

Bible-Reading Coach Podcast Transcript

Week 10: Deuteronomy 18-34, *More Laws and Ceremonies*

Welcome to Week 10 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 finished the Bible's fifth book, Deuteronomy. We'll be looking at Deuteronomy 18 through 34. Because of this, we will also be finishing up what's called the Torah or the Books of Moses or the Pentateuch, the Law. So let's take a look at where we are, including a little bit that we covered last week. So from last week, we started with the question, what is the word Deuteronomy mean? And Deuteronomy basically means words, or it means specifically the use of words to repeat or reinforce the truth. Because this book consists almost entirely except for the last four chapters of three speeches by Moses who's reiterating for them, everything they've been through in the previous 40 years, they're two months away from going into the land after 40 years wandering in the wilderness.

So Moses is reminding them of what they've been through so that he's making sure they will not repeat their disobedience and that they will remember the things that happened, that happened and why they happen so that they don't repeat their mistakes, and so that they learn and do better the next time. So chapters one through 33, speeches by Moses. Chapter 31, through 34, are Moses finale, so let's get to it. Alright, Deuteronomy 18, through 26, we have another radiate reiteration of laws and ceremonies that we mostly don't do anymore. So again, I'm going to go over with you why I'm doing this several times through this series, because it's something we need to be reminded of regularly because it is one of those valid questions that not just cynics and skeptics of the Bible have that but sincere Christians have, why do we obey some laws and not others, especially when it comes to the Old Testament?

Here's why. There are three types of Old Testament laws, moral civil and ceremonial. The ceremonial ones is mostly what we'll be reading this week. These are ceremonies that were done at that time for those people in anticipation of Jesus sacrifice. When Jesus came and died on the cross and rose again, he made these ceremonies, unnecessary because he fulfilled them. And again, we'll get into it more later, especially when we get into the New Testament, and the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. We also have a civil laws, which were just for the Israelites at that time, even the other nations around them weren't required to obey their civil laws, because they only applied to that nation at that time. And then there's the moral laws. And these are eternal laws that apply to all people at all times. Things like the 10 commandments, things about sexual and moral behavior, things about not putting people into slavery, not being cruel with others, those kinds of things. Those are moral laws that apply everywhere at all times. And one of the challenges of the Old Testament is the three of them were all mixed in most of the time because they were written to people who had to obey all three.

So who cared, you know, how they were divided? But for us today, it does matter. And yeah, there are a handful of gray areas. Where is this a moral one, a civil one, or a ceremonial one. But 99% of them are really, really clear. So as you're going through it, look for the basis of all the laws as we read through them this week, because even the ceremonial laws can teach us something. If we pause and go, I don't understand why they can't mix two different fabrics in the same clothes. But then ask, okay, this is a ceremonial law. I'm not worried about that today, and what lesson might it have been teaching them and the lesson, of course, was holiness, not to put two different things together. And even the way they dressed was to be an example of the holiness they were to have before God. So all of the laws are about honoring God, about staying moral, and about keeping holy, even if the specific seems strange to us, the basis of the makes sense, and that's what we have to look for. And then we'll take a look at Chapters 27 through 30. And he'll talk about blessings and cursings and an altar. So let's take a look at them.

First of all, they set up an altar. And anytime you see an altar in Scripture, a Jewish or Christian altar, anyway, Jewish altar, you're always going to see a simple altar, they were never allowed to carve anything on the altar, it was usually just stone set upon another. And the idea was, if you don't carve it, and if you don't put artistry into it, it's less likely to become an idol that you will worship. It's just a pile of rocks. Now it's a pile of rocks on which we offer a sacrifice to God. But bottom line is just a pile of rocks. So they were the altars that the Hebrews built were always simple and they were never carved. So you'll note that when you see it. Then there's a reminder that there will be blessings for people who obey God's laws. And there will be curses for us if we don't obey God's laws. Some of those blessings happen as a natural result of doing the right thing.

When you do things. For instance, when you when you separate different foods from each other. There's no cross contamination, you're going to have a blessing of not having germ infestation. And if you do it, you will have the curse of infestation. So sometimes the blessings and curses are the natural result of those behaviors. And sometimes they are things that God brings upon us, because we bless him or brings upon us because we didn't obey him. Okay? So you'll notice that as you go through, you're going to see in chapter 29, a renewal of God's covenant with His people, and the blessings that He wants to give them because of that covenant, God gave them a covenant, because he wanted to bless them. And through them, he wanted to bless the entire world. So he's gonna show us that again in chapters 29, and 30.

