

*Alpha and Omega*

# DEUTERONOMY

14 lessons



Rejep and Layla Aydin

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*Deuteronomy: 14 lessons*

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*alphaomegasilkroad@gmail.com*

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# Preface

## **In preparing this course, we are indebted to the following:**

*Deuteronomy*, Christopher Wright (1996, Hendrickson, New International Biblical Commentary)

*The Message of Deuteronomy*, Raymond Brown (1993, IVP, The Bible Speaks Today)

*Deuteronomy*, Alec Motyer (2016, 10Publishing)

*New International Version Zondervan Study Bible* (2015)

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The rest of the course is born out of Leyla's degree in Biblical Studies and more than three decades of Rejep and Leyla teaching God's word to Central Asian believers. These courses are written to fill a need for simple courses that would address the issues that are particularly relevant to the church in this part of the world. They are tools that ordinary believers can use as they gather with other believers, so that together they can grow in their understanding and love of God's word.



# Why study the book of Deuteronomy?

The book of Deuteronomy gave teaching that was foundational to the rest of the Old Testament. We can see the influence of this book on all the Old Testament prophets (especially Jeremiah), the Israelite kings (e.g. 2 Kings 22:8), the Psalms and the book of Proverbs.

Jesus the Messiah used words from the book of Deuteronomy more than any other book in the Old Testament (e.g. Matt 4:1–11; 5:33; 19:18–19).

Throughout the New Testament there are many verses and references from this book.

The message of this book was not just for the Israelites in the Old Testament, but also for us all today. As we study it, it will grow our understanding of who our amazing God is and what he has done for us.

Here are 14 lessons to help you to get to know this wonderful book!

If you have not studied the Alpha and Omega *Bible Overview Course*, you will benefit from studying it before doing this course.

Each lesson has lots of questions for you to answer. The number in brackets after each question indicates the number of the answer at the bottom of the lesson. Try to answer the question before looking at the answer.

Each lesson has references to verses from other books of the Bible. If they are in **bold**, it is important to find them and read them. If they are not in bold, you can look them up if you have time.

The “extra” boxes are for those who want to explore a little further into the chapter. They can be studied as part of the lesson, or they can be studied for homework.

We pray that you will enjoy learning about this wonderful book and sharing it with others!



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## Deuteronomy lesson 1:

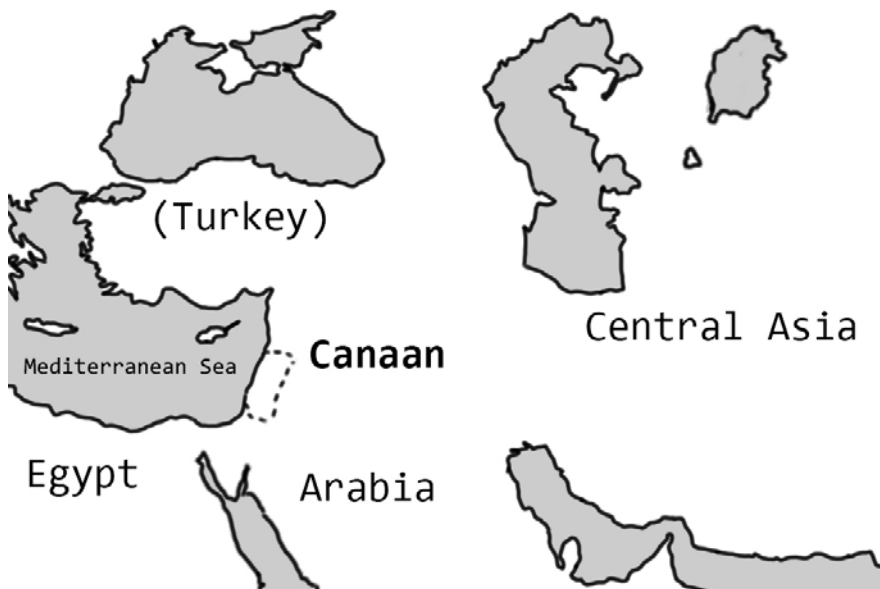
# Prophet and promise



## Introduction

### Background information

In the book of Deuteronomy we have the precious words that God spoke to his people through his servant Moses. Moses spoke to them just before they entered the land that God had promised to give to them—the land of Canaan.



The background to this book is found in the books of Genesis, Exodus and Numbers.

Read these statements and see if you can repeat them all without looking at them:

- God created everything good: the world and the first two people, Adam and Eve.
- Instead of obeying God, they were tempted by the devil into disobeying him.

- Because of this, they were banished from God's presence. And so they lost God's blessings, including eternal life.
- Many years later, God promised landless, childless old Abraham, who lived in the area east of Canaan, that:
  - he would be the father of a great nation,
  - his descendants would live in the land of Canaan,
  - through him all people would be blessed!
- But Abraham's descendants moved to Egypt to escape terrible famine. This was NOT the land God had promised them. And there they ended up in unbearable slavery.
- So God raised up Moses to lead them out of slavery. This rescue is the most important event for God's people in the Old Testament. It is called the **exodus**.

You can read about these events in the books of Genesis, and Exodus chapters 1–19.

Now in the book of Deuteronomy, God is finally about to bring his people to the promised land.

## 1. Treaty

The whole book of Deuteronomy is similar to ancient treaties that kings in those days made with those they had conquered. These treaties usually had five main parts:

1. Historical introduction (Deut 1:1–4:49).
2. General requirements of the treaty (Deut chapters 5–11).
3. Detailed instructions on what the conquered people were expected to do (Deut chapters 12–26).
4. Blessings and curses (Deut chapters 27–28).
5. Witnesses (Deut 30:19; 31:19; chapter 32).

So the book of Deuteronomy is like God's treaty with his people. He is their new king (Deut 33:5). In this book, God's people learn what their king expects of them.

## 2. Geography

In the first three chapters, God's people are travelling. There are a lot of places mentioned. These show us that we are reading about events that really happened. You do not need to know where all these places were to understand what these verses are teaching us. We will show the important places on maps.

Now we're ready to start the course!

# Prophet and promise

In this first lesson we will look at:

- God's most important prophet and promise in the Old Testament.
- God's most important prophet and promise in the New Testament.

Let's start with the Old Testament.

## God's most important prophet in the Old Testament: Moses

Read **Deuteronomy 1:1–5**.

There are three characteristics of Moses that we notice here. He was:

### 1. Reliant on God

What had Moses said about himself in **Exodus 4:10**? [1]

And what had God told him in **Exodus 4:11–12**? [2]

In this book, we see the results! God made Moses into a faithful speaker who was able to teach and explain God's Word clearly. Despite Moses' weakness, God greatly used him to lead God's people out of slavery and to prepare them for life in the promised land. But Moses never forgot how dependent he was on God (Deut 34:10).

### 2. A good teacher

Who was Moses speaking to in Deuteronomy 1:1? [3]

Moses spoke these words to **all** the people of Israel, not just to the leaders. These words are for everyone! In the same way, the book of Deuteronomy is not just for leaders, but is a foundational book that all believers should study.

What do we learn about where Moses' teaching had come from (v.3)? [4]

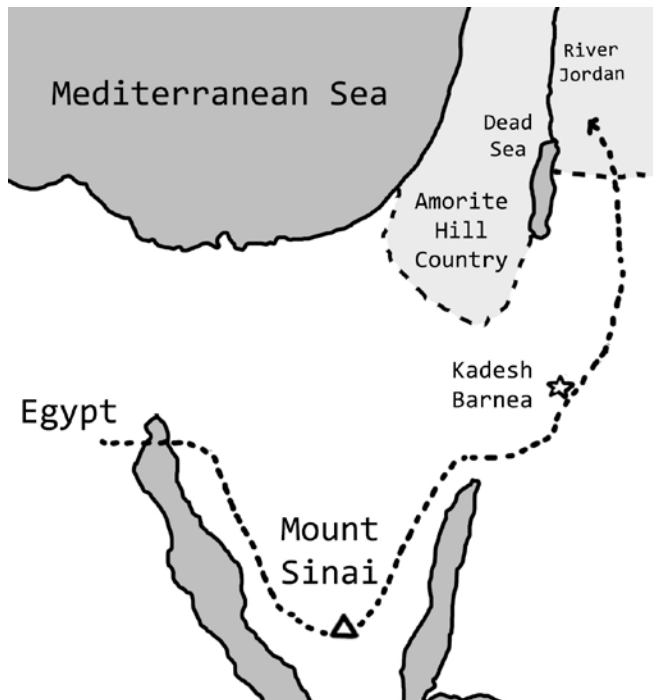
Like all the books of the Bible, this is the voice of a human being, but at the same time these words are from God.

What did Moses do (v.5)? [5]

Moses not only told the people what God had said, but he explained it. God's people need to know **and** understand God's word. Moses was a good teacher!

### 3. A faithful proclaimer of the kingdom of God

As God's prophet, Moses' task was to call God's people to obey God, their king who had rescued them (Deut 33:5). So obedience is an important theme in the book of Deuteronomy. They belonged to God. It was essential that they obeyed him!



Where were the people in Deuteronomy 1:1? [6]

Find this place on the map.

In which year after the exodus from Egypt did Moses speak (v.3)? [7]

How long did the journey from Horeb (or Mount Sinai) to Kadesh Barnea usually take (v.2)? [8]

So an 11-day journey took 40 years! This is the price of disobedience. Because they disobeyed, the Israelites had to spend 40 years wandering around in the wilderness.

Read **Deuteronomy 30:16**. What does God say will be the result if his people will obey him? [9]

Read **Deuteronomy 30:17–18**. What does God say will be the result if his people disobey him? [10]

The Old Testament is an extraordinary story. Throughout the Old Testament we read that:

- God's people continually disobeyed him.
- God continually worked to restore his relationship with his people.

How extraordinary that God is such a merciful and gracious God! In the book of Deuteronomy we read that Moses repeatedly reminded God's people about this.

Moses faithfully proclaimed the need for God's people to obey their king and be faithful citizens of God's kingdom.

## God's most important Old Testament promise—the promised land

Read **Deuteronomy 1:6–8**.



Look at the map and find these places:

- Mount Sinai (in Deuteronomy it is also called Horeb)
- The hill country of the Amorites
- The Arabah Valley
- The Western Foothills
- The Negev
- Lebanon
- The Euphrates River

Five hundred years before Moses, God had promised to give Abraham's descendants the land of Canaan (Gen 15:18–21). Now, at last, God is ready to give his people this land.

In Deuteronomy 1:6, Moses looks back to the time when God met with his people on Mount Sinai (also called Horeb). This was 40 years before Moses spoke the words in this book.

What had God told them to do 40 years ago (v.7)? [11]

Forty years earlier, God had told them to enter the promised land. But, as we will read in the next lesson, they refused to go! God promised them a wonderful land, and yet, at that time, his people did not want to enter it!

## New Testament

So far in this lesson we have looked at:

- the most important Old Testament **prophet**—Moses. His task was to call the people to obey God, their king.
- the most important Old Testament **promise**—the promised land. This promise could only be received by God's people if they obeyed and went into the promised land.

Now let's look at the most important prophet and most important promise in the New Testament.

## The most important prophet in the New Testament

Read **Hebrews 1:1–2**. Who is the most important prophet in the New Testament? [12]

Like Moses, he was God's prophet, (Mark 6:4) who:

- spoke the words that God the Father gave him to say (John 8:28),
- was a very good teacher (Matt 7:28),
- proclaimed the kingdom of God (Luke 8:1).

Jesus was the special prophet who Moses had predicted that God would send:

*The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among... your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him* (Deut 18:15).

In his sermon on the day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter quoted this verse to show how Jesus was the Messiah whom God had promised long ago through Moses (Acts 3:20–22).

In John's gospel, Jesus told those who didn't believe in him: *If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me* (John 5:46).

Through Moses, God was telling his people that there was someone very important who was coming. This is just one example of how the Old Testament prepares us for the coming of Jesus the Messiah, the most important prophet of all.

## The most important promise in the New Testament

Read **1 John 2:25**. What is the most important promise that God has made us, in the New Testament? [13]

God is promising us a home in his eternal promised land, the new Jerusalem!

Read **John 1:12**. What do we have to do to receive God's promise of eternal life? [14]

It is only through Jesus that we can come to God the Father (John 14:6).

But the gift is not ours until we accept it. We must not be like the Israelites, who refused God's wonderful offer!

In the Old Testament, God used Moses to bring his people to the edge of the promised land and then Moses died. Other leaders brought them into the promised land and ruled over them in the years ahead. However, in the New Testament it is Jesus himself who brings us into the eternal promised land **and** will be with us forever (John 14:1–6). Unlike Moses and the promised land, Jesus is inseparable from the promise of eternal life!

Like the Israelites, we are on a journey to the promised land! But, unlike the Israelites, the land we are going to is a perfect one that will last forever (Rev 21:1–4).

In what two ways is our journey to the eternal promised land different from the Israelites' journey to the promised land? [15]



## Extra: Why did God's people have to wait so long before they entered the promised land?

1. How many of God's people (the descendants of Abraham) went to Egypt in the time of Joseph (**Gen 46:27**)? [16]

This was not enough people to fill a country!

How numerous were God's people (men) when they left Egypt (**Num 1:46**)? [17]

So if we add the women and children, maybe there were about two million people. Now there are enough of them to live in the promised land!

2. Why did the Amorites lose the land of Canaan (**Gen 15:16**)? [18]

God was amazingly patient with the people of the land. He gave them a long time to repent and change how they lived. Only when they became finally and truly evil did he destroy them.

## Challenge

Moses is a great example for us! He said that he was not good at talking but he became a great teacher. Of course, our words aren't going to be part of the Bible. God's word is complete and cannot be added to. But people need to hear what God has already said. We don't need to be good at talking to be able to tell people the good news.

Even the apostle Paul in the New Testament lacked confidence! He told the Corinthians: *I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power...* (1 Cor 2:3-4).

He later wrote: *That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses... For when I am weak, then I am strong* (2 Cor 12:10).

So let the examples of Moses and the apostle Paul encourage us!

Our job is:

- **to be reliant on God.** We should pray that the Holy Spirit will open the eyes of our relatives and friends to the truth,
- **to be good teachers.** We should tell them about how God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ,
- **to proclaim God's kingdom.** We should help them to love reading and obeying God's Word so that they too can be good citizens of God's kingdom.

Let God develop in us the gifts of evangelism and teaching as we practise talking to people about our wonderful God!

How are Moses and the Apostle Paul examples for us? [19]

Is there someone that you can teach these lessons to?

**What has God been saying to you through this lesson?**

**Who can you share this with today?**

## Homework

Read **Deuteronomy 1:6–3:11** before the next lesson.

## Answers

- 1 – He said that he was slow of speech and tongue.
- 2 – I will help you speak and teach you what to say.
- 3 – Moses was speaking to all the people of Israel.
- 4 – Moses' teaching had come from the Lord.
- 5 – Moses **expounded** the law of God.
- 6 – In the wilderness, east of the River Jordan.
- 7 – In the fortieth year after the exodus from Egypt.
- 8 – It usually took only eleven days to travel.
- 9 – God promised them that they would live and increase, and that he would bless them in the promised land.
- 10 – God said they would be destroyed and would not live long in the promised land.
- 11 – Go and take possession of the promised land.
- 12 – God's Son, Jesus Christ.
- 13 – God promised to give us eternal life!
- 14 – We must receive Jesus the Messiah and believe in his name.
- 15 – Jesus himself will take us there and will be with us forever! Also the promised land we are going to is perfect and will last forever!
- 16 – Seventy people.
- 17 – There were more than 600,000 men.
- 18 – They lost the land of Canaan because they had become so evil.
- 19 – They were afraid to teach people about God, but God made them into great teachers.

## Deuteronomy lesson 2:

# Leaders and followers



In this lesson we will think about:

- how to be a good leader,
- how to be a good follower,
- what it looks like when we learn to obey.

## Leaders

Read **Deuteronomy 1:9–18**.

What was Moses' problem and what did he do about it (vv.10–15)? [1]

**Commanders** (v.15) were army officers and also those who supervised different groups of people who had certain jobs to do.

**Tribal officials** (v.15) were civil (non-military) officials who assisted with the organisation of the nation.

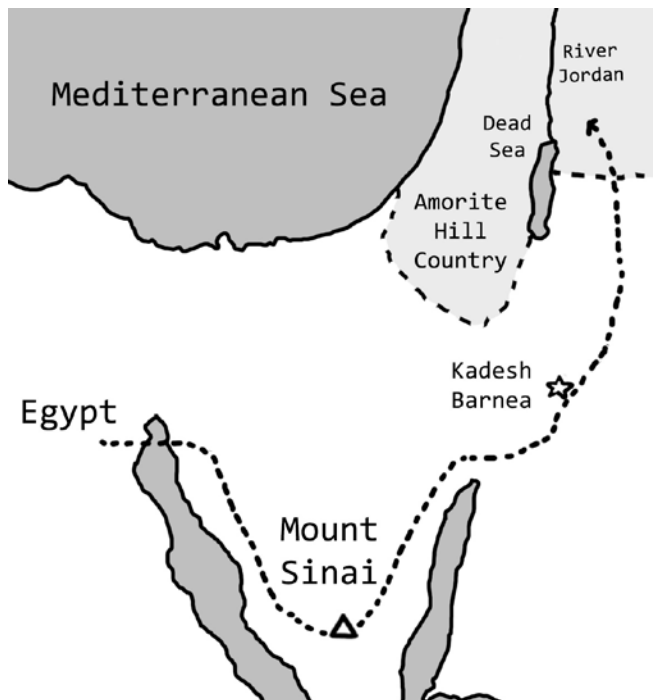
**Judges** (v.16) were those who made sure that justice was done whenever there was a crime.

