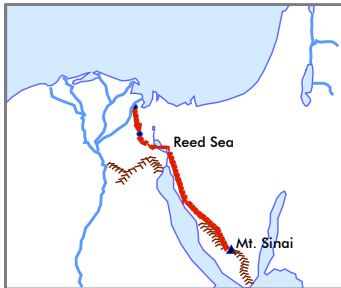


## Lesson #8 – Deuteronomy 2018

Before starting this lesson, read at least **Deuteronomy 5, 8, 18, 28, 30, 34; Psalm 90** (written by Moses at the end of his life). If possible read the whole book. You may find it helpful to read just the minimum chapters, go thru the lesson and then read the whole book. You will discover what works best for you.

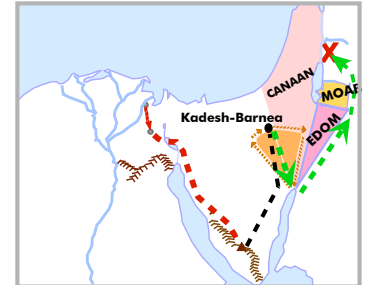
We have now come to the 5<sup>th</sup> book of Moses. Its name is a combination of 2 Greek words. *Deutero* means 2<sup>nd</sup>; *nomos* means **law**. Moses is repeating God's laws a **second** time because he is giving them to the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation.



The **first** time he gave God's laws was at Mt. Sinai, to all the Jews who came out of Egypt. Those 20 years and older made a contract with God to accept and obey His laws. But then they broke the contract. When they repented and wanted forgiveness, God forgave them, but He did not remove the consequences. That generation died in the wilderness.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> generation has grown up and **they** are now the nation of Israel. They are camped just north of the Dead Sea on the eastern side of the Jordan River. God wants them to know - the same contract He made with their parents is still in effect for them. Thru Moses, He repeats the terms of the contract to show there have been no changes. Dt. 29:12-13

So just before his death, around 1300 BC, Moses takes 30-40 days to give God's instruction.



He reviews what God has done for them in the past	chapters 1 - 4
He tells them what God expects from them now	chapters 5 - 26
He explains what God will do in the future	chapters 27 - 34

For the Jews of the Old Testament, it had been 40 years since Moses had first given God's laws. So when he repeats it, it is like new information.

But for us, if we are studying the Old Testament books in order, it is only days or weeks since we read God's laws in Exodus and Leviticus. The book of Deuteronomy seems unnecessary. This immediate repetition keeps us from seeing its beauty and importance.

However, there are 2 groups of people who **do** see its beauty.

First of all, **scholars** who specialize in history and literature – even those who do not believe in the accuracy of the Bible or those who do not accept the salvation message – even they marvel at the book of Deuteronomy. They consider it one of the finest historical documents ever written. They say it is more eloquent than even the writings of famous Greek orators, such as Plato and Demosthenes.

The **Jews** are the second group who value this book. They not only appreciate its eloquence, but also its beauty in summarizing God's laws. That is why in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, Jewish boys had to memorize parts of it at the age of three and had to know all of it by the age of seven. It is why Deuteronomy is quoted more than 80 times in the New Testament.

For example, Jesus quoted it all 3 times when He was tempted by Satan. He quoted it again when asked to name the greatest commandment.

Interesting note: Jewish boys had to memorize the book of Leviticus at the age of 5 or 6 – (Edersheim, *Social Life*, p. 150).

Since the lessons of Exodus and Leviticus covered the basic laws, this lesson will focus on specific details and explanations.

### IMPORTANT PHRASE

*The LORD, your God* 1:30. Moses repeats this phrase over 300 times in the book.

As we saw in the lesson on Exodus, the name LORD in capital letters is the translation of the Hebrew name *Yahweh*. It points to **God's salvation and relationship with His people**. All nations and peoples had their gods. Moses tells the Jews, *You have only one God. Yahweh is your God (Elohim)*. Moses is emphasizing to the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, *not just your parents, but you also, are God's people and He is your God*.

