

Bible-Reading Coach Podcast Transcript

Week 09: Deuteronomy 1-17, *Laws and Ceremonies*

Welcome to week nine of the Bible reading coach podcast. My name is Karl Vaters. And I'm here to help you read through the entire Bible in 52 weeks.

This week, we start the Bible's fifth book, Deuteronomy, 1 through 17. It's called Laws and Ceremonies but there's a whole bunch more to it than that. Here is where we begin to start climbing out of the Bible in a year graveyard that we've been in for a couple of books. Hopefully, we've made it not quite so much a graveyard this time as you've gone through it by pointing out some of the highlights some of the beautiful passages and some of the great lessons that there are to learn. But Deuteronomy now actually picks up the pace with some great storylines.

So let's begin, first of all, by talking about the name, what's with the name of the book, Deuteronomy. As we talked about earlier, most of the Bible books have obvious meanings for their names. We saw that in week four. So you can go back and review that if you'd like. But Deuteronomy is one of those words where like this is the only place that's ever used. So what does it mean? Well, Deuteronomy basically means words, Deuteronomy means words, but it specifically means the use of words, to repeat or reinforce a truth, or like doubling up on your words. So this book actually doubles up on a lot of what we've already read, including the 10 commandments, where we'll see it for a second time. Now, here's why they have been wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, they're about to go into the land after 40 years of wandering. So they need reminding of where they are, why they're going in now, why the previous generation couldn't go in 40 years previously. I mean, think about it, think 40 years back. And even if you were alive back, then it's quite a bit of a distance. And many of you watching and listening were not even alive back then so it's in your history books.

So what happens in this book is the first 30 of 34 chapters consists of three long speeches by Moses, reminding them of the 40 plus years of their history and how they ended up where they are. So this week, in Chapters one through 17, we're going to look at the first half of the book, and the first half of those speeches by Moses. Now, when you hear three long speeches, immediately, your eyes glaze over and go, Oh, please. But it's a reiteration of your history. And in fact, it takes the history that we saw in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, and tightens it up and highlights it. So it's actually a wonderful way of reviewing the whole thing that we've been in for the last several weeks together.

So let's take a look at what we'll be covering this week as we read it together. First of all, in Deuteronomy, chapters one and two, Moses reiterates with them why they had to wander through the wilderness for 40 years. He reminds them in Deuteronomy 1:3. And we know we know first of all that this is at the end of the 40 years, because Deuteronomy chapter 1, verse 3 starts with in the 14th, year, on the first day of the 11th month, which means, okay, think about it. So for us, that would be the first day of the 11th month, that's the first day of the second to last month, of their four of their 40th year. So they're two months out from actually going in, and

they're beginning to prep. This is like, for those of us in America, this will be the beginning of November, and you've just had Halloween, and now you're coming into holiday season. Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's are about to come and that's when you really start getting ready for, right? So they are starting to get ready for the entry into the land after 40 years of wandering, with exactly two months to go.

So Moses at this point reminds them that they wandered 40 years because of the disobedience, not to rub it in, but so that they learn the lessons from the 40 years and not repeat their disobedience. That's why he's doing this. So that's what chapters one and two of Deuteronomy are about. We then move into chapters three through six. And again, he reminds them why they had to wander, he actually walks through the story with them, how they have disobeyed at the beginning of the 40 years. And he reminds them about how he had disobeyed 40 years ago with the episode of the water out of the rock and reminds them this is why I can't even go into the land with you because of my disobedience. And then he reminds them of some of the key laws that God gave them, and what they mean for them, including in chapter five, verses six through 21. The second full mention of the 10 commandments.

So the 10 commandments are in the Bible twice, fully listed once when they're given on the mountain. And one more time now in Deuteronomy as a reminder before they go into the land, we then go to chapter seven through 11, where Moses talks to them about the purpose of the laws and the purpose of them being called as God's people. What he basically tells them is God doesn't just choose us and give us laws. He reminds them why they were chosen. And in chapter nine, verse four, take a look for that when you get there. It's not because they're righteous. He reminds them of that it's all about God. Remember who's the hero of every story of the Bible. It's not Moses, the hero here is not the people that hero here, it's always God as the hero. He reminds him of that this is because you were chosen by God, it's not because you were righteous see that we'll see that in chapter nine, verse four, he then reminds them that God's laws were given to them, to help them. And it wasn't just and it wasn't helped them just to obey. But it was helped them to do two things to love God and to fear God, love and fear, how can you love and fear at the same time?