In chapter 5 and also in later chapters, Moses reminded the people of God's laws. God had given them these laws at Mount Sinai (also called Mount Horeb) 40 years before. These leaders had **to learn and obey these laws** in order to lead wisely and judge fairly. They must be concerned for the poor and defenceless (Deut 15:7; 24:14). They must not take bribes. They must not be afraid of powerful people who want them to give a certain judgement that is not right (Deut 16:19).

What did the **commanders, tribal officials and judges** need to do, in order to do their jobs properly? [2]

## Followers

Read **Deuteronomy 1:19–28**.



Where did they get to, and where were they supposed to go (vv.19–21)? [3]

What happened (vv.22–28)? [4]

What was the problem (v.28)? [5]

Read **Deuteronomy 1:29–46**.

What did Moses tell the Israelites (vv.29–30)? [6]

When Moses talked about how God had cared for the Israelites, what does he compare God to in v.31? [7]

The Israelites knew that they could trust God. He had been looking after these two million people in the desert ever since they had left Egypt. Yet how did the people respond to God (v.32)? [8]

This was shocking! God had done so much for his people. He had miraculously rescued them from terrible slavery. He had miraculously guided them. And he had miraculously provided for them in the desert. And yet they refused to trust him. Instead, they gave in to their fear, and chose to disobey.

So what did God tell them (vv.35–38)? [9]

When people disobey once, it makes it easier for them to disobey a second time. See how one sin of the Israelites led to another sin. What did the people decide to do and what was the result (vv.41–46)? [10]

They were defeated, they were very upset and worst of all, they had spoiled their relationship with God.

We have seen how, in the Old Testament, the leaders and followers from God's people needed to be faithful leaders and followers. The New Testament says the same thing.

## Leaders in the New Testament

The leaders of God's people still need to know God's word well, to obey it and to teach it faithfully (2 Tim 2:2).

Read **Mark 10:42–45**. What else does Jesus tell his disciples about leadership? [11]

Read **1 Peter 5:2–3**. How does Peter describe the elders of the churches? [12]

### Challenge 1

Church leaders are not to rule like kings. Instead, they should lead as caring shepherds, who do everything to see their church members grow in the knowledge and love of God.

Moses realised that he couldn't do everything by himself. In the same way, church leaders should not try to do everything by themselves. In 1 Corinthians chapter 12, Paul describes the church as a body made up of different parts. A good leader will see what gifts God has given to the different members of his church. He will encourage them to use their gifts for the blessing of the church and community.



If you are a leader:

- Are you devoted to studying, obeying and teaching God's word?
- Are you leading humbly, serving your members as a caring, compassionate shepherd?
- Are you helping the church members to develop the gifts that God has given them? Or do you try to do everything yourself?
- Are you encouraging everyone without favouritism (1 Tim 5:21)?

Which of these do you most need to work on?

## Followers in the New Testament

Read **Mark 8:34**. What does Jesus say about being a follower? [13]

Church members are not to seek their own honour, but the honour of Jesus. They should do whatever is needed so that the church can together be a faithful witness to Jesus. We must all be ready to serve!

## Challenge 2

If you are a church member:

- Are you living in fear or in faith? What does this look like in your life?
- Are you praying for your church leaders to lead well? Or do you just complain about them?
- Are you using your gifts to serve willingly for the good of the church?

Which of these do you most need to work on?

## Learning to Obey

God wanted the Israelites to conquer the land of Canaan.

### Why God's people had to conquer the Canaanites

In the book of Genesis, we read how God chose Abraham to be the father of a nation who would be special to him. God promised him that one day his descendants would live in the land of Canaan. About 500 years later God was going to fulfil this promise.

The people who lived in the land of Canaan were evil. They even burned their sons and daughters in the fire as a sacrifice to their gods (Deut 12:31). God wanted to destroy these nations because of their terrible wickedness.

God wanted to give his people the land of Canaan so that they could be an example to the whole world. They were to show everyone how to live. Then other people could see how good and wise God is, and would know how to please God too (Deut 4:6–8).

But there was another reason why God gave his people this land. Through his people living in the promised land, God prepared the world for the coming of his Son, the Messiah. It was the Messiah who would rescue the world from sin, death and Satan himself. Without God's people living in the promised land with God's good laws to guide them, no one would have understood what the Messiah was going to do.

The destruction of the Canaanites was a once-for-all-time event in the history of the world. It is not an example for us to copy by invading any country today!

There is no physical promised land today. There is no land for which we need to fight. Believers do not live in one geographical place, but are to be found in every country of the world.

We look forward to the day when Jesus will come back and take us all to live with him in the eternal promised land—the New Jerusalem.

Before we read the next passage, look at the map and find these places:

- Edom (the Edomites were the descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother).
- Moab (the Moabites were descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew).
- Ammon (the Ammonites were also descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew).
- The Zered River
- The Arnon River

Read **Deuteronomy 2:1–13**.

Moses is reminding the Israelites of what happened after their 40 years of wandering in the desert. After 40 years, the Israelites were learning how to obey God!

Read **Deuteronomy 2:24–37**.

The promised land was full of strong people who lived in strong cities. What do we learn about how the Israelites were able to enter the promised land (v.25)? [14]

What did the Israelites have to do to be able to go into the promised land (v.24)? [15]

The promised land was a gift from God. But they still had to fight to conquer this land.

What message did Moses send to Sihon, king of Heshbon, and what was his reply (vv.26–30)? [16]

So then what happened (vv.32–33)? [17]

This was the Israelites' first battle, as they were about to conquer the promised land! It showed them that if they trusted and obeyed God, then God would indeed give them the promised land!

Read **Deuteronomy 3:1–11**.

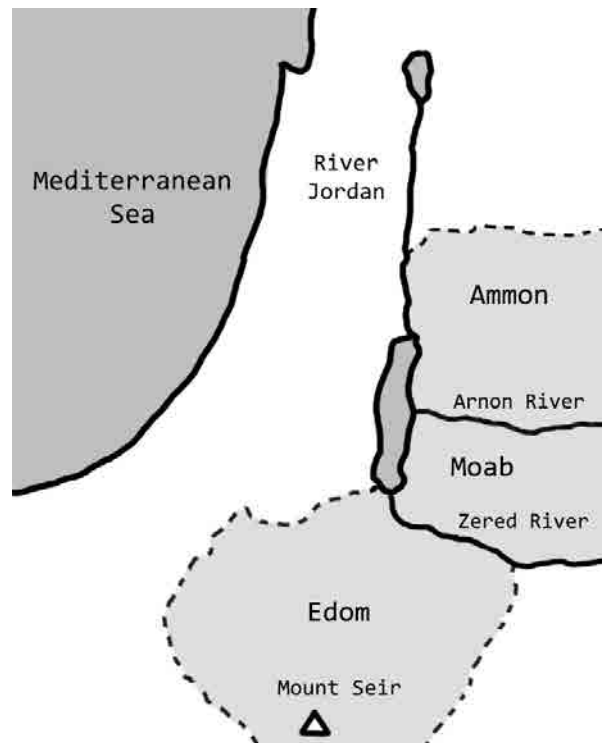
Who did God give the Israelites victory over next (v.3)? [18]

How many cities did they conquer (v.4)? [19]

This was an extraordinary achievement!

What did they destroy and what did they keep (vv.6–7)? [20]

The inhabitants of the land had been very evil. God wanted them to be destroyed so that God's people would not be led into sin (Moses talks about this in Deut 7:3–4).





The plunder was a gift from God. It was a way that God provided for them as they continued their journey.

These battles continued to show the Israelites that if they obeyed God, he would give them victory in the promised land.

### *Extra:* King Og

King Og was a Rephaite. The Rephaites were very tall and strong people (Deut 2:20–21).

Only the most wealthy people had iron in those days. And Og needed a very big bed. The Israelites had defeated a huge and powerful king!



## Learning to obey in the New Testament

In the Old Testament, God led his people. As they learned to obey, he gave them victory so they could live in the promised land. In the same way, God is leading us today. As we learn to obey, God is giving us victory over sin, so that we can enter the eternal, perfect promised land. Soon Jesus will take us to live with him forever!

Eternal life is a gift from God, but we cannot relax! We also are in a battle, and we must choose to obey our king, each minute of each day.

### Challenge 3

Read **Ephesians 6:10–18**.

Who do we have to fight against (v.12)? [21]

The Israelites had to fight against the evil people who were living in the promised land. In the same way, God has commanded us to fight against sin, the devil and his demons.

In what two ways can we fight against the devil and his demons (vv.11,18)? [22]

Think about each piece of armour and what it does. What does it mean if a believer forgets that God has given him this piece of armour?

- What happens when we forget that we have the belt of truth? [23]
- What happens when we forget that we have the breastplate of righteousness? [24]
- What happens when we forget that we have the shoes of readiness to talk about Jesus? [25]



- What happens when we forget that we have the shield of faith? [26]
- What happens when we forget that we must hold tight to God's Word? [27]
- What happens when we forget that we have the helmet of salvation? [28]

What things can we do to help us stand firm together against the devil and his demons? [29]

**What is God saying to you today through this lesson?**

**Who can you share this with today?**

## Homework

Read **Deuteronomy 3:12–29** before the next lesson.

## Answers

- 1 – There were so many people now, that Moses was not able to sort out all their disputes by himself. So he appointed wise and respected men to be leaders over the people.
- 2 – They needed to study and obey God's law.
- 3 – They had got to Kadesh Barnea and they were supposed to go to the hill country of the Amorites.
- 4 – They sent some spies to see what the land was like. Most of the spies told them that it was a good land but the people there were strong and tall, and the cities had very high walls. So the Israelites did not want to obey God and go into this land.
- 5 – They were terrified.
- 6 – Moses reminded them that they did not need to be afraid, as God would fight for them, just as he did when they left Egypt.
- 7 – He compared God to a father carrying his son.
- 8 – They did not trust God.
- 9 – None of these adults would see the promised land, except for Caleb and Joshua.
- 10 – They went up and fought, even though God told them not to. So they were defeated.
- 11 – Just as Jesus served and gave up his life for us, leaders must be like servants, not rulers.
- 12 – The elders are to be shepherds of God's flock.
- 13 – Followers must deny themselves, take up their cross and follow Jesus.
- 14 – God was making all the nations there terrified of the Israelites.
- 15 – They had to engage the people in battle.
- 16 – Let us pass through your country peacefully. He didn't give permission.
- 17 – God gave the Israelites victory over King Sihon.
- 18 – King Og.
- 19 – Sixty!
- 20 – They destroyed all the people but kept all the possessions.
- 21 – We don't fight against people, but against the devil and all his forces of evil.
- 22 – We should put on the spiritual weapons and armour that God has given us—and we should pray in the Spirit on **all** occasions!
- 23 – We are tempted to believe lies.
- 24 – We are tempted to do bad things.
- 25 – We don't like to talk about Jesus.
- 26 – When bad things happen, we think God doesn't love us or care for us. We become afraid and anxious.
- 27 – We miss out on all God wants to teach us through his word.
- 28 – We forget that salvation is a free gift. We think that we have to earn God's acceptance by our good deeds.
- 29 – Meet together, pray for each other, encourage each other to keep putting on our spiritual armour. What other ideas do you have?

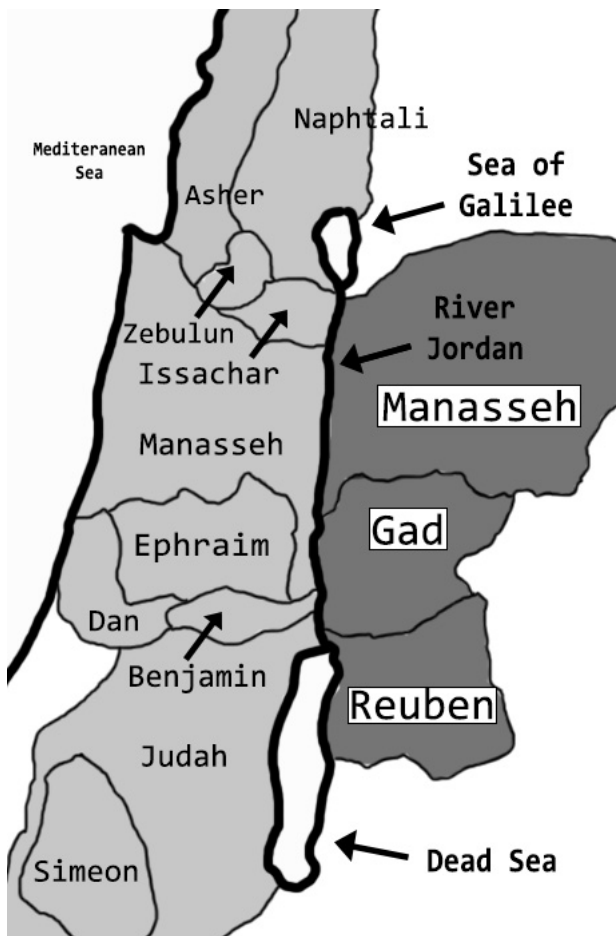
## Deuteronomy lesson 3:

# Unity and new leadership



In this lesson we will think about the importance of unity and of preparing new leaders.

## Unity



Read **Deuteronomy 3:12–13** and **18–20**.

The River Jordan flows from the Sea of Galilee in the north to the Dead Sea in the south. Find the River Jordan on the map.

The places in these verses are on the east side of the River Jordan. This is the side the Israelites came to first, before attacking Jericho (Josh chapter 6).

Read **Numbers 32:1–5**. What did the tribes of Reuben and Gad ask Moses? [1]

Read **Numbers 32:16–22**. How did they persuade Moses to let them live on the east side of the Jordan? [2]

Read **Numbers 32:33**. Who else got land on the east side of the River Jordan? [3]

Moses agreed that these two and a half tribes would live on the eastern side of the River Jordan. He allowed this only on one condition: that the men of these tribes helped the other tribes conquer the Canaanites on the west side of the River Jordan.

It was extremely important that the Reubenites, Gadites and Manassites continued to be united with the other tribes. If these tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half of the tribe of Manasseh had refused to go with the rest of the Israelites across the River Jordan, the people of God would have been disunited. They would have ended up fighting one another instead of fighting their real enemy.

## New leadership

Read **Deuteronomy 3:23–29**.

What did Moses ask God (v.25)? [4]

This had been his desire for the last 40 years! Even the greatest of God's people, even the prophets of the Old Testament, faced disappointments!

Read **Numbers 20:1–13**. Why did God not allow Moses to lead his people into the promised land? [5]

Even the greatest people of the Old Testament failed God at times. But we see God's mercy in that he did at least allow Moses to see the land from a distance (Deut 3:27).

Who would be the next leader for the Israelites (Deut 3:28)? [6]

What did Moses tell Joshua (Deut 3:21–22)? [7]

The conquest of the promised land was going to be a huge task with many battles to fight. God wanted the people to know that he himself would fight for them. It was God who would win the battles. For it was God who was their master and king! But he would use his appointed leader, Joshua, to bring his people into the promised land (v.28).

How did Moses need to prepare Joshua to become the next leader (Deut 3:28)? [8]

In what ways could he strengthen and encourage him? [9]

Moses wrote the Torah—the first five books of the Old Testament. This was Moses' gift to Joshua and the people of God.

Later on, what did God say to Joshua about reading his Word (**Josh 1:8**)? [10]

## New Testament

Let us see what the New Testament has to say about these important topics of unity and new leadership.

### Unity

Unity was not just very important for God's people in the Old Testament. It was very important for God's people in the New Testament too.

What did Jesus pray for all believers (**John 17:20–21**)? [11]

Jesus prayed for his followers to be united.

The church today must be united in our fight against sin and the devil. God wants us to serve **together** so that his church may grow. We must do our best to have unity in our church and with other churches.

### Challenge 1

In what ways do we spoil our unity? [12]

What can we do to increase our unity? [13]

## New leadership

God was the Israelites' true master and king. In the same way, Jesus, God's son, is our true master and king (Rev 17:14).

God raised up leaders for his people in the Old Testament and God still raises up leaders for his people today.

As we learned in lesson 2, leaders have a huge task! They should be:

- devoted to studying, obeying and teaching God's Word,
- leading humbly, serving their members as a caring, compassionate shepherd,
- helping church members to develop the gifts that God has given them,
- encouraging everyone, without favouritism.

But leaders also have to prepare for the time when they are no longer the leader.

