

# “Choose Life” — Week 2: Deuteronomy 1–11

Rev'd Benjamin Giffone, PhD — Redeemer Presbyterian Church — Spring 2025

## Structure of Deuteronomy (details of Deut 1–11)

1:1–4:40 First Discourse of Moses

- 1:1–5 Historical prologue of Deuteronomy
- 1:6–3:29 Historical prologue of 1<sup>st</sup> discourse: YHWH's precise plan to give Israel the land
- Chapter 1: Israel's faithlessness and YHWH's punishment of the people at Kadesh Barnea.
  - 1:2 journey that took 38 years should have taken 11 days
  - 1:7–8 YHWH transfers the legal “title” of Canaan to Israel. To the Euphrates: a huge territory!
  - 1:9–18 Revisionism 1: dividing the leadership was Moses' idea, not Jethro's (Ex 18) or God's (Num 11:16–25). Citizens and aliens treated the same (1:16).
  - 1:22–25 Revisionism 2: the spying idea was the people's, not YHWH's (Num 13:1–2). Perhaps, trying to protect YHWH from tempting his people.
  - 1:37 Revisionism 3: Moses is punished for the people's sake (cf to Num 20).
  - The Deuteronomy version makes Moses and YHWH look slightly better, and the people look a little worse. The people are hesitant to enter the land, so they suggest spies. The people somehow induce Moses to sin. YHWH cannot be accused of “tempting” his people by sending the spies. Why? Because in 1:31 Moses says that God carries Israel like a father carries a child. This image is more compelling if the father is strong and the child is weak and obstinate. Anyway, the core of the story is preserved: the people reject the promised land at Kadesh Barnea.
- Chapters 2–3: YHWH's very precise plan to give Israel the land belonging to the Canaanites, partially fulfilled by the apportionment of Amor and the Transjordan to the 2½ tribes
  - 2:1–23 distant cousins of Israel (Esau, Moab, Ammon) have their own allowance from YHWH (previously “prepared the way” for Ammon, ridding the area of the Zamzummim)
  - 2:24–37 Sihon of Heshbon (Amor) is provoked to battle, and the Israelites wipe out Heshbon. YHWH provoked the Amorites to give Israel their land (2:24); to spread his own reputation (2:25).
  - 3:1–11 Og of Bashan is “put to the ban.” The word for “ban” or “destroy utterly” is *herem*, related to place name *Hormah*
  - 3:12–17 “Trans-Jordan,” aka, East of Jordan River, apportioned to Reuben, Gad and Manasseh (Num 32)
  - 3:18–22 mandate for holy war (*herem*) against the Canaanites
  - 3:23–29, Moses asks again to go into the land. He gets to see the land, but he will have to transfer leadership to Joshua before going in.
- 4:1–24 Covenant stipulations
  - 4:1–8 This is a good law; reputation among the nations
  - 4:9–24 Oral and verbal revelation only; no images, no other gods
- 4:25–31 Consequences: exile, destruction – but also, repentance/return (30–31)
- 4:32–40 Concluding exhortation – This is unique in world history – “no other,” a statement soteriology, not ontology (cf. 4:19–20)

#### 4:44–28:68 Second discourse of Moses

- Decalogue and Exposition (5–11)
  - 5 Decalogue, Moses as mediator. Differences between the two Decalogues is the justification for the Sabbath rest. Exodus contains a creational justification—God rested on the seventh day, and so should we (Exod 20:8–11)—whereas Deut focuses on the rescue from slavery in Egypt (5:12–15).
  - 6 Faithfulness to YHWH through generations; remember the Exodus. The next generation; how Israel is to teach them and instruct them, because YHWH is preparing the way for them (16–19). *Shema'* and *Ve'ahavta*, central teachings of Judaism. *Shema'*: God's uniqueness, not ontological oneness (as opposed to Trinity)
  - 7 When you go into the land, destroy all the Canaanites
    - 7:1–6 Don't be afraid of their numbers; destroy them and their idols
    - 7:7–11 YHWH loves Israel, not because she was great, but because of election, love, promise, covenant with patriarchs
    - 7:12–16 You don't need to assimilate the fertility cults of these nations, because YHWH loves you and will prosper you
    - 7:17–26 Don't be afraid of their numbers; destroy them and their idols
  - 8 Temptations of pride and complacency in the land. The wilderness wandering is a test from God, a test for the second generation. He fed and clothed them along the way, and now he is bringing them into a land filled with milk and honey! When you go in, remember God.
    - 8:1–10 You will receive tremendous blessing in the land
    - 8:3 man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of YHWH
    - 8:5 God has been a father to them
    - 8:11–20 Do not forget that it is God who is blessing you—no pride
    - 8:19–20 If you forget this, you will perish
  - 9–10 the breaking of the covenant at Sinai (Golden Calf) and the renewal of the covenant. Chiastic structure
    - 9:1–5 Remember God when you go into the land
      - 9:6–24 The first covenant is made and broken
        - 9:25–29 Moses pleads to YHWH based on YHWH's reputation
      - 10:1–11 The covenant is renewed and written in stone
    - 10:12–22 Remember YHWH when you go into the land
  - 11 Summary, restatement of the challenge of the covenant
    - 11:1–7 Remember everything that God has done for you and to you (discipline)
    - 11:8–17 Keeping the law will result in blessing, fertility, prosperity
    - 11:18–21 Keep the law carefully, whole-heartedly!
    - 11:22–25 Keeping the law will result in blessing
    - 11:26–32 Remember all that God has done for you and to you (discipline)
- Deuteronomic Code (12–26)
- Covenant Blessings and Curses (27–28)
  - 27 Ceremony at Shechem
  - 28 Consequences of obedience and disobedience

#### 29–30 Third Discourse of Moses

#### 31–34 Conclusion