

RAY C. STEDMAN

Adventuring Through the Bible

A Comprehensive Guide to the Entire Bible

New Enhanced Edition



Adventuring Through the Bible

Copyright © 1997 by Elaine Stedman
Second Edition © 2012 by Elaine Stedman

Discovery House Publishers is affiliated with RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Requests for permission to quote from this book should be directed to: Permissions Department, Discovery House Publishers, P.O. Box 3566, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, New International Version, copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 Biblica. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved. The “NIV” and “New International Version” trademarks are registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica. The New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. The New American Standard Bible, © Copyright 1960, 1962, 1963, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. And the King James Version.

Timelines for each chapter developed by Dr. Dick Sterkenburg

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Stedman, Ray C.

Adventuring through the Bible : a comprehensive guide to the entire Bible / Ray C. Stedman. -- 2nd ed.
p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 978-1-57293-571-6

1. Bible--Introductions. I. Title.

BS475.3.S74 2012

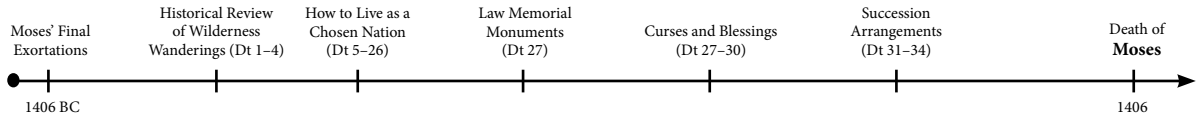
220.6'1--dc23

2012032119

Printed in the United States of America

First printing in 2012



The Law That Brings Deliverance

Most people know that John Newton, the composer of “Amazing Grace,” had been a slave trader before he gave his life to Christ. But few people know that Newton’s conversion was one of the longest, slowest conversions in history, taking place over a period of years.

While sailing aboard the *Greyhound* in 1748, the ship encountered a brutal storm and nearly sank. As the ship filled with water, Newton called out to God and pleaded with Him to save him. The ship weathered the storm—and Newton began reading the Bible. By the time he reached England, he had decided that he wanted Jesus to be his Savior. He gave up profanity, gambling, and drinking—but he couldn’t give up the profits of the slave trade.

Sailing as first mate on the slave ship *Brownlow* in 1749, he became sick with fever. Again, he begged God to save him and promised to give his life to the Lord. But from 1750 to 1754, he made three more voyages—each time as captain of slave ships. Captains were paid handsomely—and Newton couldn’t resist the pay.

Returning home after the third

LEFT: Sheep

voyage, he suffered a stroke. Again, he pleaded with God and promised to live for Him. After his recovery, Newton finally left the slave trade for good. He took a job as a port tax collector in Liverpool and spent his spare time studying Greek and Hebrew so he could read the Bible in the original languages. He preached part-time as a lay minister, and in 1764 he was ordained as an Anglican priest.

In 1779, Newton became Rector of St. Mary Woolnoth Church in London. He joined the abolitionist (antislavery) movement along with social activist Hannah More and Parliament member William Wilberforce. Working together over more than a decade, they succeeded in ending the slave trade in Great Britain. During that time, Newton penned his famous hymns, “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken,” “How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds,” and of course, “Amazing Grace.”

John Newton always thought of himself as

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

This chapter explores the themes and significance of the three great sermons Moses delivered shortly before his death, as recorded in the fifth book of the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy.

a slave to sin who was set free by the grace of God. Over the fireplace of his study, where he wrote his hymns and sermons, Newton had a verse of Scripture painted:

Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you. That is why I give you this command today (15:15).

The lesson of John Newton's life—and of the book of Deuteronomy—is that we must not dwell on memories of our slavery. Instead we must remember God's provision for us as He set us free from slavery. He redeemed us—and that gives Him the right to command us today.

The Structure of Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy consists of three great sermons delivered by Moses shortly before his death. These sermons were given to Israel while they waited on the east side of the Jordan in the Arabah, following their military triumph over Sihon, the king of the Amorites, and Og, the king of Bashan. At this time the nation of Israel consisted largely of a generation of Israelites who were mere children or not even born when Moses gave the law from Mount Sinai.

FIRST SERMON: *What God Has Done for Israel*

As the people were about to enter the land of Canaan, it was essential that they understand their history. So chapters 1 through 4 give us the first message of Moses, in which he reviewed the journey from the giving of the law at Mount Sinai until the people reached Moab, at the edge of the Jordan River.