We have seen how Moses prepared Joshua to be the new leader. Now let's see, in the New Testament, what Paul told Timothy about preparing new leaders.

Read **2 Timothy 2:2**. What does Paul tell Timothy to do? [14]

## Preparing new leaders

All teachers must equip their students to teach others.

Moses prepared Joshua to take over as the leader of God's people. In the same way, all church leaders should be preparing future leaders who may one day replace them.

Wise leaders will allow the next leader to take over leadership **before** they die! Then the new leader can have the advice of the old leader when necessary. However, this only works well when everyone (including the old leader) remembers that the old leader is not leader any more! The important thing is that the church fully supports the new leader, just as the old leader was supported.

It is also good when leaders prepare church members to start new churches in other places where there is no church.

## Important note about how we treat leaders

There are two mistakes that church members often make in our attitude to our leaders:

### **1. We treat our leaders as if they are perfect and can sort out all our problems.**

We must always remember that:

- leaders are only human and they sometimes make mistakes,
- even Moses failed,
- only Jesus is perfect. Only he can save us and sort out all our problems!

### **2. We don't respect our church leaders.**

- The New Testament makes it clear that we should respect and submit to those who serve as leaders in our churches (1 Thess 5:12–13; Heb 13:17).
- When we disrespect and don't submit to our church leaders, the church becomes disunited and ineffective in its witness.

What are two mistakes that we church members often make in our attitude to our leaders? [15]



## Challenge 2

Whether or not we are leaders in the church, we all need to be devoted to studying God's Word. How does your reading of God's Word compare with what God told Joshua to do (Josh 1:8)?



What changes can you make, so that you can read and meditate on God's Word more?

It is impossible to separate these topics of unity and new leadership:

- Unity in a church makes leadership much easier. Disunity makes leadership difficult.
- Good leadership makes unity much easier to achieve. Poor leadership can make unity difficult to achieve.

Every church is on a journey to becoming more and more a community of love and holiness. No church attains perfection in this life! But we must do all we can to help our church grow in love and holiness.

So it is important to pray regularly for our church:

- for the leaders to lead well,
- for the church to be united in our love for Jesus and each other.

**What has God been challenging you about through this lesson?**

## Homework:

Read **Deuteronomy chapter 4** before the next lesson.

## Answers

- 1 – They asked to live on the east side of the River Jordan. They did not want to cross over to the west side, which was the land that God had promised to give to his people.
- 2 – The men promised to fight with the other Israelites to conquer the promised land on the west side of the Jordan. Only then would they return to their wives and children on the east side.
- 3 – Half of the tribe of Manasseh.
- 4 – To let him see the promised land.
- 5 – He hadn't honoured God and hadn't fully obeyed his instructions: he struck the rock when he was told to speak to it.
- 6 – Joshua.
- 7 – Moses reminded Joshua that he had seen how God defeated the two kings on the east side of the River Jordan. In the same way, God would fight for Joshua so that he could conquer all the peoples on the west side of the River Jordan.
- 8 – He needed to strengthen him and encourage him.
- 9 – He would have reminded him of all God had done and encouraged him to read God's Word.
- 10 – Read the Book of the Law that Moses wrote. Talk about it. Meditate on it day and night. Obey it. Then you will have success.
- 11 – That they may all be one.
- 12 – Examples include:
  - we focus more on church leaders than on Christ,
  - we are proud,
  - we think more about ourselves and our needs than what the body of Christ needs
  - we gossip,
  - we say unkind things to others,
  - we say unkind things about others,
  - we think that we are better than others,
  - we take offence and stop coming to church.
- 13 – Examples include:
  - we focus more on Christ than on church leaders,
  - we are humble and teachable,
  - we think more about what the body of Christ needs and less about ourselves,
  - we refuse to listen to gossip,
  - we choose to say only kind things to others,
  - we choose to say only kind things about others,
  - we consider others as better than ourselves,
  - we regularly come to meetings even when we are tired, busy or offended.
- 14 – Entrust God's Word to reliable people so that they will be qualified to teach others.
- 15 – We treat our leaders as if they are perfect and can sort out all our problems. We don't respect our church leaders.

## Deuteronomy lesson 4:

# Choose life!



### Chapter 4:1–40 (part one)

In this lesson, we will think about how obedience is a matter of life and death.

This passage is a wonderful sermon that Moses preached to the Israelites. These were the people whom God had led out of slavery so that they could become his special people. Before we read this sermon, let's look at the three main ideas it teaches.

The sermon can be divided into five parts. The first and last parts say similar things, and the second and fourth parts say similar things; as in many Hebrew poems and sermons, the most important idea is found in the middle section:

- vv.1–4: **Obedience**—the Israelites must obey God's laws to have his blessing.
- vv.5–20: **Israel is different**—the Israelites were different from all other people because God is different from all other gods.
- vv.21–31: **Judgment and mercy**—God is a God of judgment and mercy.
- vv.32–38: (again) **Israel is different**.
- vv.39–40: (again) **Obedience**.

What is the most important idea in this sermon (what does the middle section talk about)? [1]

We see God's judgment and mercy throughout the Bible. These are the most important ideas for us to understand about God: he is holy and pure and must judge all sin. But even as he judges, he shows incredible mercy.

The two wrong ideas God's people often have about God are:

- God doesn't mind if we sin,
- There is no hope for us to be forgiven once we have sinned.

Why does God need to emphasize his judgment and mercy? [2]

It was easy for the Israelites to think that now God had saved them, they could do as they pleased. But God had given them his perfect law to obey!

In this lesson we will learn about the first theme of Moses' sermon: the Israelites need to obey God's laws to have God's blessing. We will look at the other two themes in the next lesson.

## Obedience

Read **Deuteronomy 4:1–4**.

In these verses we see two ideas that look as if they contradict each other:

- God will give the land to the Israelites,
- the Israelites must obey God in order to take possession of the land.

What is God going to do (v.1)? [3]

How will the Israelites take possession of the land (v.1)? [4]

So is the land a gift, or do they need to earn it by their obedience?

Throughout the Bible, we see these two ideas that seem to contradict each other: salvation from slavery, and the promised land were **free** (a gift); but God's people need to **obey** him in order to have the gift.

Just before God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, he saved them from the destroying angel. What did the Israelites have to do in order to be saved? Read **Exodus 12:21–23**. [5]

God did not save those who didn't obey!

## New Testament

In the New Testament, salvation is also a free gift but we still need to live in obedience to God's laws. When we get to the eternal promised land (the new Jerusalem) we will all be perfectly obeying God's laws!

Read **Romans 6:17–18**. What were the people slaves to? [6]

Then what did they become slaves to? [7]

Once they were hopeless and couldn't stop themselves from sinning. Now Jesus has rescued them, made them clean and filled them with his Holy Spirit. Now it is possible for them to follow him in a life of goodness and love!

## Challenge

Can people see that you are a slave to righteousness? Or do they think that you are also a slave to sin like they are?

In what ways is your life different from the unbelievers around you?

## Life

What does Deuteronomy 4:1 say will be the result of the Israelite's obedience? [8]

Look at verse 40. What does Moses promise the people if they obey God? [9]

Read **Deuteronomy 8:7–9**. What sort of land is it that God is giving to his people? [10]

God wants to give them long and abundant life in the promised land! But they will have the opposite of this if they are unfaithful to God.

Read **Deuteronomy 4:3**.

The Baal of Peor was the Moabite god of fertility. The Canaanites worshipped him through terrible immorality. What did God do to those who worshipped the Baal of Peor? [11]

Near the end of the book of Deuteronomy, Moses appeals to the people to make the right choice.

Read **Deuteronomy 30:15–20**. What choice does Moses give to the people? [12]

The decision to obey God or not is of the highest importance: it is a matter of life and death! In the book of Deuteronomy, God repeatedly calls his people to choose life.

## New Testament

Read **1 John 5:11–12**. What has God given us? [13]

Who has eternal life? [14]



## Life

Just as in the book of Deuteronomy, “life” is an important word in John’s gospel.

For example:

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal **life*** (John 3:16).

Jesus said, *I am the bread of **life*** (John 6:35).

Jesus said, *I am the way, the truth and the **life**. No one comes to the father except through me* (John 14:6).

**Eternal life is only to be found in Jesus, not through anyone else!**

Eternal life is the blessing that God gives his people in the New Testament. This is even better than the material blessings that God gave to the Israelites when they obeyed him in the Old Testament! We will think more about this in lesson 12.

In lesson 11 we will also discuss which laws we should obey today. Meanwhile we should all make sure that we are obeying the law to love God and each other (Matt 22:37–39)!

## *Warning 1: Do not change God’s Word!*

What does **Deuteronomy 4:2** say about how God’s Word should be treated? [15]

Some people want to change God’s Word. They want to make it easier for us to obey. They like to make God into the kind of god that they prefer to worship. But we cannot choose which parts of God’s Word to obey, nor ignore the parts we don’t like.

God’s Word is perfect and complete. We must not add to it or take away from it. We have all the information about God that we need for life now and life to come!

Read **Revelation 22:18–19**. What does God say to those who want to add to God’s Word or take away the things they don’t like from God’s Word? [16]

**Discuss:** what commands in the Bible do you find most hard to obey?

## Warning 2: Do not accept new revelations!

- Throughout history there have been several religious teachers who have come with new books. The Bible is the complete Word of God. It tells us everything we need to know about how to be saved, have eternal life and have a relationship with God.
- There have been other people who have changed the Bible to suit their own ideas. The Bible we have is a faithful translation of the early manuscripts!



So if someone tells us that God has given a new revelation, we must not accept it. We must always **check** what people teach us, against what we have been given in the Bible.

We also need to **know the whole of God's Word**. Over the centuries many churches have focused on one verse (or a few verses) from the Bible and made a rule out of it. They did not check to make sure that this rule agrees with the rest of the Scriptures.

**Discuss:** who do you know who says they have a book that is God's word, but it is different from the Bible?

**What have you learned about God's Word in this lesson?**

**What would you say to someone who calls themselves a Christian but doesn't live a "good" life?**

**Let's pray for each other to choose life!**

## Homework:

Read **Deuteronomy 4:1–40** again. We will continue to study it next lesson.



## Answers

- 1 – God is a God of judgment and mercy.
- 2 – God emphasises them because it is so easy for his people to think that:
  - God doesn't mind if we sin,
  - there is no hope for us to be forgiven once we have sinned.
- 3 – God is going to give the Israelites the promised land.
- 4 – By obeying God's decrees and laws.
- 5 – They had to slaughter a lamb and put its blood on the sides and top of the door frame of the house where they ate the lamb.
- 6 – Sin.
- 7 – Righteousness.
- 8 – They will live and go in and take possession of the promised land.
- 9 – Long life in the land.
- 10 – A wonderful land with rivers, fertile soil and metals to dig out and use.
- 11 – He destroyed them.
- 12 – Life and prosperity or death and destruction.
- 13 – Eternal life.
- 14 – The person who has (believes in) the Son, Jesus the Messiah.
- 15 – They must not add to it or subtract from it.
- 16 – They will be punished and will not be able to live in the new Jerusalem.

## Deuteronomy lesson 5:

# Judgment and mercy



### Deuteronomy 4:1–40 (part two)

In this lesson we will think about how God's people are different from other people. We will also think about the important topics of God's righteous judgment and his incredible mercy.

Last lesson, we saw that God's people must obey him to have his blessing. He had saved them from slavery. He was going to give them the promised land. But the Israelites had to obey his laws to enter and stay in the promised land.

#### *Extra: Review*

We saw that the sermon (Deut 4:1–40) can be divided into five parts. The first and last parts say the same thing and the second and fourth parts are about the same thing. As with many Jewish poems and sermons, the most important thought is in the middle of the poem or sermon.

- vv.1–4: **Obedience**—the Israelites must obey God's laws to have his blessing.
- vv.5–20: **Israel is different**—the Israelites were different from all other people because God is different from all other gods.
- vv.21–31: **Judgment and mercy**—God is a God of judgment and mercy.
- vv.32–38: (again) **Israel is different**.
- vv.39–40: (again) **Obedience**.

What is the most important idea in this sermon and throughout the Bible (what does the middle section say)? [1]

Why does God need to emphasize his judgment and mercy? [2]

It was easy for the Israelites to think that when God had saved them, they could do as they pleased. But God had given them his perfect law, which they needed to obey.

Moses taught three things in this sermon. What are they? [3]

In this lesson we are going to look at the second and third of the three themes of this sermon.

## Israel is different

Read **Deuteronomy 4:5–20**.

The Israelites were different from all other people because God is different from all other gods.

In what ways is God's character different from the gods worshipped by other nations (vv.7, 8, 12, 20)? [4]

v.7:

v.8:

v.12:

v.20:

If people obeyed the word of God, what should be the result (vv.6–7)? [5]

God did not just want the Israelites to worship him. He wanted the Israelites to be an advertisement to all nations, so that they would want to worship God too!

This was part of God's plan from the beginning. When he gave his wonderful promises to Abraham, God told him that all peoples on the earth would be blessed through him (Gen 12:3).

Likewise, our love for God and obedience to his word will be a great advertisement to all peoples. In this way, may they also want to follow Jesus!

## Challenge 1

Many people come to Jesus because they see how:

- believers love each other, and
- God answers our prayers.

But people will **not** come to Jesus if they see that:

- we do not love each other,
- we envy those who have more than us,



- we gossip,
- we do not pray.

Then those people will **not** have eternal life.

When we obey God's word, how does that affect unbelievers? [6]

When we don't obey God's word how does that affect unbelievers? [7]

Deuteronomy 4:10–14 recalls the extraordinary day when God himself had given the Ten Commandments to his people 40 years earlier. We will read how Moses reminded the people of the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy chapter 5. Never before had a people had such good laws. And no one has ever been able to improve them since!

What must God's people not do (vv.15–19)? [8]

How is God different from idols? What can God do that idols can't do? [9]

God had rescued his people from an idol-worshipping nation. Now he was giving them the land of other idol-worshipping nations. Therefore, it was very important that God's people did not copy those nations by making idols and worshipping them.

## Challenge 2

What things can become like idols for us? What things are we tempted to treat as more important than God? [10]

Is your relationship with God more important than your relationship with:

- your family?
- your home?
- your work?
- your money?
- your phone?
- your clothes?
- your exam results?
- your reputation?

How do the things that we “worship” show themselves in our daily life? [11]

## God is a God of judgment and mercy

Read **Deuteronomy 4:21–31**. This is the most important part of the sermon.

In verses 21–24, Moses says that if he did not escape God’s punishment for sin, then God’s people certainly won’t!

In verses 25–30, Moses prophesies that the people will rebel, suffer exile and later return to their own land. This is what actually happened later on in Old Testament history.

What sins does God say his people might commit (v.25)? [12]

What punishments does God say he will bring on his people if they commit these sins (vv.26–28)? [13]

What promise does God make (vv.29–31)? [14]

You can read about these events in the historical books of the Old Testament (Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings, 1–2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah).

It is amazing that God knew how much his people would sin. However much they sinned, God was ready to forgive them when they repented. God is a God of incredible mercy!

It is extraordinary that God, who is holy and pure, is also so merciful and faithful to his people!

Even after the terrible experience of the Exile, the Israelites continued to disobey God. They just could not stop disobeying God’s perfect laws.

Throughout the Old Testament we see how God’s people needed someone to rescue them—not just from slavery in a foreign country, but from the much worse slavery to sin.

### New Testament

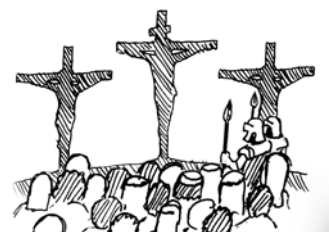
In the New Testament, we read how God sent such a rescuer!

Read **Matthew 1:20–21**. What did God tell Joseph about what Mary’s son, Jesus, was going to do? [15]

### *Extra:* Jesus—the only one who can rescue us!

Jesus was God’s Son. We know this because:

- he was conceived by the Holy Spirit—he had no physical father,
- he never sinned,
- he performed many miracles, witnessed by many people,
- three days after he had been crucified, he came back to life in a new and eternal body.



When we read about Jesus dying on the cross, we see both God's judgment and his mercy. Jesus took our sins on himself, and received God's judgment for them. So now God can be merciful to us, because Jesus has paid for our sins!

Jesus' resurrection shows us that he is the one who can rescue us from sin, death and Satan himself!

Forty days after his resurrection, Jesus ascended to God's right hand. He is offering his mercy and forgiveness now—but time is short! Soon he will come back as judge of all the earth!

Before he ascended into heaven, Jesus gave his disciples their last instructions using words from Deuteronomy chapter 4. He wanted them to be clear that he really was God's Son!

Read **Deuteronomy 4:39–40**. Who has all authority in heaven and on earth? [16]

What are his people to do? (v.40)? [17]

They must obey him!

Read **Matthew 28:18–20**. Who has been given all authority in heaven and on earth? [18]

So what are his people to do today (v.19)? [19]

## Challenge 3

We are to teach all people to obey Jesus. He is the one who has all authority in heaven and on earth! He is the one who is coming back as judge of all the earth!