## EXPLANATION of God's contract

What Yahweh **their** God had done for them in the past and why

1:30-31 *Yahweh your God, who is going before you, will fight for you, as He did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes and in the desert. There you saw how Yahweh your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place...* Verse 33 *...who went ahead of you on your journey, in fire by night and in a cloud by day, to search out places for you to camp and to show you the way you should go.*

God had protected, cared for and guided the first generation of Israelites. *But in spite of this, you Jews as a nation did not trust in Yahweh your God.* 1:32

Out of fear, the first generation did not believe God could get them into the land. The walls had looked way too high, the giants too big; the risks were far too great.

God had done all these things because He loved them and their ancestors. 4:37

God now makes a promise to the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation. 4:38

*...to drive out before you nations greater and stronger than you and to bring you into their land to give it to you for an inheritance, as it is today.*

What the Jews were to do in response: to acknowledge Yahweh as God, 4:39  
to keep His commands 4:40

But God's commands were given 39 years ago. Many of the Jews would not know them. So Moses reviews them in chapters 5-26. He starts with the most basic, the 10 Commandments - the same that were given in Exodus 20. Chapters 6-26 are God's additional laws - a total of 613.

## EXPLANATION of words and phrases

### Face to face

Moses tells the people, *The Lord spoke to you **face to face** out of the fire on the mountain.* 5:4

This does not mean Moses or the people literally saw God's face. *Face to face* is a Hebrew phrase or idiom, which means *to be in God's presence*. At Mt. Sinai Moses and the people knew they were in God's presence because they saw fire erupting from the mountain, the heavy cloud covering the top of the mountain and heard God's literal, audible voice.

### A jealous God

God says He is a *jealous* God. 5:9 Immediately we know that does not sound right. In the New Testament, Paul says jealousy is wrong and is part of the sin nature Gal. 5:19-20. So how can God say He is jealous? Once again, the problem is language.

Four hundred years ago, in the days of Shakespeare, the word *jealous* had 2 meanings, one positive and one negative. Over hundreds of years, English has changed, so today the word *jealous* has only one meaning - the negative meaning. The positive meaning has been changed to the word *zealous*. It means God is committed to what is right, fair and good. He is a *zealous* God.

### Testing God

Moses gives the command, *Do not **test** Yahweh your God* 6:16; Ex. 17:7.

Some Bibles use the word *tempt*, but that is a wrong translation. In the New Testament, James says God cannot be tempted (James 3). So the word must be translated *test*.

To *test* God means to demand God **has** to give you what you want, when you want it.

The Jews in the Old Testament demanded that God give them water or meat exactly when they wanted it.

What was true in the Old Testament is still true today. It is wrong to demand that God give us what we want when we want it. We are to ask with the stipulation, *if it is God's will*. We are to ask according to His will.

### Jewish Creed (Shema) 6:4

*Hear O Israel; the Lord our God, the Lord is One.*

The Jews refer to this as the Shemá. Using our terms, it is their confession of faith and they repeat it in their morning and evening prayers.

It is emphasizing there is only one true God and not many gods. However in that *oneness*, there is also plurality. We cannot see it in our English translations, but it is in the Hebrew.

The word for **God** is **Elohim**. It is a plural word, literally meaning *Gods*.

The word for **one** is **echad**. It means a compound or multi-part unity.

In Hebrew there is a word for *one* which means a single unit - one pencil.

There is another word for one (*echad*) which means *several, that together form a unit*. For example, one cluster of grapes - many in one unit. This is the word that is used for “**one** God”.

Since “oneness involving many” may sound confusing, let’s use a more familiar illustration.

If you have 3 people who join together to form a business and they all have equal authority, you have 3 persons but one business. It is called a partnership.

So if you have 3 persons who join together to form one God-ship and they have equal authority, you have 3 persons, but one Tri-unity, a trinity – a Divine Partnership.

Because we emphasize the oneness of God, many people think of God as one person in 3 different roles or forms. But the oneness is talking about qualities, character and abilities.

