* (the human author): A well-trained man with face-to-face experience with God (compare Paul) and great wisdom from life who was charging the nation with what the people needed to succeed and was recording that message for future generations
- *As to the book itself*: Part 5 of "five-volumed book," having a focus on exhortation, especially as to a relationship with God

## Four Key Characteristics of Deuteronomy

- Delivered like a *sermon*: a message from God (1:3), exhortation
- Reviews key aspects of *law: torah*, instruction
- Sets forth a *covenant*
- Structured as a *treaty* (Hittite treaties of the Late Bronze Age)

*Key treaty elements provide a good outline for a study:*

STRUCTURE OF DEUTERONOMY	OUR STUDY
Preamble (1:1-5)	Introduction
Historical Prologue (1:6-4:49)	Foundational Truths
Stipulations (ch. 5-26)	Obligations To God To What He Says Otherwise
Curses & Blessings, Witnesses, Ratification, Oath (ch. 27-30)	Consequences of Choices
Arrangement for Succession (ch. 31-34)	Wrap Up

## Theme Verse

"Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!" (5:29)

- Matches structure and big ideas of our study
- Shows an important progression: Heart → Obligation → Good
- Reminds us of the goal (the end) for us: our good (6:18, 21)

## Foundational Truths

- Introduction
  - Outline of the Historical Prologue (1:6-4:49)
  - Big ideas: What Israel and God did and what this implies
- Knowing & Remembering
  - Key terms: know, forget, and remember
  - The importance and role of knowledge  
*progress of knowing*: Know → Believe → Understand  
*goal of knowing*: Know → Feel → Do

- Key Knowledge of God
  - Who He is                      His identity
  - What He is like                His character
  - What He has done            His works
- Key Knowledge of Ourselves
  - What we are in ourselves
  - What we are in God
  - What we have done (lessons from past failure)
- Importance of the Heart
  - What is the heart?
  - Why is it critical?

## Our Obligations

- Obligations are a key part of treaties, both then and now
- Treaties are typically bilateral, placing obligation on both sides
- Our focus is *not* on the obligations of the “great king,” the LORD God, but rather on those of the other party: His covenant people

NOTE: The divisions below seek to help us organize and understand, yet the integral relationships among the obligations make these divisions imperfect

### *Obligations to God*

- Attitudes and Affections of the Heart
  - Fear Him
  - Love Him
- Words
  - Worship Him and only Him
  - Bless Him
  - Protect His Name
- Deeds
  - Seek Him
  - Follow Him and cling to Him
  - Serve Him
  - Obey Him

### *Obligations to What God Says*

- Listen and learn                      *listen with a goal of learning*
- Keep and do                            *keep with a goal of doing*

- Do not add to, subtract from, or alter what He says
- Teach His words to the next generations

### *Other Obligations*

- Obligation as to Others
  - Our Children: especially, to teach them
  - Our Neighbors: to act with integrity and compassion
- Obligation as to Life Generally
  - Guard Ourselves
  - Be Holy
  - Be Blameless
  - Be Fearless: in the face of God’s will and the face of man
- Obligation as to False Worship
  - Remove seductive influences
  - Do not learn or follow the ways of idolaters
  - Do not inquire into false worship

## Consequences—Blessings and Curses

- Significance of Obligation
  - We get to choose our actions but not their consequences
  - Covenant obligations not abstract: they relate to real life
- Blessings of Obedience
  - General benefits and specific blessings
  - Danger of a wrong definition of success
  - Perils of blessings: wrong motives and forgetting God
- Curses of Disobedience
  - General dangers and specific curses
  - Loss of opportunity to receive blessings/covenant promises
- Blessings of repentance and forgiveness

## Final Admonitions

- A blessing and a curse (11:26–28)
- A covenant and a choice (30:11–20) ... “choose life” (30:19)
- Warnings and witnesses (8:11–20; 29:19), including
  - Public reading of the law every seven years (31:10–13)
  - The Song of Moses (31:14–32:44)
- Take this to heart ... it is your life (32:45–47)