How are you teaching others to obey the judge of all the earth?

Who have you talked to about Jesus in the last week?

**Which of the three challenges in this lesson do you most need to ask God's help with?**

## Homework

Read **Deuteronomy 5:1–15** before the next lesson.

## Answers

- 1 – God is a God of judgment and mercy.
- 2 – God emphasises them because it is so easy for his people to think:
  - God doesn't mind if we sin,
  - there is no hope of forgiveness for us once we have sinned.
- 3 – **Obedience**—the Israelites must obey God's laws to have his blessing.  
**Israel is different**—the Israelites were different from all other people because God is different from all other gods.  
**Judgment and mercy**—God is a God of judgment and mercy.
- 4 – God is near to us and hears our prayers (v.7).  
 God gave good laws to his people for them to obey (vv.8, 13).  
 God is a speaking God, but his people never see him (v.12).  
 God rescued his people from terrible slavery (v.20).
- 5 – They become wiser and have understanding.  
 Other people admire them and the laws of God.  
 Other people see how God is near them and answers their prayers.
- 6 – Unbelievers are drawn to Jesus and so have the opportunity to receive eternal life.
- 7 – Unbelievers are not drawn to Jesus and so don't have the opportunity to receive eternal life.
- 8 – They must not make any idols, nor bow down to them.
- 9 – Unlike idols, God can see, speak, move, create, save and change his people and answer their prayers!
- 10 – Examples:
  - our children,
  - important or famous people,
  - football teams,
  - people who have died,
  - phones,
  - houses,
  - our reputation (including how many likes we have on social media or in a group chat).
- 11 – We think about it all the time, we talk about it all the time, we praise it, we want to spend lots of time with it and are angry if we can't.
- 12 – They might become corrupt, make idols and do evil.
- 13 – They will perish from the land, they will be destroyed, they will be scattered among the peoples, they will worship man-made gods that can't help them.
- 14 – If they seek God with all their hearts and souls, they will find him; God will not abandon or destroy them. He will not forget the covenant he made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Gen 12:1–3; 26:3–4; 28:14–15; 50:24).
- 15 – He will save his people from their sins.
- 16 – The LORD.
- 17 – They must keep his decrees and commands.
- 18 – Jesus.
- 19 – Teach people of all nations to obey everything that Jesus has commanded us.

# Deuteronomy lesson 6:

# The Ten Commandments

## (part 1)



In this lesson we will think about how to love God.

## Why we obey

Read **Deuteronomy 5:1–15**.

The Israelites had been helpless slaves under the power of Pharaoh. They had been completely unable to rescue themselves. And they had done nothing to deserve being saved. Yet God had chosen to rescue them and give them their own land.

So they had to obey God's commandments because he saved them and they were his people. He was their new master and king!

What did God say before he gave his people the Ten Commandments (v.6)? [1]

Why did he say this? [2]

God was their new master and king!

## New Testament

Like the Israelites, we have done nothing to deserve being saved. We were helpless sinners under the power of Satan. We were completely unable to rescue ourselves. Yet Jesus chose to rescue us and give us eternal life! We now have a new master and king!

In what way is our situation like that of the Israelites? [3]



Read **Matthew 22:37–40**.

What are the two most important laws that Jesus, our new master, told us that we should obey? [4]

The wonderful news is that Jesus gives us his Holy Spirit so that it is possible for us to obey his laws!

Now we will study the Ten Commandments, which God gave to Moses. We will see how these are all about how to love God and how to love our neighbour. Therefore, all believers today should still obey the Ten Commandments.

## The first four commandments

The first four commandments teach us how to love God.

What is the **first commandment** (Deut 5:7)? [5]

God alone deserves our total devotion.

If we have something or someone that is more important to us than God, then it becomes like our god.

How do we disobey the first commandment?

### Challenge 1

**Test to see if your phone is more important to you than God:** do you answer your phone and read new messages when you are praying, or when you are in a church meeting? If you do, this shows that your phone and your relationships are more important to you than God. Don't allow your phone to distract you from your time with God! Put it on silent—it not only disturbs you, but also everyone else in the meeting.

We must not worship other gods. All other gods are false gods.

### False gods

- A false god is one that **we cannot get to know**. Just as a good father wants to spend time with his children, so God wants to spend time with us. He does this through his Word and through the Holy Spirit, so that we get to know him.
- Another false god is one that **we think we can pay to do something for us**. Some people think that if they do something for God, he should then do something for them. The Bible teaches us that God already loves us perfectly and more than even the best earthly father loves his children. We cannot buy his love—we can only respond to his love with worship and obedience.

Some people give money to the church thinking that God will do something for them in return: they want him to answer their prayers or to give them even more money back again.

If we are trying to buy God's blessing, it shows that we have not understood the wonder of what he has done for us. This means we are not worshipping the true God but a false god.

If we worship the true God, we will give generously to him. We show our love for God because he has given us the most precious gift of all: eternal life in Jesus Christ!

We must make every effort to know God, so that we worship the true God, not a false god!



What is the **second commandment** (Deut 5:8–10)? [6]

- In many places there are **man-made images** of God or other gods. We must not make God into something we can see. A statue or image cannot sufficiently represent the wonder of who God is—it offends God if we think we can represent him in a physical form. It is wrong to do this.

What is the problem with worshipping idols made by hand? [7]

- Where else do we see images of God in the world (**Gen 1:26**)? [8]

We must not worship **people**—whether they are presidents, singers, people who have been on the Hajj, mullahs, ancestors or other dead people.

## Challenge 2

Do we have idols? Do we wear a charm or evil eye to protect us? It's like an idol for us. Only God can protect us. Don't offend God!

What are some of the ways we can break the second commandment? [9]

## Extra: Consequences for children

Read **Deuteronomy 5:9–10**. We may be shocked that God would punish three or four generations. But that is the number of generations who often lived together then, just like in many countries of the world now. God doesn't punish children unless they share in their parents' sins. But usually they do share in their parents' sin—children continue to do what they have seen adults in the family do!



Our sins not only spoil our own lives, but also the lives of our children and grandchildren. Can you share an example of this?

However, in contrast to this, how long does God's love last? [10]

Showing love to a thousand generations means God's love lasts forever—you cannot count a thousand generations!

What is the **third commandment** (Deut 5:11)? [11]

When Moses asked God his name, what did God say his name was (Exod 3:13–14)? [12]

In Hebrew, God's name is *Yahweh*. It is translated as LORD in the Old Testament.

Moses was honoured to be told God's name. A person's name and character are very important. It is terrible when someone's name or character is spoken about badly or is misused.

God's name is precious! The Israelites were so concerned to protect God's name that they rarely used it.

There are various ways we can break the third commandment:

- The Canaanites used the names of their gods in **curses** and witchcraft against those they hated. God was telling the Israelites that his name must never be used in this way. All such practices were forbidden (Deut 18:9–13).
- **by what we do and say:** as the apostle Paul wrote, *You who boast in the law, do you dishonour God by breaking the law? As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you"* (Rom 2:23–24). If we say we are God's people, we must show it through our love for him and for others. Our deeds must match our words.
- How else do people misuse the name of God, especially when things go wrong? [13]

But usually people don't praise God when things are going well.

What are the ways in which we must not take God's name in vain? [14]

## Extra: Oaths

In Old Testament times, in a court case, people took an oath in the name of their god to show they were speaking the truth. The Canaanites took oaths in the names of their gods, but they often lied.

However, God told his people to take their oaths only in his name and to tell the truth (Deut 6:13; 5:20).

In the New Testament, Jesus taught that it is better not to swear any oaths at all. *All you need to say is simply "yes" or "no"; anything beyond this comes from the evil one* (Matt 5:37). He was talking about using oaths in everyday life. In our relationships with other people, all we need to say is, "Yes, I will do it" or "No, I will not do it" (Matt 5:37). However, in some legal situations like in a law court or when joining the army for military service, it may be necessary to take an oath, so that

everyone knows that you are being serious about your commitment to serving or telling the truth. In that situation it is not a sin to swear loyalty to your country or government. As the apostle Paul wrote, *Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established* (Rom 13:1).

What is the **fourth commandment** (Deut 5:12–15)? [15]

What are the people told to remember (v.15)? [16]

Slaves have to work all the time. But God set his people FREE and now they are not slaves any more! So they should not act like slaves who do not have a day off. Every week they should celebrate their freedom by taking a whole day off from work.

If we take a day off, it shows that we are trusting in God rather than in our own strength. If we work every day, seven days a week, it shows that we are not trusting God—we are relying on our own strength to meet all our needs. We need to learn to rely on God!

There are many good ways to use this day off. It is a good time to meet with believers and to enjoy time with our families and communities.

Church leaders also need to take a day off each week. As they work hard on Sundays, they will need to take a different day off. They should let everyone know that they should not call them on this day unless there is an emergency. In this way, they can protect themselves from exhaustion and depression. They will be able to serve much better if they have one day off each week.

Our relationship with God and with people is more important than work!

If we remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy, how does it help us to love God? [17]

## Challenge 3

Do you take a day off from work each week? If so, are you using it to grow your relationship with God?

**Which of these four commandments do you think Christians find hardest to obey?**

**Which of the three challenges do you need to ask God to help you with?**

**What has God shown you that you need to repent of?**

Praise God that he freely forgives all those who confess their sins to him! (1 John 1:8–9).

Pray for each other to *love the LORD your God, with **all** your heart, with **all** your soul and with **all** your [mind]* (Deut 6:5).

## Homework

Read **Deuteronomy 5:16–21** before the next lesson.

## Answers

- 1 – *I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.*
- 2 – They must obey God's commandments because he had saved them and they were his people.
- 3 – Like the Israelites, we have done nothing to deserve being saved. We were helpless sinners under the power of Satan. We were completely unable to rescue ourselves. Yet Jesus chose to rescue us and give us eternal life! We now have a new master and king!
- 4 – Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind, and love your neighbour as yourself.
- 5 – *You shall have no other gods before me.*
- 6 – Don't make yourself an image and bow down to it.
- 7 – An idol cannot represent the wonder of who God is—it offends God if we think we can represent him in a physical form.
- 8 – All people are made in the image of God!
- 9 – We are breaking the second commandment when we worship man-made images or when we worship or pray to people (alive or dead), or when we use charms to protect us.
- 10 – For a thousand generations!
- 11 – *You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God...*
- 12 – *I AM WHO I AM.*
- 13 – They blame God when things go wrong (“Oh, God!”).
- 14 – We must not use God's name in curses or witchcraft.  
We must not dishonour God by sinning.  
We must not use God's name as a swear word.
- 15 – Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy.
- 16 – They are told to remember that they were slaves whom God had set free.
- 17 – We can spend time with God and meet with believers.

## Deuteronomy lesson 7:

# The Ten Commandments (part 2)



**For this lesson, men and women should study in separate groups.**

In the last lesson we looked at the first four commandments, which teach us how to love God. In this lesson we will look at the following six commandments. They teach us how to love each other.

If we don't love God first (first four commandments), we won't be able to love each other (the next six commandments).

Read **Deuteronomy 5:16–21**.

### Order of importance

The order of the Ten Commandments shows us what is most important to God:

- God is most concerned about our relationship with him.
- After this, the next most important thing is our relationships with each other.
- Only then, should our possessions be important to us.



But, so often, we have these things in the **opposite** order:

- Our possessions are more important to us than anything else.
- Then we care about our relationships with each other.
- And we hardly care about our relationship with God!

If we value what God values most, we will have peace and joy. But if we turn God's values upside down, we will never know true peace and joy.

What is God's order of what should be important to us? [1]

Read **Deuteronomy 5:16**. What is the fifth commandment? [2]

Children must obey their parents (Eph 6:1). Adult children should honour their parents (Deut 5:16) and provide for them when they are in need (1 Tim 5:8).

Parents should teach their children to obey them, both the mother and the father. Both boys and girls need to obey their parents. Training your children starts when they are very young, even before they have learned to talk!

Good parents will want the best for the whole family, including the children. To be good parents, the father and mother must love and respect each other. Children copy what they see in their parents. If the father is always shouting at the mother, the children will learn to do this too. If the mother is always criticising the father, the children will learn to do this too.

There are no perfect parents. Sadly, there are times when parents want their children to do something that is wrong. What does Acts 4:19 tell us to do in this situation? [3]

## Discussion

So how should adult believers relate to their parents?

### 1. With regard to money:

- What should we do when parents insist that we work seven days a week to make more money?
- What should we do when they want us to go abroad to earn money to send to them?
- What should we do when they want us to earn money for things that aren't important to us?

We can talk to our parents openly about how we feel: we love them, but we feel aggrieved that they expect us to work so hard and not see our children for many years.

What ideas do they have for earning money where they are?

Examples may include:

- Can our parents build a small shop and sell goods that someone can send to them?
- Can they offer to teach a skill or craft to other people?
- Can our parents look after other people's children while they go out to work?
- What other ideas can you think of?

### 2. With regard to abuse in the home:

- What should we do if someone is doing wrong to another person in the family?

A good home is a safe place for every person in the family. There is no shame in protecting yourself or others from further harm.

If a church member is in a dangerous situation in their own home, the church should discuss how to provide a safe place for them.

Read **Deuteronomy 5:17**. What is the sixth commandment? [4]

Maybe you think that you have never broken this commandment. But...

Read **Matthew 5:21–22**. What does this tell us about being angry with someone? [5]

## Challenge 1

Is there someone you are angry with? Ask God to help you forgive that person so that you can be set free from the chains of anger that are binding your heart!

It is important to understand that abortion is also murder, even when there seems to be a valid reason. For example, when the baby is the result of rape, or the baby has a physical problem it is still a sin to abort the baby. Babies are a gift from God. We should trust him to give us all the grace we need to look after whatever sort of child he chooses to give us.

If we or our spouse have had an abortion, we need to know three things:

- God still loves us and he is ready to forgive us.
- God loves our child, and our child is waiting for us in heaven.
- God wants to set us free from the guilt and sin of our past.

Don't live with the guilt and sadness of having taken your child's life.

Let us stop for a minute and pray quietly for forgiveness if:

- we are holding on to hatred of someone,
- we have had an abortion.

Pray that we discover the wonder of God's love and forgiveness!



Read **Deuteronomy 5:18**. What is the seventh commandment? [6]

All sexual relationships outside of marriage—between one man and one woman—are wrong.

Young couples should not be kissing and touching each other intimately before they get married. As Paul wrote, *But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality* (Eph 5:3).



Young men must not visit a prostitute to learn how to be a husband. The most important quality of a husband is that he is faithful to his wife. So visiting a prostitute when he becomes an adult is a lesson on how NOT to be a good husband. On the contrary, it means that he cannot give his wife the most precious wedding present: his purity. He may even compare his wife unfavourably with the prostitute. And he may well get a nasty disease that might not be curable.

A husband must not visit a prostitute when his wife is not available sexually. For example, for the first month after a baby has been born, when the wife has her period, if she is ill for a long time or when the husband or wife are working in different countries. Self-control is evidence of the Holy Spirit working in our lives (Gal 5:22–23). It is not good for husbands and wives to spend a long time apart from each other (1 Cor 7:5). Many marriages have been ruined because of this. Faithfulness to your husband or wife is essential for a happy marriage. The apostle Paul wrote: *Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Should I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh”* (1 Cor 6:15–16).

What is the problem with visiting a prostitute? [7]

But God is concerned with our thoughts and not just our actions.

Read **Matthew 5:27–30**. What do these verses tell us about the things we think about? [8]

## Challenge 2

What kind of films and videos do you watch?

The problem with watching erotic films is:

- they fill our minds with unclean thoughts,
- these images may stay in our memories forever,
- they give us the desire to do wrong actions,
- they make us dissatisfied with our spouse and spoil our marriage relationship,
- watching such films before we get married spoils our future marriage,
- these films encourage us to masturbate—this is to seek sexual pleasure on our own. Sex is a gift only for a married couple to enjoy together. The Bible tells us to be self-controlled and not to “indulge our flesh” (Gal 5:13).



Do you need to stop watching certain types of films?



Let us stop for a minute and pray quietly for forgiveness for any sexual sins that we have committed that we have never asked God to forgive.

Let us ask God to forgive us for the things we have watched that have left us with impure thoughts. Ask God to clean our minds and hearts.

Pray that we all discover the wonder of God’s love and forgiveness!

Pray that by the power of the Holy Spirit we will all stop watching and doing these wrong things.

Read **Deuteronomy 5:19**. What is the eighth commandment? [9]

When do we not keep this commandment?

If we are receiving a salary for work that we are not doing properly, that is stealing. Your employer is paying you to do a certain job and it is important that you do that job properly, even when no one is looking (see Eph 6:5–8).

If we borrow something from someone or from church (e.g. plates, towels, books, toys), we must always return them, unless someone has told us that they are a gift. If we don't, we have stolen these things.

If we borrow money, we need to pay it back. If we cannot return the money, then we need to talk with the person from whom we borrowed. We need to discuss with them how we can repay the debt. Often when people loan money to other members of the church, the debtor stops coming to church because they can't pay it back.