There are 3 separate and distinct persons who are exactly the same in quality and ability. This plurality is also seen in the name **Elohim**. El means God; **Elohim** is plural – more than one, yet when the text is referring to God, it is translated in the singular. It is another way to say in the one God-ship, there are 3 separate persons. Deity is a Divine Partnership of 3 - a Tri-unity.

So the literal translation of the Hebrew in 6:4 is

*Hear O Israel; the Lord our Gods (Elohim), the Lord is several in One unit (echad).*

Sadly, the majority of Jews have not been able to accept this concept. They are looking for their Messiah to come, but they expect Him to be only a man - not deity.

Based on tradition, Jews write this verse along with several others on a small piece of paper and then put it inside a tiny metal box on the outside doorframe of their Jewish home. Some also put it on the doorframes of the rooms inside their house. It is called a mezuzah. Dt. 6:4-9; 11:13-21.

Every time they go out or come into their house, they reach out, touch this box and then bring their hand to the mouth as tho they are kissing their fingers. They do this to show reverence and respect for what these verses say and represent. If you saw the movie, *Fiddler on the Roof*, you saw them doing this frequently. This custom or tradition started on the basis of Deuteronomy 6:9. God told the Jews, *Write them, these commands, on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.*



God did not mean the people should do it literally. He was using picture language to say that whether they went **into** their home or **out** into the community, they should obey His laws. Whether out in public where people can watch them or in the privacy of their home, God wanted obedience.

As the years passed, the Jews did not like some of God’s laws and did not want to obey them. But they wanted people to think they were obeying. So instead of obedience in their life, they put His commands on paper on their doorframes. They were doing what the verses said, but they were not doing what the verses meant.

### **The greatest of God’s 613 laws 6:5**

According to Jesus in the New Testament, all 613 laws could be narrowed down to the one law in Deut. 6:5.

*Love Yahweh **your** God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.*

#### **Command to love**

The command to love is found thruout the Bible - but unfortunately most people do not understand its meaning. The problem is the difference in cultures and language. In our culture, *love* means *closeness, passion, excitement or warm fuzzies*. That is what the word means in our western culture and we cannot change it. It will always be pictured as a heart - an emotion.

As we know thru experience, love, as an emotion, is spontaneous and changeable. Therefore it is impossible to command. Feelings cannot be commanded.

### Meaning of love

The word for *love* in Scripture has a different concept both in Hebrew and Greek. It is part of the Middle East culture. It has 2 meanings.

#### A statement of fact

When love is **not** commanded but is used as a statement of fact, it includes feelings and emotions along with choices. God gives us the *emotion* of love for relationships with others. It is a wonderful gift from God.

#### A command

However, most of the time, the word *love* in the Bible is a command. This means it **cannot** be talking about emotion. Emotions cannot be commanded. Try going home and telling a family member, *I command you to love me*. Yet that is exactly what God says, *I command you to love Me*.

When love is commanded, it has a different meaning. It means, *do what is right*, based on God's standards. It is a choice, a use of our will, an action we are capable of doing, regardless of how we feel.

### Examples of commanded love

#### Love your enemy

For years I struggled with this command. I knew how I felt when I loved a friend. But I was never going to have *that* feeling towards an enemy, no matter how much I prayed, read the Bible or tried. What a relief when I discovered God does not expect us to have warm feelings for someone wanting to hurt us.

What God does expect is that we do what is right. We are not to seek revenge; we are not to hold resentment or bitterness. It also means to protect ourselves so that person is not able to hurt us any more. We may even have to use legal means to hold the person accountable.

*Love your enemy*. Because it is commanded, it is not an emotion. It is a choice to do what is right.

#### Love your neighbor

Our neighbor is the person around us or who crosses our path. It includes family and friends.

Loving our neighbor means *doing what is right*; it does not mean always doing what they want. People may say, *If you really loved me, you would do what I want*. No, if I obey God's command to love them, I will *do what is right*.

Many times it will mean saying *no* or setting boundaries. Sometimes we may even have to break a relationship. To love our neighbor is a choice to do what is healthy for us and healthy for them - to do what is right.