Moses' first task was to recite to the people the wonderful love and care of God who had both *led* them and *fed* them. God *led* the Israelites with a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day. And God *fed* the Israelites through a miraculous provision. Moses reminded the people of how God brought forth water from the rock to quench their thirst, how He had fed them with manna and quail, and how He delivered them again and again from their enemies.

In chapter 1, Moses recalls the migration of the people, from the giving of the law at Sinai (also called Mount Horeb) to the refusal of the people to enter the land at Kadesh-barnea. In chapter 2, he reviews the second movement from Kadesh-barnea to Heshbon, around the land of Edom, and through the wilderness of Moab to their encounter with Sihon, the king of Heshbon. Throughout this passage, Moses emphasizes God's continual deliverance of His people from their enemies, in spite of their unbelief.

Continuing his discourse in chapter 3, Moses reviews the conquest of the Jordan Valley as far north as Mount Hermon, and the decision of Reuben and Gad to settle on the east side of the river. He movingly and poignantly recalls his own desire to enter the land with his people, but he acknowledges that God has justly denied him this privilege. Still, he was permitted to view the Promised Land from the top of Mount Pisgah.

Moses closes his historic review in chapter 4. He exhorts the people to remember the greatness of their God and to live in obedience to Him. He warns against the danger of idolatry and the making of graven images. He concludes by setting aside three

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

MOSES' FIRST SERMON: A REVIEW OF WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR ISRAEL (DEUTERONOMY 1–4)

FROM MOUNT SINAI TO KADESH-BARNEA 1

FROM KADESH-BARNEA TO MOAB 2:1–23

THE CONQUEST OF LAND EAST OF JORDAN 2:24–3:20

SUMMARY: THE COVENANT 3:21–4:43

MOSES' SECOND SERMON: A REVIEW OF THE LAW OF GOD (DEUTERONOMY 4–26)

INTRODUCTION TO THE LAW 4:44–49

EXPOSITION OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS 5–11

EXPOSITION OF THE CEREMONIAL, CIVIL, SOCIAL, AND CRIMINAL LAWS 12–26

MOSES' THIRD SERMON: A REVIEW OF THE COVENANT OF GOD (DEUTERONOMY 27–34)

THE RATIFICATION OF THE COVENANT 27–30

LEADERSHIP TRANSITION 31–34

A. Moses charges Joshua and Israel 31

B. The song of Moses 32:1–47

C. The death of Moses 32:48–34:12

cities of refuge on the east side of the Jordan for the protection of those who committed involuntary manslaughter.

As we survey this record of God's provision for the people of Israel, we see that God has led them out of Egypt, through the wilderness, and right up to the borders of Canaan. In their journey, they have experienced the same kinds of problems, obstacles, enemies, failures, and victories that we encounter in the Christian life. The bondage the Israelites experienced as slaves in Egypt reminds us of the bondage to sin and the world that we experienced before we were Christians. The land of Canaan, flowing with milk and honey, pictures a life filled with victory and joy, which is ours in Christ.

If you read your Old Testament with this key in hand, it becomes a luminous and practical book. Every Old Testament story is full of meaning and lessons for our daily lives. I don't believe we can truly grasp the mighty truths of the New Testament until we see them demonstrated in the Old Testament.

SECOND SERMON: *The Law of God*

Chapters 5 through 26 contain the second message of Moses. It begins with a fresh recital of the Ten Commandments as God gave them to Moses on Mount Sinai. Deuteronomy means "the second law" or "the second giving of the law." The message of Moses in these chapters is more than a mere recounting of the law. It's the divinely inspired commentary of Moses on the law.

Moses reminds the people that they have promised to hear and to do all that God said. To this God responded, "Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my

commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!" (5:29).

Next, Moses declares the "Shema," or "Hear, O Israel," which devout Jews still recite to this day as a summary of the central feature of their faith—the uniqueness of God. Moses admonishes the people to observe these words and teach them diligently to their children. This is a great lesson on parenting—on the importance of making the most of "teachable moments," using at-hand situations to reinforce family values and beliefs.

Moses then reviews the conditions they will find in the land and the blessings that await them there. He especially warns them to beware of three spiritual dangers: the peril of prosperity, the peril of adversity, and the peril of neglecting to teach their children.