Let us stop for a minute and pray for forgiveness if:

- we have been deceiving our employer,
- we have stolen things,
- we have not repaid debts.

Pray that God would help us to put this right soon.

Pray that any relationships broken by debt would soon be restored.

And pray that we all discover the wonder of God's love and forgiveness!



Read **Deuteronomy 5:20**. What is the ninth commandment? [10]

When we speak badly of others, we ruin their lives. In the same way, when we gossip about others we ruin their lives. Again, people will stop coming to church if they know that other people are saying bad things about them.



Let us stop for a minute and pray for forgiveness for speaking badly about others.

Pray for those who have stopped coming to church because people were gossiping about them.

Pray that we discover how the Holy Spirit can help us all to change.

And pray that we discover the wonder of God's love and forgiveness!

Read **Deuteronomy 5:21**. What is the tenth commandment? [11]

What does it mean to covet? [12]

What does **Hebrews 13:5** tell us about what our attitude towards money should be like? [13]

If we are content with what we have:

- we are grateful for what the Lord has given us,
- we don't complain about what we don't have,
- we are not jealous of other people having things that we don't.

When do people have enough? [14]

Many people see little of their children because they are working so many hours each day.

Some people even go to another country to earn money and don't see their family for years.

If you work abroad, it's important to pray for God's wisdom, to know how long to stay away from your home and family in order to earn money.

It's so easy always to be wanting to earn money for the next thing. But the most precious thing for children is to have both their parents with them. They need their parents to show them love and to teach them how to follow the Lord.



Ask the Lord to show you what things you covet.

Ask him to show you how coveting these things affects the decisions you make.  
Who suffers because of your desire to have these things?

What does the Lord want to say to you about this?

## How to receive forgiveness

Read **1 John 1:8–9**.

What do we learn, if we think that we don't sin (v.8)? [15]

How can we be forgiven (v.9)? [16]

Of course, confession can be done privately between you and God. But if you confess to a trusted friend, you will find that this a powerful way to break the power of the sin in your life.

Your group is a good place to confess sins. But be very careful **not to tell anyone else** what is shared in the group. We must learn to be people who others can trust!

## Discussion

What is the most difficult of these commandments for those in your church to obey?

What is the most difficult of these commandments for you to obey?

**Praise God that he has given us the Holy Spirit to help us live the way he wants us to live!**

**Pray for each other to be filled in a fresh way with God's Holy Spirit today!**

## Homework

Before you come to the next lesson, read **Deuteronomy chapter 6**.

## Answers

- 1 – God is most concerned about our relationship with him. After this, the next most important thing is our relationships with each other. Only then, should our possessions be important to us.
- 2 – Honour your father and mother.
- 3 – You should obey God rather than man.
- 4 – You shall not murder.
- 5 – If we are angry with someone, it's just as bad as if we murdered them.
- 6 – You shall not commit adultery.
- 7 – Visiting a prostitute spoils your marriage, your thoughts and your health.
- 8 – If we have impure thoughts, it is as bad as actually doing the bad act.
- 9 – You shall not steal.
- 10 – You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.
- 11 – You shall not covet anything!
- 12 – It means that we really really want to have something.
- 13 – Be free from the love of money, be content with what you have.
- 14 – Never! Most people are always wanting more possessions!
- 15 – We are deceiving ourselves.
- 16 – We need to confess our sins.

## Deuteronomy lesson 8:

# Love the LORD your God



In this lesson we will learn how our love for God will show itself in our lives.

Read **Deuteronomy chapter 6**.

## One God

What does verse 4 say about God? [1]

In the original Hebrew this verse says: “*Yahweh our God, Yahweh is one.*”

The Hebrew word for “one” is *ehad*. It means unity. We also read this word, *ehad*:

- when God is giving instructions about how to make the tabernacle: *Then make fifty gold clasps and use them to fasten the curtains together so that the tabernacle is a **unit*** (Exod 26:6).
- when God is telling Ezekiel that he will reunite the two nations of Israel into one nation: *I will make them into a **single** stick of wood, and they will become one in my hand* (Ezek 37:19).

Some people say that Christians worship three gods. Our God is only one God. Yahweh is the only living and true God. He alone is God, and he is “one”. God does not want his people to worship other gods as well as himself. Just as a woman can only have one husband, we can only have one God. Worshipping anything else is terrible unfaithfulness. Therefore Deuteronomy chapter 6 continues with: *Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength* (v.5).

Why do we only worship one God? [2]

## Our one God is three persons

There is evidence of the Trinity in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament. For example:

- **Genesis 1:26:** God says “our” not “my” image. Here we are given an indication that our one God is in some way more than one.
- **Genesis 18:22:** God is in heaven and on earth! Of course, God the Father is still in heaven. And yet God spoke to Abraham on earth as a man to a man. How can it be? When we understand that God is one, but he reveals himself as three persons, this becomes understandable. It was the second person of the Trinity who appeared as an Angel of the LORD, and who said, *Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?* (Gen 18:17). Even before he was born as a human baby, there were several times in the Old Testament when the second person of the Trinity appeared as a human (e.g. Gen 32:22–31; Dan 3:24–25).
- **Exodus 24:9–11:** It is written that no one can see God and live (Exod 33:20). So how did these people see God and yet not die? If we understand that this was the second person of the Trinity, then this becomes understandable. One day he would come to earth as a man and be seen by many!
- **Matthew 22:43–45:** Jesus quotes Psalm 110 to show that the Messiah is God. God was in heaven and on earth at the same time!
- **John 14:16–17:** Jesus, God the Son, says that he will ask God the Father to send the Holy Spirit to his disciples. This shows that God in heaven was listening to the prayers of his Son. And he was going to send his Holy Spirit to live in us! So we see all three members of the Trinity in these verses.

In the New Testament we learn that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is a unity of three persons. The Trinity is a wonderful thing to understand about God. It shows us that God is not a distant God, but rather has come close to us. The almighty God lives in us, while still being ruler of the universe!

Why is it so wonderful that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit? [3]

### **Extra: In whose name?**

Read **Matthew 28:18–20**. In whose name do we baptise people? [4]

Read **John 14:13**. In whose name should we pray? [5]

Read **Hebrews 10:19**. Why do we pray in Jesus’ name? [6]

This is the most wonderful privilege! We can come to the heavenly Father through Jesus the Messiah!

What does Deuteronomy 6:21, 23 tell us about God? [7]

Only the Lord God was able to save Israel from slavery in Egypt. Other gods could not help them at all.

What does Deuteronomy 6:10–12 tell us about God’s character? [8]

God is a generous God!

## How God's people should live

In response to all this, what does God tell his people to do (Deut 6:5)? [9]

God's people are to love only him! Nobody or nothing else should be first in their lives. If they love anything more than they love God, then they are worshipping idols. As a result, they will not experience the blessing of obeying God.

### Challenge 1

In the Old Testament, it is one's **heart** that makes decisions. For example, Proverbs 3:1–3: *keep my commands in your heart... write them on the tablet of your heart.*

Do you seek to please God in the decisions you make?

- Do you decide to read God's Word and to pray before you go to work each morning?
- Do you decide to go to a church meeting rather than go to work, meet with friends or relax?
- Do you decide to pray for those who annoy you, at home or at work?
- Do you decide to serve others, even when you would prefer to look at your phone?
- Do you decide to only look at good things on the phone and television?

*Love the LORD with all your heart...* (Deut 6:5)!

In the Old Testament, our **soul** is where we show our desires and emotions. For example, *Praise the LORD, my soul!* (Ps 103:1)

Do we seek to please God with our desires and emotions?

Which do we **desire** more:

- to earn more money or to have fellowship with God's people?
- to earn more money or to have time with our spouse and children?
- to hear the latest on social media or to hear from God through his Word?
- to get married to anyone, whether or not they love Jesus, or to wait for a spouse who is a believer?
- to express our anger as soon as we are irritated or to exercise self-control?

*Love the LORD your God with all... your soul!* (Deut 6:5)

The word **strength** emphasises just how much we should love God!

*Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength* (Deut 6:5).

Who are we seeking to please: ourselves or God?

Love for God includes fearing him, and not fearing other gods, including those that were worshipped in the land of Canaan, the promised land.

What does **Deuteronomy 6:13–17** say about how the Israelites should fear God? [10]

In the same way, we should not be afraid of people and their curses. We should not join others when they are fortune-telling, visiting a “holy man” or praying at graves.

### The incident at Massah (Deut 6:16)

The Israelites had been angry with Moses and God. They were very thirsty. They did not believe that God would provide them with the water they needed. They were almost ready to stone Moses. They doubted that God was really with them, even though God had done so many miracles. It is not surprising that God was angry with them (Exod 17:1–7).

How did the Israelites *put God to the test* in these verses? [11]

How might we *put God to the test*? [12]

Read **Deuteronomy 6:6–9**.

***These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts:*** these commands must influence all the decisions that we make!

What did the Israelites have to do to keep God’s commands on their hearts? [13]

## Challenge 2

How can we have God’s Word on our hearts? [14]



How can we teach our children the Word of God? [15]

***Tie God’s Word as symbols on our hands:*** With our hands we do all our work. So the words of God must guide everything we do with our hands.

## Challenge 3:

Give some examples of the good we can do with our hands. [16]

It’s always good to ask God, “How can I serve you in this situation?”



Give some examples of the bad we can do with our hands. [17]

It is a good thing to ask yourself: “What would Jesus do?”

**Bind them on your foreheads:** This means that the Word of God should guide us where to go. As we study God’s Word, we learn better which places Jesus wants us to go to, and where Jesus does not want us to go.

## Challenge 4

Give some examples of good places we should go to. [18]

Give some examples of bad places we should not go to. [19]

**Write them on the doorframes of your houses:** This means doing everything so that everyone who lives in our home or comes to our home knows that we love God.

## Challenge 5

What can you do so that everyone who lives in your home or comes to your home knows that you love God? [20]



It is good to write verses and hang them in a conspicuous place in the house to remind everyone of the Word of God. It is good to put verses up beside the mirror or on the door so that we often look at them.

Can you give examples of some verses that would be good to have on your walls? [21]

What can you do to allow God’s Word to be more important in your life and in your home?

**Write them... on your gates:** in the time when Deuteronomy was written, the city gate was an important area, where the people of the city discussed and conducted important affairs. It functioned like a city council of today (see **Ruth 4:1–4**).

So this command was to prompt God’s people to allow his commands to influence every aspect of city life.

Today God's people are not one nation. They are scattered throughout the world. They are working for the good of their communities: helping the poor, helping orphans, helping refugees, visiting those in prison, helping women escape the slavery of prostitution, serving those with disabilities, helping people escape from their addictions, collecting rubbish in parks and much more.

God's people are people who love: they show love to their neighbour, who is different from them or even is unkind to them. They give them gifts and offer to help them when they see a need (Rom 12:14–21).

## Challenge 6

In what ways can you show God's love in practical ways where you live?

**What have we learned about God today?**

**What changes would you like to make in your life, as a result of this lesson?**

## Homework

Before you come to the next lesson, read **Deuteronomy 7:1–11** and fill in the first two charts in lesson 9 (questions 5 and 6). You can then discuss your answers next time your group meets.

## Answers

- 1 – The Lord is one.
- 2 – *Yahweh* is the only living and true God. Worshipping anyone or anything else is terrible unfaithfulness.
- 3 – God is not a distant God, but instead has come close to us. God lives in us, while still being ruler of the universe!
- 4 – We baptise people in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- 5 – In the name of Jesus the Messiah.
- 6 – We pray in Jesus' name because we can only come to God the Father through having been made clean by the blood of Jesus.
- 7 – God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt in order to bring them to the promised land.
- 8 – God is a generous God who will provide richly for their needs in the promised land.
- 9 – Love him with all their heart, soul and strength.
- 10 – They should serve him only, take their oaths in his name and not follow other gods, but obey his laws.
- 11 – They didn't trust God to provide what they needed, and got angry.
- 12 – When we don't trust God to provide what we need and we complain.
- 13 – They were to impress God's commands on their children and talk about them throughout the day. They were to have God's commands on their hands, foreheads, their doors and gates.
- 14 – We need to read, learn, meditate on and obey God's Word so that it influences all our decisions throughout the day.
- 15 – We need to read the Bible or children's Bible to our children. We need to sing Bible songs. We need to tell stories from the Bible as we walk along the road. We need to tell children how God answers our prayers, and let them see what a difference Jesus makes to our life, minute by minute!
- 16 – Giving gifts; writing encouraging messages to others who are having a hard time; serving and helping at home, at church and in our community.
- 17 – Stealing, hitting, not helping (being lazy), looking at bad things on our phones, throwing rubbish on the ground.
- 18 – Go to church, visit someone who is ill or has lost a relative, or visit someone to tell them about Jesus.
- 19 – Don't watch violent or erotic films at the cinema, on television or your phone, don't go to work instead of going to church, don't go to friends' homes if you know that they will do bad things there.
- 20 – The most important thing is that people can see God's love shine through you. Pray before meals. Speak about God and how he has answered your prayers. Pray a blessing for people when they leave your house. Also, having verses from God's Word on display in your home will show people that God's Word is important to you.
- 21 – Examples:
  - Hebrews 13:6
  - 2 Corinthians 12:9
  - Psalm 23
  - Proverbs 3:5–6
  - Psalm 40:1–3.

## Deuteronomy lesson 9:

# Conquering the land



In this lesson we will use the five-questions method to help us to think more about what a wonderful God we have and what he has done for us!

Read **Deuteronomy 7:1–11**.

### Destruction of the people of Canaan

The people who lived in the land of Canaan were evil. They even burned their sons and daughters in the fire as a sacrifice to their gods. God wanted to destroy these nations because of their sin.

God wanted to give his people the land of Canaan so that they could be an example to the whole world. They were to show everyone how to live. Then other people could see how great and wise God is, and would know how to please him too.

The destruction of these people was a once-for-all-time circumstance in the history of the world. It is not an example for us to copy by invading any country today!

The destruction of the evil people who lived in Canaan is a **warning** to those who live in rebellion to their Creator. At the end of the world God will judge all people and he will destroy all evil.

God wonderfully fulfilled his promise to Abraham and his descendants by bringing the Israelites into the promised land. This also **reminds us of the eternal promised land**, which God has prepared for all his people. Soon Jesus will come back and take his people to the new Jerusalem! This land will be perfect, without death, without mourning, without any crying and without any pain (Rev 21:4)!

Why did the people living in this land have to be destroyed? [1]

What did the destruction of the evil people who lived in Canaan warn us about? [2]

What does the promised land remind us of today? [3]

Read **John 3:16–17**. How is it possible for us to go and live there forever? [4]

## Studying the passage

Here are five questions that we can use to study any Bible passage:

1. What does this passage tell us about God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)?
2. What does this passage tell us about people?
3. Is there:
  - a command to obey,
  - a warning to listen to,
  - or an example to follow?
4. What has God taught you from this passage?
5. Who can you share this with?

Let's answer each of these study questions in turn to help us study Deuteronomy 7:1–11.

## 1. What do these verses tell us about God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)? [5]

Fill in this chart, then compare your chart with the suggested answers to question 5 (at the end of this lesson).

There is an extra column for you to write any verses you may know from the New Testament that say the same thing.

If you already did this for homework, share what you found with your group.

Verse from 7:1–11	What we learn about God	New Testament references to this


## 2. What do these verses tell us about people? [6]

Fill in this chart, then compare your chart with the suggested answers to question 6 (at the end of this lesson).

<b>Verse from 7:1–11</b>	<b>What we learn about people</b>	<b>New Testament references to this</b>

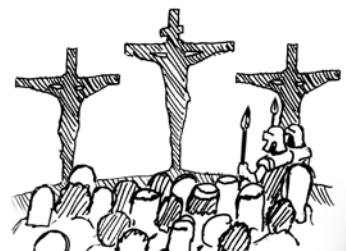
The Old Testament prepared God's people for the Messiah whose coming we learn about in the New Testament. The New Testament teaches us the same things about God and people as the Old Testament teaches us. Only by the power of the Holy Spirit can people be transformed into the holy people God called them to be!

Before we answer question 3, we must think about the context.

## Remember the context.

When we study the Old Testament, it is important that we remember that we live **after the cross**, which means after the death and resurrection of Jesus. This means that:

- Jesus fulfilled all God's commands perfectly and became the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Now he has given us a new covenant with new commands.
- There is no physical promised land today. There is no land for which we need to fight. Believers do not live in one geographical place, but are to be found in every country of the world. We look forward to the day when Jesus will come back and take us all to live with him in the eternal promised land!



So when we read God's commands in the Old Testament, we should also ask ourselves what the New Testament says about these commands.

## 3. Are there commands for God's people to obey, warnings to listen to, or examples to follow? [7]

Fill in this chart, then compare your chart with the suggested answers to question 7 (at the end of this lesson).

Verse from 7:1–11	Command/warning/example	Should we obey this today?	Why? What does the New Testament say about this?