#### Love God

Since it is a **command**, it is not about emotions or feelings. Let's be honest - at times our feelings for God are deep and overwhelming. It is such a wonderful feeling, that we want to have it every day. We try to recreate it. But the truth is, there are times we have little or no feelings for God - we go thru a time of spiritual darkness where God seems distant. This is normal; it is OK. Feelings are spontaneous and changeable. They are impossible to **command**.

The **command** to love God means *to do what is right*. To put it more simply, to love God is to obey Him. It comes from our will. It is a choice we can make; it is an action we are capable of doing.

The **command** to *love God with all our heart, soul and strength* is the Jewish way to say: obey what He shows us to do, with right actions, right attitude and to the best of our ability. Each day, we are to focus on what God shows us to do at the moment and do it in a way that honors Him. This does not just mean spiritual things. It means whatever responsibility I have at that time, whether fixing a meal or going to work. If I am doing what He shows me to do, then I will always be doing what He wants me to do. I am keeping His commands. This is why Jesus said it is the greatest and most important command of all.

Over the years, Jewish rabbis added thousands of laws to the 613 laws of God. This was called the **Mishna**. The people felt like they were continually under a heavy burden. Jesus said they only needed to focus on the one command. It is why He said that *His yoke is easy and His burden is light*.

## **INSTRUCTION about...**

### **Guidance - what not to use**

God tells His people,

*When you enter the land Yahweh **your** God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist, or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to Yahweh and because of these detestable practices, Yahweh **your** God will drive out those nations before you. 18:9-12.*

When the Canaanites wanted to know the future or needed help to make decisions, they would contact the spirit world. The things mentioned in these verses, were the ways they contacted the spirits. God told His people they were not to have anything to do with these activities. They were to get their answer from Him. They were to use only His methods.

These verses are still relevant for our lives. How amazing that the methods people used 3000 years ago are still being used today. They are all part of what is called the *occult*. They are ways to contact the spirit world or get spirit guides. If we are in God's family, we are to have nothing to do with them.

The God of the Bible is the One to guide us - thru the Bible, thru Bible teaching, the Holy Spirit, information from godly books or people, thru common sense or circumstances. God has given us very practical ways to guide us.

I would encourage you to mark 18:9-12 and write *the occult* in the margin. I would also encourage you to make a note on the inside cover of your Bible - *what God says about the occult* - Dt. 18:9-12. Then if you are asked, you will know exactly where to find the answer.

### **Guidance - what to use** Deuteronomy 18

For Jews in the Old Testament, instead of getting answers from the occult, they are to get answers from the prophets God will send them. They are to listen to His prophets. However, anyone can claim to speak for God. So how will they know if a prophet is sent by God and is speaking God's message?

1. Every specific prediction they make must come true. There must be 100% accuracy. 18:21-22

2. It must always be in agreement with God's laws

*If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder and if the sign or wonder which he has spoken takes place and he says, 'Let us follow other gods', you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. 13:1-3*

Even if a person predicts a miracle and it happens, if that person's life or message is not in agreement with God's commands, the message is not from God.

These tests are still relevant for us today. If a person makes specific predictions about things in the near future and they do not happen, we can know their message was not from God. If people's lives are not consistent with the character of God, they are not sent by God to teach us. If their message is not consistent with the commands of God, their message is not from God. We are not to listen to them.

Moses began this book with a review - what God had done for them. In light of what He did, God expected them to obey Him.

In the final chapters Moses reviews the terms of the contract.

Since the beginning of the Church, the Body of Christ, God deals with us as individuals.

But in the Old Testament, God deals with His people as a unit, as a nation.

If they obey, God will bless them as a nation, with many physical blessings.

If they disobey, He will punish them as a nation, with physical judgments.

These chapters give detail after detail to warn the Jews about the seriousness of disobedience.

### **Chapter 28.**

The first 14 verses are the  **blessings**.

The rest of the chapter gives the  **curses** for disobedience. Once again we have a problem with language.

In today's English, *curse* means God's judgment in eternity.