In chapter 7, Moses deals with the danger Israel will face in confronting the corrupt nations already in the land. Moses commands the Israelites to show no mercy to the inhabitants of Canaan but to thoroughly eliminate them so that no vestige of their idolatries and practices will remain to turn the Israelites away from the true worship of Jehovah. Moses reminds the Israelites that they were chosen, that the Lord had set His love upon them and He would be their strength in subjugating enemy nations. Their prosperity and health would depend on their faithfulness and obedience.

Chapter 8 reminds the people of lessons God taught them in the wilderness; how they were humbled and fed with manna so that they might know that "man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD" (8:3). These were familiar words to Jesus, who used them to good effect

against the tempter in the Judean wilderness (see Matt. 4:4).

God wanted His people, when they entered the land and feasted on its richness, to beware of spiritual pride. God knew how quickly people became spiritually smug, and tended to take credit for all He had given them. They should not trust in their own righteousness, but remember their persistent stubbornness in the wilderness. They had provoked the Lord again and again, yet He continued to love them.

Moses also recalls the awesome scene at Sinai, when, in the midst of God's mighty demonstration of His power, the people sinned by making an idol of a golden calf. They committed this sin at the same time Moses was interceding for them for forty days and nights. At that time Moses also received the second tablets of stone and later placed them in the ark of the covenant where they remained.

In a passage of great beauty and power, Moses reminds the people that God does not ask anything of them but to love Him and to serve Him wholeheartedly, keeping His commandments and statutes for their own benefit. The central emphasis is this passage is that "the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome" (10:17). Yet His actions toward His people are demonstrations of His infinite tenderness and love.

As the people enter the land, God promises them rain from heaven to water the earth, grass in the fields for their cattle, and power in their warfare to drive out enemy nations. The whole land was to become their possession. To remind them of God's love and

discipline, God instructs them to annually recite the blessings on Mount Gerizim and the cursings on Mount Ebal, which face the site of Jacob's well.

Deuteronomy 12 through 21 contains a series of statutes and ordinances that were given to the people to govern their behavior within the land. They were commanded to destroy all the places of idol worship of the nations then in the land. They were to tear down the foreign altars and burn the Asherim (phallic symbols)—evidence of the foulness of the idol worship in the land at the time.

God told Israel that, in due time, He would show them a place where they would bring their burnt offerings and sacrifices, and would worship and rejoice before the Lord. This promise was fulfilled in the days of David and Solomon when the temple was built (though a temporary provision was made when the ark was located at Shiloh).

The Lord gave Israel further instructions about the foods they could eat, telling them that they should always avoid eating the blood. God also told the people how to tell false prophets from true prophets. Though the false prophet may be a wonder-worker, if he suggests that they go after other gods, the people were to stone him. Even if close friends or relatives should seek to entice them to idolatry, Israel was instructed to put such people to death. If a whole city should apostatize and begin serving other gods, the inhabitants of that city were to be put to the sword, for "you are the children of the LORD your God" (14:1).

Next, we see the dietary laws, the rules on tithing for the support of the Levites, the sabbatical years (to resolve economic



THE THREE FEASTS OF DEUTERONOMY 16

1. The Passover

Observe the month of Abib and celebrate the Passover of the LORD your God, because in the month of Abib he brought you out of Egypt by night. Sacrifice as the Passover to the LORD your God an animal from your flock or herd at the place the LORD will choose as a dwelling for his Name. Do not eat it with bread made with yeast, but for seven days eat unleavened bread, the bread of affliction, because you left Egypt in haste—so that all the days of your life you may remember the time of your departure from Egypt (Deut. 16:1–3).

The account of the first Passover is found in Exodus 12. The Hebrew people were instructed to sacrifice the Passover lamb and apply its blood to the doorposts of their homes. Then, when God sent His angel to take the firstborn of Egypt, every household that had sacrificed the Passover lamb was spared.

The Passover speaks prophetically of Jesus, the Lamb of God, who was sacrificed on Calvary, and whose blood was applied to the beams of the cross, so that God’s wrath would “pass over” us. The unleavened bread was symbolic in several ways. When the Hebrew people came out of Egypt, they had to leave in haste. There was no time to make bread with yeast and allow it to rise. The Hebrews had to make flat, unleavened bread.