Two important points:

1. When a believer marries an unbeliever, usually life is very hard for the believing spouse in all sorts of ways. Often they are not allowed to go to church or to teach their children how to follow Jesus. Often they have frequent arguments with their spouse because of their different values. And it is easy for the believer's heart to grow cold towards God.
2. We're to get rid of anything that encourages us to worship other gods, for example, evil eyes, other charms, horoscopes and verses from any book that people of other faiths consider holy. Of course, if you are not in charge of your home, it may not be possible to get rid of these things. Pray that those in your home will understand how these offend God!

We will talk about which Old Testament laws we should still obey today in lesson 10.

## 4. What has God taught you from these verses?

## 5. Who can you share this with?

### Homework

Each day this week, read another section of Deuteronomy and answer the five study questions:

1. 7:12–26
2. 8:1–20
3. 9:1–6
4. 9:7–29
5. 10:1–11
6. 10:12–22
7. 11:1–32



## Answers

- 1 – They had to be destroyed because they were so evil.
- 2 – At the end of the world all people will be judged and evil will be punished.
- 3 – The promised land reminds us of the eternal promised land, which God has prepared for all his people—the new Jerusalem.
- 4 – By believing that Jesus is the one who can save us and give us eternal life.
- 5 –

Verses	What we learn about God	New Testament references to this characteristic of God
<b>v.1a</b>	God was going to give his people a new home: the land of Canaan.	<i>But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells</i> (2 Pet 3:13 NIV 2015).
<b>vv.1b–2, 10</b>	God will destroy those who oppose him.	<i>He will punish those who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might on the day he comes...</i> (2 Thess 1:9–10).
<b>v.6</b>	God chooses certain people to belong to him.	<i>But you are a chosen people...</i> (1 Pet 2:9).
<b>vv.7–8a</b>	God loved his people so much that he chose to rescue them. It is totally undeserved love!	<i>For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life</i> (John 3:16).
<b>v.8</b>	God keeps his promises, however long ago he made them! He was keeping the promise that he had made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the book of Genesis.	<i>We tell you the good news: what God promised to our ancestors he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus</i> (Acts 13: 32–33).
<b>vv.9–10</b>	God is faithful to keep his covenant of love to those who love him, but he will destroy those who hate him.	<i>Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?</i> (Rom 8:35).  <i>... the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgement and destruction of the ungodly</i> (2 Pet 3:7).

6 –

Verses	What we learn about people	New Testament references to this
<b>v.6</b>	God's people are holy to God (set apart as pure).	<i>But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a <b>holy nation</b>... (1 Pet 2:9).</i>
<b>vv.7–8</b>	God's mercy to his people is totally undeserved. There is nothing that God's people did to deserve the love and mercy that God had shown them.	<i>But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions... (Eph 2:4–5).</i>
<b>v.8</b>	They had been redeemed (bought back from slavery).	<i>Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us... (Gal 3:13).</i>

7 –

Verse	Command/warning/example	Should we do this today?	Why? What does the New Testament say about this?
<b>v.2</b>	God tells them to kill all the people in the land of Canaan, that is those living there who worshipped other gods.	No	<i>Love your enemies...</i> (Matt 5:43–44)  Our real enemy is the devil (1 Pet 5:8). Of course, this teaching does not mean loving the devil!
<b>v.3</b>	God tells his people not to marry those who are not his people (i.e. they should not marry those who worship other gods).	Yes	<i>Do not be yoked together with unbelievers</i> (2 Cor 6:14).  <i>... she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord</i> (1 Cor 7:39).
<b>v.5</b>	The Israelites must break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles, and burn their idols in the fire.	Yes	<i>A number who had practised sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas</i> (Acts 19:19).

<b>v.11</b>	Take care to follow the commands, decrees and laws that God gave to Moses.	Yes—God’s people must obey all God’s commandments that are confirmed in the New Testament. These are summed up by the commands to love God and love one’s neighbour.	<p><i>Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them (Matt 5:17).</i></p> <p><i>“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments (Matt 22:37–40).</i></p>
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# Deuteronomy lesson 10:

## God's laws



In this lesson we will get a better understanding of how wonderful God's laws are!

We read the laws and instructions that God gave to Moses in chapters 12–26.

If you have not already done so, try to read through these chapters this week.

Read **Deuteronomy 26:16–19**.

What did God tell his people to do with his laws (v.16)? [1]

God is not content with half-hearted obedience. He wants his people to know the joy of complete obedience to him.

All the laws were given so that people would love God and one another.

It's easy to think that laws are difficult to obey and that if we do obey them our lives will become unpleasant. But, in fact, obedience brings joy and respect!

What do we learn about God's laws from:

**Psalms 19:8?** [2]

**Psalms 119:97–99?** [3]

## The laws in Deuteronomy

The laws in Deuteronomy cover many different aspects of life for God's people in the promised land. These include:

- where to worship God,
- clean and unclean food,

- tithing,
- celebrating festivals,
- what the king must do,
- what justice looks like,
- how to do warfare in a way that pleases God,
- marriage and sexual purity.

## God's laws

### Where to worship God

The Israelites were only to worship God in the one place that he would show them (Deut 12:1–14). This was very different from how the Canaanites worshipped their many gods in many different places. Because God is One, he was only worshipped in one place.



While the Israelites lived in the wilderness, they worshipped God at the tabernacle. This moved with them as they travelled from place to place (Exod chapters 25–27).

Once they were settled in the promised land, Solomon built a beautiful temple. This was to be the place where God would meet with his people (1 Kgs chapters 6–8).

Worshipping God is the most important thing for God's people to do!

What did the law say about where the Israelites were to worship God? [4]

### Food

The Israelites were told not to eat certain types of meat (Deut 14:1–21). This was to be a sign that they were holy—that is, set apart for God. They were not to live or worship like those who didn't know the true God.

Meat was a luxury that most people ate only rarely. So eating it was a special occasion, usually associated with worshipping God.



Meat that was forbidden included animals that eat the flesh of other animals.

Obeying these laws would keep them from having close relationships with those who didn't obey God. They would not be able to eat meat in the homes of those who weren't Israelites.

What did the law say about food? [5]

### Tithing

The Israelites were instructed to set aside ten per cent of their produce (Deut 14:22–29). This was to be used for:

- celebrating at the tabernacle or temple,
- giving to the Levites who worked at the tabernacle or temple,
- giving to those who were poor.



Throughout the Bible God instructs his people to care for the poor. In these chapters of the laws that God gave (chapters 12–26), six times there are instructions to be kind to the poor.

What did the law say about tithing? [6]

## Festivals

Each year the Israelites were to celebrate three festivals:

- the **Festival of Passover**—when they remembered their escape from slavery in Egypt
- the **Festival of Weeks**, seven weeks later—at the time of the wheat harvest. In Greek this is called *Pentecost*.
- the **Festival of Tabernacles**—at the time of the autumn fruit harvest, when they remembered their time of wandering in the desert.



This was a way to remember all that God had done for them. God wanted them not only to remember him, but also enjoy themselves and have a rest from work (Deut 16:1–17).

What did the law say about festivals? [7]

## The King

The King had to be an Israelite who worshipped God. And he was not to become very rich and have lots of wives. Instead, he should study and obey God's law. Then he would know how to rule God's people in the right way (Deut 17:14–20).



As we read the Old Testament, we see how Israelite kings did not obey this law. They led God's people further and further away from God. Even Solomon, with all his wisdom, failed to obey this law (1 Kgs 11:1–8).

What did the law say about the king? [8]

## Justice

The Israelites were told to make sure that people were tried fairly for crimes. They were to be sure that no one was punished for a crime they did not commit. Punishments were to be appropriate and not excessive (Deut.19:1–21).



What did the law say about justice? [9]

## War

War was part of normal life in the ancient world. Kings always wanted to expand their empires. If they weren't attacking other nations, they were defending their own territory. The Israelites were to do warfare in a way that honoured God. Warfare, of course, is always a terrible thing. But God gave laws to lessen some of the worst aspects of war (Deut 20:1–10).



The Israelites were told to show mercy on their own soldiers who were not ready to fight; and to show mercy to those who lived in enemy cities that they were attacking.

Only the Canaanites living in the promised land were to be completely destroyed, because they had been consistently evil for hundreds of years. God had chosen to give this land to his people. God wanted the Israelites to show all the other nations how to live in a way pleasing to the Creator God.

What did the law say about war? [10]

## Marriage

Marriage is a commitment for life and the rights of women need to be protected. These laws forbid all sexual activity for both men and women outside of marriage. This includes incest and rape (Deut 22:13–30). These sins always devastate not only the victim, but also their family. Sexual sins are never hidden from God's sight.



We know, from lesson 7, that marriage with non-Israelites (i.e. with unbelievers) was prohibited. This was because the children of such a marriage were unlikely to follow the LORD (Deut 7:3–4).

What did the law say about marriage? [11]

All these laws were unheard of in the ancient world—no nation had laws like these. These were God's good laws that God gave for the good of his people.

## When God's people fail to obey God's laws

Despite these laws being for their good, God's people were never able to obey them faithfully. So God commanded his people to offer animal sacrifices at the tabernacle and, later on, at the temple. This was to remind them that:

- sin is always terrible—the person who sins deserves death,
- something must die in their place in order for them to be forgiven.

These sacrifices prepared God's people for the day when he would send someone who would solve the problem of the people's sin once and for all. This person would:

- perfectly obey all of God's laws,
- be the one perfect sacrifice for all time,
- be the new "temple", the person to whom God's people can come to have their sins forgiven,
- come to live in the lives of God's people by his Holy Spirit, so that they would be able to truly obey God!

Read **1 John 4:9–10**. Who would this perfect person be, whom God would one day send? [12]

What would this perfect person do? [13]

## The old covenant and the new covenant

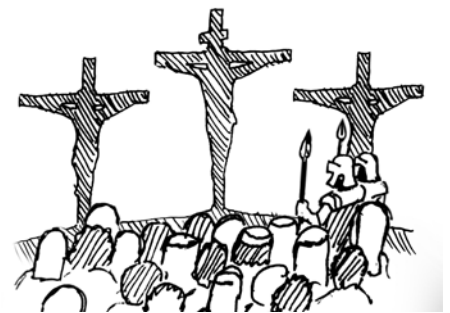
The book of Deuteronomy explains about the agreement—covenant—God had made with his people at Mount Sinai—Horeb (Deut 5:2):

- God had **rescued** his people from slavery,
- If they **trusted and obeyed God**, God would bless them and give them abundant lives in the promised land.
- The way to escape God's curse for disobedience was to offer certain **sacrifices**.
- If they **continuously disobeyed**, God would curse them and send them out of the promised land.

This covenant was later called the **Old Testament**. Therefore, this is what we call the first part of the Bible.

The second part of the Bible is called the **New Testament**—now God has made a new agreement:

- God's Son, Jesus the Messiah, has **rescued** his people from slavery to sin (Rom 6:20–22),
- If we **trust and obey God's Son**, God will bless us by adopting us as his children and giving us eternal life (John 1:12; 3:16).
- Jesus' once-for-all-time **sacrifice** continues to provide us with forgiveness when we repent of our sins (1 John 1:9).
- If we continuously **disobey God**, we might lose these blessings (Heb 10:26–31).



In both the Old and New Testaments, God's people had to have the **faith** to obey God. Hebrews chapter 11 discusses this important topic.

Read **Luke 22:20**. What did Jesus make with his blood? [14]

Read **Hebrews 9:15**. What is the new covenant? [15]

## Which Old Testament laws do we need to obey today?

Today we live under the new covenant.

### What do we NOT need to do?

#### 1. We do not have to obey the laws about the temple and sacrifices:

- Jesus offered the one perfect sacrifice for everyone's sins (1 John 2:2) and he is the new temple! (John 2:19, 21)



- We don't have to make sacrifices any more, so we do not need a physical temple. The Jewish temple was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70. God allowed this to happen as there was no need for a temple after Jesus had died and risen.
- The church (i.e. the gathering of those who follow Jesus) is now Jesus' body and the temple of God. This is where people can now meet with God (1 Cor 3:16).

## 2. We do not need to avoid eating certain foods:

- Jesus told Peter, after Jesus' death and resurrection, that he could eat all types of meat (Acts 11:1–18). God's people no longer need to separate themselves from other nations to show that they are set apart as holy to God. Instead, their holiness will now be seen by their love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:22–23).
- What Old Testament laws do we not need to obey today? [16]

## What DO we need to do?

Read **Jeremiah 31:31–33**. What did God say would be different about the new covenant laws? [17]

When we start following Jesus, he fills us with his Holy Spirit. And **he shows us what things we should change in our lives**. As you read God's Word, listen to what he is telling you!

- What did Jesus say were the most important laws to obey (**Mark 12:30–31**)? [18]

This is so easy to say and so hard to do!

All the Old Testament law is about how to love God and love our neighbour.

- The Ten Commandments (Deut 5:6–21) are still important for us to obey today. They help us to make sure that we do love God and our neighbour,.
- The New Testament affirms the importance of sexual purity. This too is part of loving our neighbour and obeying the Ten Commandments. (Read **Heb 13:4**). Never believe that sexual unfaithfulness doesn't matter (1 Cor 6:15–16). Satan has led many good leaders astray in this area. This is always excruciating for the church, their family and God (Heb 10:29).

What laws do we need to obey today? [19]

## So why do we need to read the laws of the Old Testament?

It is good for us to read the laws in the Old Testament so we can better understand:

- the character of God,
- what is right and wrong,



- how sinful we all are,
- that our sin can only be atoned for by the death of another,
- how much we need a Saviour!

Our understanding of who Jesus is and what he has done is much greater when we read the whole of the Old Testament.

What would you say to someone who says that there is no need to read the Old Testament, and especially all its laws?

**Are you allowing Jesus to transform your life, or do you think that you are good enough as you are?**

**How can you grow to be more like Jesus?**

## Homework

Read **Deuteronomy chapters 27–28** before the next lesson.

## Answers

- 1 – God told his people to follow his laws and to observe them carefully with all their heart and with all their soul.
- 2 – The laws of God gladden our hearts.
- 3 – God's laws make us wise.
- 4 – The Israelites could worship God only at the tabernacle, and later at the temple, unlike Canaanite worship.
- 5 – The Israelites were not to eat certain types of meat. This was to be a sign that they were holy—set apart for God.
- 6 – The Israelites should set aside ten per cent of their produce, for celebrating at the tabernacle or temple, for giving to the Levites who worked at the tabernacle or temple and to those who were poor.
- 7 – Each year the Israelites should celebrate the Festival of Passover, the Festival of Weeks and the Festival of Tabernacles. This was a way to remember all that God had done for them.
- 8 – The King had to be an Israelite who worshipped God. He was not to become very rich and have lots of wives. Instead, he should study and obey God's law so that he would know how to rule God's people in the right way.
- 9 – People had to be tried fairly for crimes. No one should be punished for a crime they didn't commit.
- 10 – They should show mercy on soldiers who were not ready to fight. They should show mercy to those who lived in enemy cities that they were attacking. Only the people living in the promised land should be completely destroyed.
- 11 – Marriage is a commitment for life and the rights of women need to be protected. The laws forbid all sexual activity outside of marriage, including incest and rape. God's people should only marry believers.
- 12 – God's Son, Jesus the Messiah.
- 13 – He would perfectly obey God's laws, be the one perfect sacrifice, the new "temple", and come to live in the lives of God's people by his Holy Spirit.
- 14 – Jesus made a new covenant—agreement—between God and people with his own blood.
- 15 – Jesus died as a ransom, to set us free from our sins so we may receive eternal life!
- 16 – We don't need to obey the laws about the temple, sacrifices and what we eat.
- 17 – God will write these laws on our minds and hearts.
- 18 – Love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. Love your neighbour as yourself.
- 19 – Love God and love your neighbour. This includes obeying the Ten Commandments and being sexually pure.

# Deuteronomy lesson 11:

## Blessings and curses



In this lesson, we will think about the blessings and curses of the Old Testament and how they apply to us today.

### The two mountains

Read **Deuteronomy 11:29**.

When the Israelites entered the promised land, God gave them instructions about two mountains. The two mountains in the centre of the country were to be an everlasting reminder of God's covenant with his people. God wanted to remind them of the blessings for those who obey him and the curses for those who disobey him.

On which mountain should they proclaim God's blessings? [1]

On which mountain should they proclaim God's curses? [2]

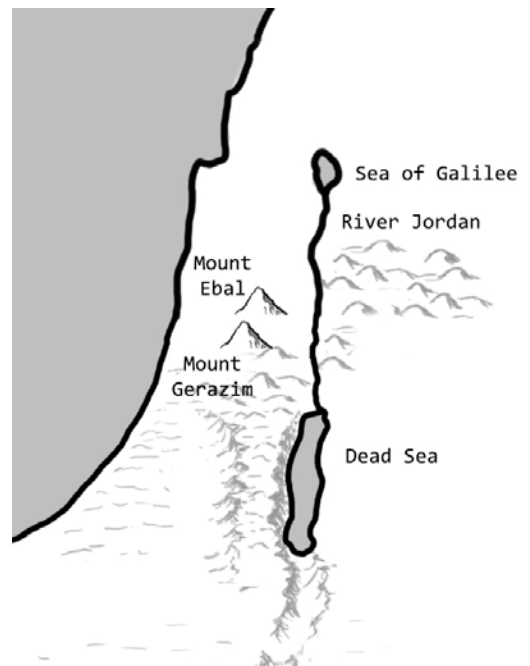
Read **Deuteronomy 27:1–8**.