In the Bible, *curse* means God's judgment in **this** life.

So verses 15 - 68 are about God's judgments on the Jews here on earth.

**28:33** *A people that you do not know will eat what your land and labor produce and you will have nothing but cruel oppression all your days.*

This happened just 30 years after Moses, during the time of the judges. Because the Jews disobeyed, God allowed their enemies to oppress and crush them. They were still in the land, but as a nation they did not enjoy God and He could not enjoy them.

**28:36-37** *Yahweh will drive you and the king you set over you to a nation unknown to you or your fathers. There you will worship other gods, gods of wood and stone. You will become a thing of horror and an object of scorn and ridicule to all the nations where Yahweh will drive you.*

Because the disobedience continued, God removed the Jews from the land and sent them into exile in Assyria and Babylon.

This raises 2 important questions.

1. Since God knew the Jews would disobey, why did He choose them and form them into a special people?

*For you are a people holy to Yahweh **your** God. Yahweh **your** God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, His treasured possession. Yahweh did not set His affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because Yahweh loved you and kept the oath He swore to your forefathers, that He brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 7:6-8*

God chose the Jews first of all, **because He loved them**. This includes emotions, feelings and affection. It also includes doing what is right - He kept His promise. Both meanings of love are involved. God chose the Jews because He loved them.

He also chose them **because He wanted them to be His example and voice**. He wanted them to show other nations how wonderful it was to have companionship with God and then tell them they also could enjoy that companionship.

2. Since God knew the Jews would disobey, why did He take land from other people, destroy them and give the land to the Jews?

*It is not because of your rightness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land, but on account of **the wickedness of these nations**. Yahweh **your** God will drive them out before you, to accomplish what He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Understand then, that it is not because of your rightness that Yahweh **your** God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked people. 9:5-6*

God is very blunt. The Jews are not getting the land because they are so good, but because the Canaanites are so evil.

God wanted His people in this strategic location so the immediate world could learn about Him. This was possible because the land is at the crossroads of 3 continents. The trade routes going thru Israel, led to Asia, Europe and Africa. Knowledge of God's presence and blessing could reach the world around them.



From the days of Moses to our day, the history of Israel centers on the land. She received the land, lost it for 70 years, got it back and lost it again for almost 1900 years. Today she is back in the land. What God said in the past is still true today.

Israel does not have a right to the land because of her goodness. She has a right to the land because God gave it to her. God is the Creator of heaven and earth. Therefore all land is His and He has a right to give any of it to anyone He wants. God has placed Israel in that location now so she has a homeland and a place of refuge. As anti-Semitism increases worldwide, God's people have a place to go.

God also returned them to the land in preparation for the future. God will use special people and special events so that many in Israel will believe that Jesus is their promised Messiah. He will use these Jews to once again give His message to the world. God has said that as He used the Jewish people in the past, so He will use them in the future and He will keep His promise.



At the end of Deuteronomy, the Jews are camped by the Jordan River, just across from the land. Moses, because of his disobedience, knows he cannot lead the people into the land. But being so close, he keeps pleading with God to let him enter. Finally God says, *Moses, the answer is no; do not ask Me anymore* Deuteronomy 3:23-26. This was so disappointing to Moses that he became overwhelmed with sadness and heaviness.

Yet just a few weeks later he could teach a song of praise to the Jews. Moses says,

*I will proclaim the name of the Lord. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock. His works are perfect and all His way are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and fair is He. 32:3*

Moses could say without reservation that everything God does is right.

Moses went from deep discouragement to complete rest and praise. I suggest Moses was able to make that change because he worked thru his feelings by means of prayer – Psalm 90. Moses wrote it in the 1300's. It was the 1<sup>st</sup> psalm in the Jewish psalter or hymnbook. It is a prayer by a man with a very heavy heart.