Leaven is also a symbolic picture of sin in our lives. Just as a pinch of yeast can cause an entire lump of dough to rise, a pinch of lust, hate, ego, or falsehood can cause us to swell with pride and sin. God calls us to an “unleavened” way of life—that is, a life that is pure, humble, and holy. The Passover served the Hebrew people as a reminder of God’s deliverance and His command that they be holy as He is holy. And the Passover reminds us of the sacrifice of the holy Lamb of God for us.

2. The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)

Count off seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain. Then celebrate the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God by giving a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings the LORD your God has given you. And rejoice before the LORD your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name—you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, the Levites in your towns, and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows living among you. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt, and follow carefully these decrees (Deut. 16:9–12).

The Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, was a feast of thanksgiving. It was a response to God in return for the blessing and joy of the harvest. The Hebrew people would give a freewill offering to God proportionate to God’s blessing in their lives. Instead of ritual, ceremony, and sacrifice, Pentecost was to be an expression from the heart.

Leviticus 23:15–21 describes how the Hebrew people were to celebrate the feast of Pentecost by bringing new grain as an offering to God and by waving two loaves of leavened bread before the Lord. These symbols speak of God’s new covenant with the human race in Jesus Christ.

Under the new covenant, no sacrifice of atonement is required because Jesus has already made the perfect sacrifice. Under the new covenant, there is a great harvest to God—the harvest of both Jewish and Gentile believers. Under the new covenant, the obligations of the law have been replaced by a joyful response of the heart to God. And the two loaves of leavened bread represent the fact that, under the new covenant, God’s church includes the “leavened bread” of the Gentile people, waved as holy before the Lord.

These prophetic pictures were fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit filled the newborn church in Jerusalem.

3. The Feast of Tabernacles

Celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days after you have gathered the produce of your threshing floor and your winepress. Be joyful at your Feast—you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, and the Levites, the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns. For seven days celebrate the Feast to the LORD your God at the place the LORD will choose. For the LORD your God will bless you in all your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your joy will be complete (Deut. 16:13–15).

The Feast of Tabernacles celebrated God’s provision for Israel during the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. The feast began and ended with rest, symbolizing the rest and refreshment that comes from God alone. The feast also looked ahead to the millennial rest that God will give to Israel and all of His people when Jesus comes to reign on earth (see Zech. 14:16–19).

Keep All Three Feasts

Three times a year all your men must appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. No man should appear before the LORD empty-handed: Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you (Deut. 16:16–17).

God commanded Israel to observe all three feasts on an annual basis. Every Jewish man, if at all possible, was to go to the tabernacle or temple and partake of this feast with the rest of his nation, Israel. The Lord Jesus Himself obeyed this command, traveling from Galilee to Jerusalem to attend the feasts (see, for example, John 7).

inequities), and the great feasts of Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Tabernacles are again restated. God makes provision for judges to decide cases where the law has not specifically spoken and for the choosing of a king (who must carefully walk by the statutes of the law and keep his heart humble before the Lord his God).

In Deuteronomy 18, we encounter God's great promise that "the LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him" (18:15). What does this promise mean? It was partially fulfilled by all the true prophets who later arose in Israel. But its ultimate fulfillment took place when Jesus came, Moses-like in being able to behold the face of God, and in His preaching to the people. Jesus perfectly fulfilled the Old Testament ideal of priest, prophet, and king.

Next, in Deuteronomy 19, God through Moses again designates three cities of refuge, this time on the west side of the Jordan. Anyone guilty of deliberate murder could find no sanctuary in those cities, but those who killed accidentally (manslaughter) were to flee to those cities and escape the avenger of blood. God also set forth the importance of integrity, commanding that boundary stones marking property lines could not be removed, and the people of Israel were to be truthful *to* one another and *about* one another at all times.

Deuteronomy 20 gives the Israelites instruction for going to war. People are often disturbed over the amount of war and bloodshed in the Old Testament. But we have to remember that God was sending the Israelites into hostile territory. They were not

only to gain the Promised Land for their own use, but God was also sending Israel as His instrument for cleansing that land of a foul and evil people. The Canaanites practiced horrible rites of idolatry, including sacrificing their own infants to the fires of the demon-god Molech.

Was God cruel in ordering the extermination of these wicked people, along with the atrocities they committed against their own children? Or was God truly being merciful in bringing these abominable practices to an end?

God charged His people to always keep before them the vision of their God and His power. He ordered that the Israelites offer terms of peace to every city they attacked; if the terms were accepted, the inhabitants were not be killed but were put to forced labor. If the enemy refused those terms, the city was to be destroyed.