Moses told the Israelites to set up two things out of stone on Mount Ebal (where they were to proclaim the curses).

What were they to set up (**vv.2–4**)? [3]

What were they to build (**v.5**)? [4]

God told the Israelites to put his written law on Mount Ebal; right beside this, God told them to build an altar. He knew that his people would not be able to keep the laws perfectly. Sacrifices were the means to



atone for their sin. So the altar is there to remind them that, from the beginning, he provided the way for them to be forgiven through offering sacrifices.

What two types of sacrifice were they to offer on this altar (**vv.6–7**)? [5]

## The burnt offering

The burnt offering not only atoned for sin, but also symbolised the offering of their whole lives to God. Unlike the other sacrifices, none of it could be eaten by the priests.

Read **Ephesians 5:2**. Who gave up his life as a voluntary burnt offering so that we could be forgiven? [6]

Read **Romans 12:1**. In view of what Jesus has done for us, what should we do? [7]

What does this mean? [8]

So what does the burnt offering remind us of? [9]

When we commit our whole lives to God, he fills us with his joy!

## The fellowship offering

Usually only the priests were allowed to eat the meat of animals offered in sacrifice. But the fellowship offering was the one sacrifice that ordinary people could eat too. It was to be shared with family and neighbours.

This sacrifice was a symbol of their restored relationship with God after he had forgiven their sins. This was a joy to share with others!

Now we are in New Testament times, what do we do instead of offering a fellowship offering (Luke 22:19)? [10]

Jesus was the perfect, once-for-all-time sacrifice, so now we are forgiven and can have fellowship with God again!

Nowadays many churches don't have a proper meal when they celebrate the Lord's Supper. Instead, they only have a symbolic meal to remember Jesus' death on the cross. The fellowship offering shows us how important it is for God's people to eat together. So even if your church only has a symbolic meal for the Lord's Supper, it is important that you eat together regularly as a community of believers.

What does the fellowship offering remind us of? [11]

## Blessings and curses

In Deuteronomy chapters 27–28 there are:

- many blessings for those who obey the laws of God,
- many curses for those who do not obey the laws of God.

Read **Deuteronomy 28:1–24**.

In the Old Testament, God blessed his people in ways that they never deserved. And yet they were continuously disobedient to him. And so, many times, God sent curses on his people.

In the book of Judges, God's people continuously went through a cycle of:

- disobeying God's good laws—and leading evil lives,
- being given by God into the hands of their enemies, who oppressed them for many years,
- crying out to God for help,
- God sending a deliverer (a judge) to rescue them,
- soon disobeying God's laws and leading evil lives again.

This happened continuously for about 300 years.

Many years later, when Ahab was king of Israel, he promoted the worship of the god Baal. So God sent a drought for three years (1 Kgs 17:1).

Eventually, because God's people were so completely unfaithful to God, he punished his people. He did what was unthinkable: he brought the Babylonian army to conquer the land, destroy the temple and take the people into exile. This happened in 586 BC (2 Chron 36:15–21).

## ***Extra: The book of Lamentations***

Lamentations is a collection of poems expressing the grief of God's people after Jerusalem was destroyed.

*How deserted lies the city,  
once so full of people!  
How like a widow is she,  
who once was great among the nations!  
She who was a queen among the provinces  
has now become a slave. (Lam 1:1)*

Yet even in this tragedy, the writer can declare:

*Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed,  
for his compassions never fail.  
They are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.  
I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion;  
therefore I will wait for him." (Lam 3:22–24)*



The writer knew that this was not the end for God's people, and many believers over the centuries have been comforted by these verses. They give us hope as we face all sorts of difficulties.

As we read God's Word today, it's important for us to see that these blessings and curses represent something much bigger. They give us a taste of the eternal blessings and curses that Jesus will bring when he comes back to judge the world.

Read **Matthew 25:34**. What will Jesus say to those who have faithfully followed him? [12]

These are the most wonderful words we will ever hear!

Read **Matthew 25:41**. What will Jesus say to those who have not followed him? [13]

These are the most terrible words anyone could ever hear.

What do the blessings and curses of the Old Testament represent? [14]

However, our blessings are not just in the future.

Read **Ephesians 1:3–8**. What blessings has God given us to enjoy now? [15]

These blessings are far greater than any physical blessings that we could ever have now!

## Other blessings God has given us

Look up the verses which are most important to you at this time:

- God gives us his Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16).
- God forgives us when we come to him and tell him we are sorry that we have failed him again (1 John 1:9).
- He comforts us in our troubles (2 Cor 1:3–4).
- He is close to the broken-hearted (Ps 34:18).
- He gives us wisdom (James 1:5).
- He answers our prayers (John 14:13).
- He gives us a family of other believers (Gal 6:10).
- He loves us dearly (Eph 5:1).
- He gives us a new understanding of who we really are: children of the living God! This gives us dignity and self-respect, whoever we are, because we are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:28).

These are some of the blessings that we can enjoy now.

What other blessings from God can you think of that we can enjoy now?

## What about curses today?

Jesus has *redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us* (Gal 3:13). We are now under God's blessing and not his curse.

If we are following Jesus, he is protecting us from any curse that people might make against us! In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul reminds them of God's *incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come* (Eph 1:19–21).

If you are aware that anyone has cursed you, you can pray in the powerful name of Jesus that he will protect you.

So, we do not need to be afraid of any curses today!

## Health and wealth

Sometimes people tell us that God promises us health and wealth now. But that is not true.

In the Old Testament, God promised wealth and prosperity to his people if they obeyed him. We see the fulfilment of this during the reign of King Solomon: *Everyone lived in safety, everyone under their own vine and under their own fig tree* (1 Kgs 4:25).



But that wealth and prosperity was only material, and it did not last.

God's plan was for the whole world to experience **everlasting blessing**, which comes from a changed heart and a new relationship with God (Ezek 36:26, Eph 2:18). Everlasting blessing can never come from material possessions.

Neither Jesus nor the apostles were rich. We know that Paul suffered from a physical problem that he begged God to take away (2 Cor 12:1–10). And, of course, Jesus himself suffered terribly and then was put to death in the most cruel way ever invented. What does Paul say in **Romans 8:18**? [16]

We cannot imagine how wonderful it will be to live with God in the new Jerusalem!

It is important to see that the Old Testament blessings are not ours to claim today—not until we live in the new Jerusalem. God loves to answer our prayers, but there are times when we do suffer in this life. We know that God uses difficulties to make us more like Jesus (Heb 12:7–11). But we do not know why God is allowing difficulties in our lives (Isa 55:9). If we live in abundance, with good health and have no problems, this does not mean that God is more pleased with us than with others. And when we suffer difficulties, illnesses and deprivation today we must not think that God is cursing us. We must never assume that God is punishing someone when they face problems. Our job is to love, encourage and support one another!

Life may be difficult now. But God promises us that he will never leave us (Heb 13:5). His Holy Spirit will give us all the strength and joy that we need, to follow Jesus to the end! Then we will know true health and wealth (Rev 21:3–4; 22:1–5).

What does a “blessed” person know today? [17]

How do you think we can enjoy more of God's blessing? [18]

## Homework

Read **Deuteronomy chapters 29–30** before the next lesson.



## Answers

- 1 – Mount Gerizim.
- 2 – Mount Ebal.
- 3 – Stones with God's law written on them.
- 4 – An altar.
- 5 – Burnt offerings and fellowship offerings.
- 6 – Jesus the Messiah.
- 7 – We should offer ourselves as a living sacrifice to God.
- 8 – It means we want to live our whole lives pleasing God and telling others about him.
- 9 – The burnt offering reminds us that we need a sacrifice to atone for our sin. As Jesus has sacrificed himself for us, we should offer our whole lives to God.
- 10 – We celebrate the Lord's Supper together (we share bread and wine) to remember that Jesus died for our sins.
- 11 – The fellowship offering reminds us that when we repent, we can enjoy fellowship with God again. This is only possible because Jesus cleansed us from our sins by his blood. This is so wonderful that we should celebrate it with others!
- 12 – *Come you who are blessed by my Father, take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.*
- 13 – *Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*
- 14 – They represent the eternal blessings and curses that Jesus will bring when he comes back to judge the world.
- 15 – He chose us before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight, to become his children, to be redeemed and forgiven!
- 16 – *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*
- 17 – The blessed person is someone who knows that:
  - God chose them before the creation of the world,
  - they are God's child,
  - they are redeemed and forgiven,
  - whatever happens in this life, God will always be with them,
  - and God will bring them safely to the glorious, eternal promised land!
- 18 – We can enjoy more of God's blessings as we:
  - read, meditate on and obey his Word,
  - pray as much as we can,
  - go to meetings to meet with other believers,
  - tell others about Jesus.

## Deuteronomy lesson 12:

# Renewing the covenant



In this lesson we will consider how important it is for each generation to renew its commitment to obeying God.

Deuteronomy chapters 29–30 describes how Moses and the next generation of God’s people renewed their covenant with God. The original generation, with whom God had made an agreement at Mount Sinai, had died. So now their children and grandchildren needed to renew the covenant with God.

Like the whole book of Deuteronomy, in many ways chapters 29–30 follow the pattern of ancient treaties that kings made in those days, with those they had conquered. These treaties were not always written in exactly the same way, but they usually had five main parts (see also lesson 1):

1. Historical introduction.
2. General requirements of the covenant.
3. Warnings against breaking the covenant.
4. Blessings and curses.
5. Witnesses.

Read **chapters 29–30** and look for these five parts of the agreement as you read it.

We will now consider the five parts of the covenant.

## 1. Historical introduction (29:2–8)

God reminded the Israelites of their past. Moses spoke to them as if they themselves had been there at Mount Sinai, when in fact it was their parents’ generation who had been there (v.3).

### Challenge 1

History is very important. By reading what God has done for us in the past, we remember that we are saved by God’s grace. If we forget what God has done for us, we can become proud and start to judge other people, like the Pharisees did in Jesus’ day. So we must continuously read God’s Word to remind ourselves of what he has done and who we are—sinners saved by the grace of God!

## Challenge 2

As we read God's Word, it is helpful to imagine that we ourselves were there at the events that we are reading about. This is what Moses was doing as he spoke to the Israelites: *With your eyes you saw...*(Deut 29:3). This helps us to feel the impact of the words.

## 2. General requirements of the covenant (29:9–15)

Deuteronomy has already given us God's laws in detail. So here we just have the challenge that everyone is expected to obey the terms of the covenant, including the women, children and foreigners (v.11). We must not think that God's Word is only for the men or only for the adults or only for those who are like us.

- Parents have a very important task in teaching their children to obey God's Word from their earliest days. They must never think that it is okay for their children to do what God's Word says is wrong.
- We must teach our sons, as well as daughters, to honour and obey **both** their parents.
- We must teach our sons, as well as daughters, to love and care for other people.
- We must not ignore people from other tribes and nationalities. They need to learn about the Lord too!

## Challenge 3

What are you doing in your family and in your community of believers to make sure that all people, including children and foreigners, have the opportunity to learn how to love and please God?

## 3. Warnings about breaking the covenant (29:16–29)

How does God describe the things that the other nations worship (v.17)? [1]

How does God describe the teaching of those who start following other gods (v.18)? [2]

What will happen to God's people who worship other gods (vv.20–28)? [3]

God is angry when his people sin. We must never think that he doesn't mind and will not notice! He loves the world he made. He is pained when we spoil our relationships and our world.

*When... a person hears the words of this oath and they invoke a blessing on themselves, thinking, "I will be safe even though I persist in going my own way", they will bring disaster on the watered land as well as the dry (v.19).* The devil wants us to think that worshipping things other than God is okay. He wants us to think that 'secret' sin is okay. There are two reasons why sin is never okay:

1. Sin **always** damages our own hearts, our relationships, and worst of all, it brings God pain.

2. Sin is contagious—it will be reproduced in other people. As the apostle Paul said, *Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough?* (1 Cor 5:6)

Never forget that our sin can cause great damage to our churches, our communities and our countries. We need to be ruthless with the sin in our lives. As Jesus said: *if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell* (Matt 5:30).

If we are not sure whether something is sinful, we should ask ourselves two questions:

- What does the Bible say about this?
- Would Jesus have done that?

The Canaanite god, Baal, was the god of prosperity. Baal was worshipped by nearly everyone. In a similar way, for most people today, the most important thing is to earn more money. They believe that money will bring them happiness, security and peace.

Just as the Israelites thought that they could worship both God and Baal, so today, many believers think they can worship both God and money.

What did Jesus say about this in Matthew 6:24? [4]

## Challenge 4

Money test: what is most important in your life?

- Do you miss church because you want to earn more money?
- Do you give less money to church than you could, because you want to buy a newer telephone or other new things?
- Are you generous to those in need?
- Do you ask God how he wants you to use your money?



The answers to these questions show whether or not you are trying to serve both God and money. Jesus says it is not possible. You cannot serve both God and money.

## Hope for those who break the covenant (30:1–15)

Before we read about the blessings and curses, there is an extraordinary addition that Moses made to give hope to those who break the covenant.

God knew that his people would fail him, despite all his warnings. But, as we saw in lesson 4, God is a God of incredible mercy: he will judge sin, but he will also restore those who are genuinely repentant (30:1–10).

What does “circumcise your hearts” mean? [5]

Moses looks forward to a time when God's people really will love God! The apostle Paul uses "circumcision of the heart" to describe what happens when someone repents and trusts in Jesus (Col 2:11).

We must see sin in the same way that we see cancer: we must cut it out immediately before it has time to spread and kill us! Of course, this can be very painful, but it is necessary in order to live!

Who is the only one who has the power to give us what we need (Deut 30:9)? [6]

***Then the LORD your God will make you most prosperous in all the work of your hands and in the fruit of your womb...*** The Canaanites believed that their god Baal gave healthy children and abundant harvests. God wants his people to know that it is he who has the power to give these things, not Baal.

What does the Lord do when people truly repent of their rebellion and sin (v.9)? [7]

***The LORD will again delight in you...*** These are the most beautiful words in the world! They are said to those who are truly repentant. This is like the joy of the shepherd who found his lost sheep, in the parable Jesus told (Luke 15:6–7).

What choice do we have to make every minute of every day (Deut 30:19–20)? [8]

***choose life... For the LORD is your life...*** Moses begged God's people to choose between life and prosperity or death and destruction (v.15). In a similar way, in John's gospel we are called to follow the one who is *the way, the truth and the life* (John 14:6). It is only by believing in Jesus that we can have eternal life (John 17:3).

## 4. Blessings and curses (30:16–18)

What blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience are stated again (vv.16–18)? [9]

Look at lesson 11 again for a reminder about the topic of blessings and curses for us today.

## 5. Concluding summons to witnesses (30:19)

In the ancient world treaties ended with calling on the gods of the conquering king and the conquered people to be witnesses to their agreement. Obviously, in this covenant they could not call pagan gods as witnesses. So God uses his creation as a witness.

A marriage ceremony is a public event so that everyone knows that this man is now married to this woman. There have to be witnesses in case either is unfaithful to their covenant. In the same way, this covenant between God and his people was made publicly. God's own creation will cry out against his people if they are unfaithful. The curses in Deuteronomy chapter 28 warn of this (Deut 28:16–19).

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul tells us that creation itself is looking forward to the time when there will be no more decay (Rom 8:21). A beautiful, flawless creation is coming! But until then we live in a world full of difficulties (Gen 3:17–18). Our job is to care for the precious creation that God has given us now (Gen 2:15)!

## Renewing the covenant

We have seen how the next generation of God's people renewed their commitment to obeying him. In a similar way we must give opportunities to the children of believers today to publicly affirm their own commitment to following Jesus. How can you do this in your church?

**What has God been saying to you through these two chapters of Deuteronomy?**

### Homework

Read **Deuteronomy chapters 31–32** before the next lesson.

## Answers

- 1 – They are detestable.
- 2 – A root that produces bitter poison.
- 3 – They will suffer the full weight of God's judgment.
- 4 – *No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.*
- 5 – It means to allow God to cut out all the sinful habits in our hearts.
- 6 – The Lord God alone has power to give us what we need.
- 7 – He delights in them!
- 8 – We have to choose the path of life and not the path of death.
- 9 – The blessings are that they will live and increase and have God's blessing in the promised land. The curses are that they will be destroyed and will not live long in the promised land.

## Deuteronomy lesson 13:

# Looking to the future



In chapters 31–32, Moses repeated many of the things he said earlier. But he said them in new ways, so that old truths might impact his hearers' hearts in a new way. These chapters remind us that God is our faithful, kind and perfect king; we are so easily unfaithful to him and yet he continues to restore our broken relationship with him. So, in gratitude we must work hard together to show our love for God and obey his word.