Well, that's one of those interesting paradoxes in scripture that we see constantly. And take a look for that, as you go through the reading this week, take a look at how we have a balance of loving God and fearing him at the same time, we never approached God with just love and no fear. We never approached God with just fear and no love. God requires both of us. And we'll see how those come together in this passage this week. So look for that.

Deuteronomy 12 through 14 talks about the importance of holiness in three different ways. First of all, in chapter 12, the importance of holiness in the tabernacle, the place that is set apart on Earth, where we will worship God and where they will offer sacrifices to God and God where God will appear to them. Chapter 13 talks about the importance of holiness, that we should worship God and God, only you're about to go into a land where they have all kinds of false gods there, it's going to be tempting just to go along with the people to add a couple idols to your shelf. Don't do that, chapter 13 reminds them. And then chapter 14 reminds them that

they're going to only be allowed to eat certain foods, and that this will be done as a reminder of their holiness of how they're set apart from the people around them. Again, as we go through the remember, there are three different types of laws in the Old Testament. There's the civil laws, the ceremonial laws and the moral laws. So the stuff about the food is ceremonial laws, which we as Christians, because of Jesus, don't have to observe any more. But even as you read them in chapter 14, take a look at how this sets them apart and distinguishes them from the nations around them and how it reinforces the idea of God's holiness, and how they are to be a reflection of God's holiness.

We then go to chapters 15 to 17, which is where we'll finish up this week. And he reminds them of some of their celebrations and feasts that God has called them to observe. He introduces the idea of the year of canceling debts, that every seven years you're going to cancel all debts that you must treat your servants. Well. And this is really an amazing thing in chapter 15 is where we read this. What it does is that it assures that no one in their nation will become completely destitute, because they will never lose their property permanently. Even if you go in debt to the point where you have to sell your property is really only leasing it over to somebody until the year of cancelling debt come that's comes in chapter seven. So God's system is really an amazing thing. It even when you're in the best shape possible, even people who simply make bad decision after bad decision, they get a reboot every seven years. It's really an extraordinary thing. So we'll read about that in chapter 15, Chapter 16.

He reminds them of the three great feasts that that'd be called to celebrate Passover, the feast of weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. And then in chapter 17, he reminds them of how their laws are really different from the laws and from the leadership of the parent of the people who are currently in the land. You see up until God came and gave the 10 commandments. And then the other laws, laws throughout all of history, and through most of history since then, had been pretty much the same thing. A king comes up and the king decides on the laws for the people. And the laws are given to keep the people in line and obey the king. In this situation, he reminds them this is not about keeping a power for the king, because there is no king. This may be the first nation in history where laws came before a king. And for four generations, they lived with laws and only under God without a king. So it wasn't a king who passed laws about the people keeping in line. It was everybody, including people in charge had to keep God's laws. And his laws were not based on raw power, like the the laws of every other king before and every other king around them. God's laws were based on justice. But Justice mixed with mercy, quite frankly. But that's what they were based on, on justice and on mercy, not on raw power. So God's laws are very different than the laws of the people around them.

So as we finish up this week, here's here's what to look for this week, and next week, you're going to have some deja vu. You're going to be reading stuff and go didn't read that before. And the answer is going to be yes. You read about that episode before previously, because this is Moses reiteration of everything that happened during the 40 years. And this is not the last time you get a deja vu in Scripture. Scripture on purpose repeats events, sometimes multiple times. And there's a reason for that. It's not because they got bored. It's not because they forgot they said it already. It's to help it stick in our heads. If you want to remember

something go back to it multiple times. So you're going to see this in other places where the events are going to be repeated. You're going to be told the same event twice.

Don't let Your eyes glaze over on that lean into it and go, Why is God telling me this two times must be because there's something important about it. But this will also give you those events in a shorter version than we read in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers because it summarizes the things that we should pay attention to. So take note of all that take note of how God's laws are different from the laws of people around them. Take a look at what's repeated and why it's repeated. And take a look at how God summarizes those laws, including coming back to the 10 commandments, the laws that are most important and we should pay the most attention to Alright, watch for that this week. I think you're gonna get a lot out of this, you're gonna see the pace beginning to pick up a little bit in the storytelling. We'll see you next week.

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