And then chapter 30, ends with this wonderful verse, God says this to them, I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life that you and your children may live. You'll see that near the end of chapter 30, 30 verse 19. And what's wonderful about that, aside from the beautiful poetry of that phrasing, is that God always gives us a choice. He sets before us life and death, he sets about Horus blessings and curses. And then he gives us a choice and but he encourages us choose life. Please choose life so that you and your children may live. But God always gives us the choice, and then the speeches end.

And then chapter 31, through 34, the last four chapters, we have a farewell for Moses. Let's take a look at it chapter by chapter in chapter 31. You'll notice the passing of the baton of

leadership to Joseph, including chapter 31, verse 24, which says that Moses wrote all of this in a book, probably the book, we have Genesis through, you know, through Deuteronomy, which is why they're called the Book of Moses Books of Moses, chapter 32, is a farewell song from Moses, chapter 33, Moses blesses the people. And then in chapter 34, Moses leaves, because remember, from his disobedience at the beginning of the 40 years, when he hit the rock, instead of talking to it to get water out of it, God said, You're not going into the land.

So he's literally inside of the land, they are weeks away from going into the land. And Moses has to look at them and go, I can't go in with you. And he leaves, he goes up to the mountain, he dies there. But take a look at actually what happens what the Bible says about his body. At that time, it's important, because we will see this come back again, later, all the way when we get to the New Testament months from now, Matthew, Mark, and Luke all mentioned something called the Mount of Transfiguration, in which Moses appears again. So a couple 1000 years at well, almost a couple 1000 years after he's died. In fact, just about 2000 years after he died, we will see Moses again at that one time, Matthew, Mark, and Luke at the Mount of Transfiguration. So remember that so take a look. Take note of what happens to Moses body, because that will matter.

Okay. Now, as we conclude, take a look at this this week. Note God's provision. Note that even in his punishment, God does so to provide for us like any good parent, even his punishments are designed to make us better. Also, notice that we're closing out all the books of Moses. So remember what's happened so far. Remember that this is the conclusion of a story that began with it's the collusion of this chapter, this major chapter of a story that began with creation then went to sin to the destruction of the planet through a flood, who are striving to become gods. And then as God always dies, he chooses someone to bless us and to do something special. Then even as Abraham and his sons fail, over and over, God stays faithful through this 400 years of slavery, then God chooses to deliver an imperfect one to be sure. But he chooses to deliver and even then we blow it and we got to die off for another 40 years. And yet now even after all of that, God says, I'm still going to bring you into the land. Remember that what we've covered already is covers 1000s and 1000s of years.

In fact, just to give you an idea of the timeline, Jesus comes as far after Abraham, as we come after Jesus. Let me say that again for you. Jesus is as far removed from Abraham, as we are from Jesus, we have this thing of looking back and going, Oh, Bible times, like it all happened within a short period of time. No, Jesus, would Jesus look back to Abraham, he looked back at a at the same amount of time, as we look back at when we look back to Jesus 2000 years separates them. So these are big passages of time that happened during what we've looked at already. So how do we know all of that? Well, because of the so called boring genealogies, more of which will come. But that's how we can put these timelines together and get get some sense of the size and scope of what's happening here. It also tells us that God's timing is never what we want. But it's always for the best. It always takes longer than we expect, always does. But it's always for our best.

So what I want to encourage you as we get now to the end of this big section of the Bible, the books of the law, the Torah, the Pentateuch, is, if you have been enjoying this so far, if you've been getting something out of it, we encourage you first of all, make sure you subscribe to it. So you get regular reminders if you haven't done that yet, and if you pass it along to someone else that you think might benefit Maybe a Christian who wants to dig deeper or someone who has had questions about the Bible, or you think might be interested in knowing about the Bible who doesn't know anything about it at all, but we'd like to hear how Christians approach the Bible, or someone who you know who maybe has never read through the Bible, and might need some help, but subscribe, pass it along, and then we hope to see you again next week. Thanks.

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