## God is with us

Read **Deuteronomy 31:1–8**.

This chapter describes how Moses continued to prepare God's people for the time when he would not be with them anymore.

Moses would not lead the people across the River Jordan, into the promised land. What did Moses tell the people (Deut 31:3)? [1]

He reminded the people that although Joshua would be their new leader, it was really God himself who was their king and unbeatable warrior.

What did Moses tell Joshua (v.8)? [2]

This wonderful assurance was repeated to Joshua (Josh 1:5) and then to us in the New Testament (Matt 28:20; Heb 13:5). Our leaders and teachers may leave us, but God never will!

### Challenge 1

When do you most need to remember these precious words that Moses said about God: *he will never leave you or forsake you* (Deut 31:8)?

If you are facing a big change in your work, your family situation or where you live, these are important words for you to remember. If we are seeking to love and obey the Lord, he will never leave us or forsake us!

Have there been times when you have been tempted to doubt this?

## Everyone should learn to fear the Lord

Read **Deuteronomy 31:9–13**.

Moses reminded the people that God's people should know his laws.

Who needed to listen to God's law and learn his law (vv.12–13)? [3]

Moses wrote down God's laws and gave them to the priests and elders of the people. They were the only ones who had copies of God's Word. It was their job to teach it to all of God's people—including the women and the children. Today, most believers can read God's Word for themselves, either as a book or on their phone. But sometimes believers are not teaching God's Word to their children. It is very important that children learn God's Word from an early age.

### Challenge 2

Parents should make it part of their daily lives to read God's Word to their children. Church gatherings should provide opportunities for children to hear God's Word in a way that they can understand. Then they can learn to love God's Word too.

Does this happen in your home and church? If not, what can you do so that the children learn to love God's Word?

## God knows how quickly we forget him

Read **Deuteronomy 31:14–29**.

Moses knew that God's people would be unfaithful to the God who had rescued them, cared for them and brought them into a land of plenty (vv.15–29).

***I will hide my face...*** (v.17–18): this is the most terrible thing that can happen to us—that God should hide his face from us. What does the priestly blessing ask God to do regarding his face (Num 6:24–26)? [4]

The New Testament gives us the wonderful promise that those who follow Jesus will one day see God's face (Rev 22:4)!

How amazing that God did not give up on his people. He always gives us the opportunity to turn back to him, however much we have pained him. The gospel really is good news!



## Challenge 3

We are also so easily unfaithful to God. Do you ask God daily to show you your sin? Do you ask God daily to make your heart clean by the blood of Jesus?

We should never be complacent about the sin in our lives! One sin easily leads to another sin. We need to repent daily so that sin can't grow and take us away from the Lord.

## Moses' song

In chapter 32, we read a song that Moses taught the people. It is a song of bitter grief. It shows God's extreme disappointment with his beloved people. It was a song that he wanted future generations to sing, in order to warn them not to be unfaithful to God (Deut 31:19).



## Challenge 4

Songs are good ways to remember important truths. They can stay in our hearts and minds for a long time. So in church we should choose songs that have words that fill us with life-changing truth that is faithful to God's Word. Do those who choose the songs in your church check carefully that the words are faithful to what the Bible teaches?

Read **chapter 32** and look for what it teaches us about God and his people.

Moses wanted the Israelites to remember some very important truths about God and his people.

- **What do we learn about who God is (vv.4, 6, 10–14, 16, 18–19, 21)?** [5]
- **What do we learn about who God's people are (vv.9–10)?** [6]

**Inheritance** (v.9): God's people belonged to God. And one day he will enjoy relating to them in a perfect, unspoiled relationship, forever!

It is like when a woman is engaged to be married. She belongs to her future husband, but she doesn't enjoy the fullness of that relationship until after the wedding. In the book of Revelation, Jesus' return is described as his wedding (Rev 19:7). In the same way, in Deuteronomy, God is jealous of his people's love.

**The apple of his eye...** (v.10): this refers to our pupil, the most sensitive part of our bodies that we protect at all costs. God loves his people more than any others, and protects them from all harm!

- **When are God's people particularly likely to turn away from God (v.15)?** [7]

***Jeshurun*** (v.15): means “the upright one” and is another name for Israel (Isa 44:2). Tragically, Israel often did not live up to its name.

***Their vine comes from the vine of Sodom and from the fields of Gomorrah*** (v.32): these are the two wealthy cities that were so evil that God destroyed them (Genesis chapter 19). The Israelites were in danger of the same thing happening to them, if they continued to rebel against God and his good laws.

- **What do we learn about the false gods that people worship (vv.17, 21)?** [8]

The false gods cannot do anything and they have no history of miracles or salvation.

***People sacrifice to demons*** (v.17): Everyone worships something or someone. What people don't realise is that behind what they worship is the devil himself. The devil loves to draw us to worship him, and away from worshipping God.

- **What will God do about his people's unfaithfulness (Deut 32:20–23)?** [9]

***I will make them envious by those who are not a people...*** (v.21): the apostle Paul used this verse (Rom 10:19) to explain why it appeared that God had rejected Israel and had welcomed non-Jews into his kingdom. Israel had made God jealous by worshipping other gods. So God made them jealous by giving salvation to the Gentiles (**Rom 11:11, 14**).

***I will heap calamities on them...*** (v.23): God had to act in a terrible way. If he had not done this, the faith of his people would have been spoiled and lost. The promise that God had given to Abraham would have disappeared. The truth about God, his covenant, his law, his land, his people and his purpose had to be preserved faithfully until the coming of his one and only Son (John 3:16).

- **What do we learn about how wise God's people are (v.28)?** [10]

They were extraordinarily bad at seeing what God was teaching them through their difficulties. This was such a common problem that the Old Testament prophets often referred to God's people as sheep (e.g. Isa 53:6, Jer 50:6); sheep are not very intelligent and do something just because the others are doing it. However, the picture of Jesus being the Good Shepherd means that if we follow him we will be safe and cared for (Ps 23). And this leads us to the most extraordinary truth of all:

- **What do we learn about what God will do (vv.39–43)?** [11]

Just when God's people are at their weakest (v.36), God comes to their rescue and destroys the enemies of his people (vv.41–42).

***[God will] make atonement for his land and people...*** (v.43): how extraordinary that God himself will make atonement for their sin. Normally, it was the priest's task to make sacrifices in order for the people's sins to be atoned for (Lev 6:7), but here God does it!

In the New Testament we learn that atonement was only possible through the one perfect sacrifice that God's Son made for the whole world (1 John 4:10). Our sins can only be atoned for if we uncover them or confess them to God first (1 John 1:9).

## Challenge 5

Do you daily acknowledge who God is, who you are, how sinful you are and how wonderful the gospel is?

### *Extra: God is our Rock*

The word “Rock” is used to describe God five times in this song (You can find these in vv.4, 15, 18, 30, 31).



Imagine a huge rock in a desert. What does this word tell us about God? [12]

There are also other ideas that we can understand from this descriptive word. Sometimes rocks provide food:

***He nourished him with honey from the rock and with oil from the flinty crag...*** (v.13): wild honeybees make hives in cracks in rocks. And olive trees grow in places where other trees are not able to grow, including rocky places.

It is much better to build your house on a rock than on the sand. Jesus told a parable about this (Matt 7:24–27).

So the word “Rock” tells us that God is dependable and that he provides for us. Other gods are useless: they cannot protect us, help us, or provide for us. They do not give us a firm foundation on which to build our lives. In fact, if we build our lives on false gods, we are heading for destruction (Matt 7:27).

**What has God been saying to you through this lesson?**

**Which of the five challenges do you most need to think and pray about?**

## Homework

Read **Deuteronomy chapters 33–34** before the next lesson.

## Answers

- 1 – *The LORD your God himself will cross over ahead of you. He will destroy these nations before you.*
- 2 – *The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.*
- 3 – *The men, women and children, and the foreigners residing in [their] towns...*
- 4 – *... the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face towards you and give you peace.*
- 5 – *God is the Rock (v.4); his works are perfect (v.4); all his ways are just (v.4); [he is] a faithful God who does no wrong (v.4); their Father and Creator (v.6); he found them, shielded, cared for and guarded them (v.10); he is like an eagle that carries its young on its wings (v.11); he provides abundantly for his people (v.13–14); he gave them life—he is both their father and mother (v.18); he is a passionate God who is jealous and angry when his people worship other gods (vv.16, 19, 21).*
- 6 – *... the LORD's portion... his allotted inheritance... the apple of his eye.*
- 7 – *As people grow more and more wealthy, they no longer feel the need for God. They forget more easily that God made them, loves them, rescued them and has blessed them in so many ways: *They abandoned the God who made them.**
- 8 – *These gods are worthless [and had only] recently appeared.*
- 9 – *God will hide his face from them... make them envious by those who are not a people [and]... heap calamities on them.*
- 10 – *They are a nation without sense...*
- 11 – *God will bring his people back to life, heal them, avenge them from their enemies and he himself will make atonement for his land and his people.*
- 12 – *He provides shelter from the storms and shade from the intense heat.*

## Deuteronomy lesson 14:

# Final warnings and encouragements



In chapters 33–34 we read Moses' final warnings and encouragements to his people. Pay attention to which warnings and encouragements the Lord wants to give you as you study this last lesson of the course.

In chapter 33, we read about Moses' blessing of the 12 tribes. This reminds us of Jacob who, 500 years earlier, had blessed his 12 sons before he died (Gen 49:1–27). In doing this, Moses was reminding God's people of God's faithfulness to his covenant across 500 years! They were about to cross the river Jordan without Moses, but not without God. He would continue to be faithful to his people.

Over the previous 40 years, Moses had got to know these tribes well. This was his last opportunity to tell them about the things that mattered most. The promised land would be a place where they could enjoy great wealth, but it would also be a place of spiritual danger. So, like a good pastor, he both warned and encouraged his people.

## Moses blessed the 12 tribes

Read **Deuteronomy chapter 33** but don't be discouraged by the names you may not know. Imagine you were there, listening to Moses' final words. Look for the phrases and verses that impact you most. Share these with your group after reading the whole chapter.

Some of the truths that Moses wanted to remind the Israelites about:

- God came down to make a covenant with his people, whom he had rescued from Egypt (vv.1–5). In a similar way, in New Testament times, God lived among us in the person of Jesus (John 1:14).
- Conflict and opposition are part of life (vv.7, 11, 20, 22).
- Leaders must set an example by putting God first in their lives (vv.8–10).
- God protects and cares for his people (v.12).

- Spiritual fruitfulness comes out of suffering—Joseph lived many years as a slave and then in prison before he enjoyed “fruitfulness” (v.13–17).
- God’s people will be those who rejoice (v.18).
- God’s people invite others to worship God (v.19).
- God rewards obedience to him—the tribe of Gad had unselfishly gone with the rest of God’s people to fight the Canaanites even when they had already secured their own land (vv.20–21). See lesson 4 (Num 32:16–19).
- God will help his people (vv.23–29).
- God is the mighty king who cares for his people (vv.26–29).

Which of these truths do you most need to be reminded of today?

**Jeshurun** (vv.5, 26): as we learnt in lesson 13, this means “the upright one” and is another name for Israel.

## Challenge 1

Do you praise God daily for the wonder that he rescued you and cares for you? If not, think about how to make this part of your daily life so that it becomes a habit.

## The death of Moses

Read **Deuteronomy chapter 34**.

What was the last thing Moses did before he died (vv.1–4)? [1]

**There the LORD showed him the whole land...** (v.1): for Israelites, to view the land was part of the process of becoming its owner. Abraham viewed the land of Canaan (Gen 13:14–15). The devil tried to tempt Jesus to worship him by showing him all the kingdoms (lands) of the world (Matt 4:8). And in Jesus’ parable of the great banquet, one of the excuses for absence was that the man had just bought a field and *must go and see it* (Luke 14:18). So when Moses looked over the promised land it meant that he was given the privilege of legally taking ownership of it on behalf of God’s people.



When was Moses able at last to enter the promised land (Matt 17:1–3)? [2]

Just like Moses, we can look at the eternal promised land (the new Jerusalem) from a distance but we can’t enter it yet. As is written in the book of Hebrews: *All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth* (Heb 11:13).

Similarly, Peter wrote: *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who*

*through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Pet 1:3–5).*

We are heirs because we are children of God (John 1:12), but we do not enjoy all the benefits of ownership on this side of heaven. Only in the new Jerusalem will we enjoy all that the promised land offers us: sinless lives, perfect relationships, permanently healthy bodies and unlimited prosperity!

How was Moses' viewing of the promised land similar to our experience today? [3]

What things can we do to keep our eyes on the eternal promised land? [4]

***the servant of the LORD...*** (Deut 34:5): this is what the apostles called themselves (e.g. Rom 1:1; James 1:1; 2 Pet 1:1). Every believer should be the Lord's servant. We should always be thinking about how to please our master and bring him glory. We should not be thinking about how to please ourselves and bring ourselves glory.

What is the task of a servant? [5]

## ***Extra: Servant of the LORD***

The title "servant of the LORD" is important in the book of Isaiah. In four passages\* Isaiah speaks of God's servant, who will make it possible for Israel to return to God. Not only that, this servant will make it possible for all nations to come to him too, by atoning for the sins of the people through his death (Isa 53:5–6).

\*Isaiah 42:1–9; 49:1–12; 50:4–9; 52:13–53:12

***... no one knows where his grave is*** (Deut 34:6): Maybe this was another reason for God to keep Moses from entering the promised land. God knew that his people would so easily do wrong things. Moses was such an important person to the Israelites that it would have been easy for them to make Moses' grave a place of pilgrimage. People would have gone there to worship him and pray to him, just as many people pray at the graves of "holy" people today. God intended that Moses would die outside the promised land so that no one knew where he was buried.

***... whom the LORD knew face to face*** (Deut 34:10): daily appointments with God are essential for all believers to be able to face the challenges of life, even more so for leaders. Leaders of God's people can only be as successful in their ministry as their diligence in spending time in prayer each day.

## **Challenge 2**

Do you have a daily appointment with God? If not, ask yourself how long you spend looking at your phone and television each day. Which is more important to you: looking at messages and social media, or reading God's Word?



What changes do you need to make to ensure you enjoy a closer relationship with God?

*For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel* (Deut 34:12): Deuteronomy is based on Moses' words. But we can see that someone else later edited them and made them into the book that we have today. That is why we read that "Moses said", not "I said". Also, at the end of the book we read about his death. The editor lived quite a long time after Moses. We know that just as God inspired Moses to speak, so he inspired the person who edited this book. The editor has looked back on Israel's history and has seen many prophets come and go. But none were as great as Moses.

Why was Moses a great servant of the LORD? What did Moses pray (Exod 33:13)? [6]

Moses' motivation for his entire life had been these three things:

- to learn God's ways,
- to know God,
- to please God.

How does this compare with what motivates you to do the things you do each day?

## Challenge 3

What motivates you?

What results are you seeing of this motivation?

What changes would you like to make so that you can become more the kind of servant of the Lord Jesus that God is calling you to be?

Moses not only led God's people out of slavery and to the edge of the promised land. He also wrote down God's words, which God's people have been reading for three and a half thousand years!

The words of these first five books of the Bible (the Torah) came from Moses, under God's inspiration. They are of immense importance for us to understand God and who he is.

In spite of all the rebellion of God's people, God continued to be faithful to them. And even now he continues to work to achieve his goal so that one day:

- there will be a holy people (Rev 20:6),
- his people will be from **every** nation (Rev 7:9),
- they will live in safety, peace and prosperity in the eternal promised land (Rev 22:1–5),
- they will live under the loving rule of the King of Kings! (Rev 19:16)

## Challenge 4

What are you doing to join in with God's plan to gather a people from every nation?





**What has God been saying to you today through this lesson?**

## Answers

- 1 – He climbed up a mountain to see the whole of the promised land.
- 2 – When Jesus was transfigured on a mountain in front of Peter, James and John.
- 3 – We can look at the eternal promised land from a distance but we can't enter it yet. We are heirs but we do not enjoy all the benefits of ownership on this side of heaven.
- 4 – As we read and meditate on God's Word and as we meet with other believers to learn more about how to follow Jesus, we will be keeping our eyes on the eternal promised land.
- 5 – A servant's task is to please and obey his master.
- 6 – *If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so that I may know you and continue to find favour with you.*

# **CONGRATULATIONS!**

## You have finished the Deuteronomy course!

There is so much more about God that we can learn from this wonderful book—its influence can be seen in the whole of the rest of the Bible! This course has been designed to help you develop a lifelong love of this book, and, of course, of the LORD God himself!

**Who can you share these lessons with?**



This 14-lesson course takes you through the wonderful book of Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy is foundational for understanding the rest of the Old Testament and also the New Testament. The message of this book was not just for the Israelites in the Old Testament, but also for us all today. This course is especially designed for small groups of believers in Central Asia to study together. Each lesson includes many questions, and the answers are at the end of each lesson. As you study this book, may God grow your understanding of who our amazing God is and what he has done for us!