## Psalm 90

### Verse 1-2

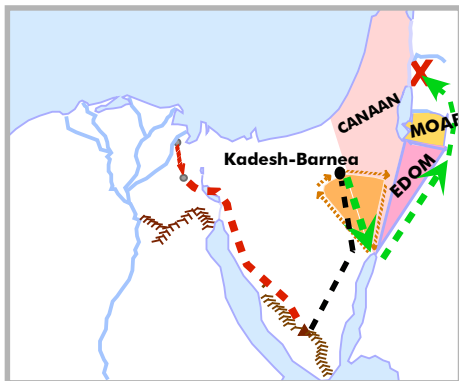
*Lord, You have been our dwelling place thruout all generations. Before the mountains were born or You brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting You are God.*

The phrase *dwelling place* in Hebrew has the literal concept, *God is our place to come home to*. By extension, the meaning is *refuge*. Moses says, *Lord, from the very beginning You have been our refuge, the One in whom we feel safe and secure.*

He then comments that human life is so brief. Generations come and go, one after another. God however, is eternal. No matter which generation is living, God will always be present to be **their** refuge. To put it simply, Moses is saying, *In the brevity and chaos of life, only God can provide stability.*

### Verses 7-11

Moses talks about God's anger, meaning *God's response to disobedience*. All 5 verses, 7-11, repeat the same idea, so we can summarize it with 2 sentences. *God, You responded to our disobedience and sent consequences. The consequences have been painful and hard.*



He is thinking about the failure of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation - they died in the wilderness. He thinks about the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation and those who died for their sin. He is also thinking about himself when he refers to *secret sins*.

*You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your presence. 90:8.*

He is saying that when he expressed those rash words, God knew what was going on in his mind and emotions. He was guilty.

Thinking of the painful consequences in the lives of the people and in his life, he is overwhelmed with sadness and heaviness.

Aware of his discouragement, he prays...

that he will wisely use the time he has left, in what he does and how he thinks and responds  
that he can have a greater awareness and enjoyment of God's presence and God's comfort.

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation, he prays...

that they will obey so they can have God's blessings and stability.  
that God will complete what he, Moses, had started.

Because he cannot lead the Jews into the Promised Land, he releases them to God. He asks...

that God, not just **get** them into the land, but also **establish** them in the land.

As he keeps thinking about **that** picture, the people in the land – enjoying the land – established in the land – he is filled with peace and comfort. God's purpose will be accomplished. Moses' desire for the people will be fulfilled.

## **A pattern for our prayers - from the prayer of Moses**

We start with a focus on God.

*You are my refuge. Thank You that You are always there.* Focus on God's stability in spite of the chaos that fills our lives.

Then we admit our disobedience and accept any consequences that God has sent.

As we think of family and friends, we pray they will obey God so they can have His blessing and stability.

In addition, we need to commit our family and friends to God.

So often we are asking God how **we** can change them – how **we** can fix them. The key is to release them and let God be the One to establish them. Let Him be the One to fix them.

In praying for ourselves...

In times of discouragement, we should ask for greater awareness and enjoyment of God's presence and comfort. Ask for a sense of His arms around us to comfort and support us. Ask for a touch of His hand on our life. Ask that we can feel His presence.

We also need to ask God for wisdom in how to use the years we have left. This is not just talking about doing spiritual things. It also includes our attitudes – to become more appreciative – to take time to smell the flowers – to encourage others – to build people up instead of finding fault with them. It includes taking time for ourselves, to develop our interests and abilities.

Moses prayed, *Teach us to effectively number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*

Today we would say,

*Lord, teach us to live life to the fullest –*

*to become more aware and appreciate the little things as well as the big things.*

*Teach **us** to live life to the fullest; and help us to **learn**, even from the things that are difficult. Give us a heart of wisdom.*

## **EXTRA INFORMATION FOR THE STUDIOUS AND INQUISITIVE**

### **Why Deuteronomy is not a treaty like the other nations had in that day**

1. The Jews were to be different from all other nations
2. This was spiritual, not political
3. The covenant /contract was made at Mt. Sinai with the nation.  
God is confirming the same contract is still in effect for the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation  
He is restating the terms so they know there have been no changes
4. There is no response on the part of the people.  
It is not needed because the contract is with the nation - not the individuals