In chapters 22 through 26, we find the various regulations for the life of the people within the land. These rules governed such matters as lost or stolen property, transvestism, sexual purity, sanitation, lending money, vows, and divorce. Provision was then made for the punishment of theft, but cruel and unusual punishment was strictly forbidden. It was likewise forbidden to muzzle an ox as it tread out the corn—a command that was given spiritual significance by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:8–10.

Deuteronomy 25 sets forth the law of the kinsman-redeemer. On the surface, this seems to be merely a provision for those who die without leaving an heir. But these verses turn out to have a deeper, prophetic significance:

If brothers are living together and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband's brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her. The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel (25:5-6).

The kinsman-redeemer is a symbolic type of the coming Messiah. The surviving brother is the kinsman who redeems the bride of the dead brother. To be a kinsman-redeemer, he must meet certain qualifications:

He must be a blood relative of the dead husband, just as Christ became our blood relative through the virgin birth. In the story of Ruth and her kinsman-redeemer in the Ruth 4, we see other parallels between the kinsman-redeemer and Christ. The kinsman must be able to pay the price of the inheritance of the deceased man, just as Christ paid the price for us when we were dead in our sins. And the kinsman must marry the widow of the deceased man, just as Christ became the husband of His bride, the church. We will look at this relationship more closely when we explore the book of Ruth.

The most important principle here in Deuteronomy 25:5-6 is that God makes provision for the kinsman-redeemer to do what the dead brother cannot do for himself. He makes it possible for the dead brother's name to "not be blotted out from Israel," just as the Lord Jesus Christ provides for us so that our names will not be blotted out from God's Book of Life.

The second sermon concludes with Moses' instructions about the way the people were to worship in the new land. They were

to bring the firstfruits and offer them to God, gratefully acknowledging His provision and grace. The firstfruits are followed by the gifts given to the Levites, to strangers, to the fatherless, and to widows. Then Moses gives detailed instructions regarding the impressive ceremony to be carried out on the two mountains of Gerizim and Ebal. The Ten Commandments were to be displayed on plaster-covered stone monuments, and each year the sons of Rachel and Leah were to recite the blessings upon Mount Gerizim, and the sons of Jacob's concubines were to recite the curses upon Mount Ebal. The curses are detailed in chapter 27 and the blessings in the opening words of chapter 28.

THIRD SERMON: *The Covenant of God*

The third message of Moses, chapters 27 through 31, lays out the choices Israel must make, as well as the potential blessings and curses that would flow from those choices. This sermon could be viewed as a grand exposition of the theme Moses set forth in Deuteronomy 11:26: "See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse."

At the heart of this message we find chapter 28, one of the most amazing prophecies ever recorded. It predicts in remarkable detail the entire history of the Jewish people. It even predicts events following the crucifixion of Jesus when the Jewish people would cease to be a nation and would be scattered over the face of the earth.

Deuteronomy 28:1-14 speaks of God's delight in pouring out His abundant blessings on His people, if only they would be faithful to the Lord and His commands. Verses 15-44 speak of the curses for disobedience. This



LAWS OF THE DEUTERONOMIC CODE

Deuteronomy 12–26

Laws of Religious and Ceremonial Observance

- Laws governing worship at the place of worship, Deut. 12:1–28
- Laws against worshipping other gods, Deut. 12:29–31
- Laws against false prophets, Deut. 13
- Laws prohibiting self-disfigurement as an act of mourning, Deut. 14:1–2
- Laws concerning clean and unclean animals, Deut. 14:3–20
- Laws prohibiting the eating of carrion (animals found already dead), Deut. 14:21
- Laws concerning the tithe, Deut. 14:22–29
- Laws ordering the offering of firstborn male animals, Deut. 15:19–23
- Laws concerning three annual feasts (Passover, Feast of Weeks, Feast of Tabernacles), Deut. 16:1–17
- Laws forbidding Asherah groves and sacred stones, Deut. 16:21–22
- Laws against blemished sacrifices, Deut. 17:1
- Laws excluding certain individuals from the assembly of the people, Deut. 23:1–8
- Laws against religious prostitution, Deut. 23:17–18
- The ritual of the firstfruits and tithes, Deut. 26:1–15

Criminal Law

- Laws requiring the death penalty for idolaters, Deut. 17:2–7
- Laws forbidding human sacrifice, sorcery, and other detestable practices, Deut. 18:9–13
- Laws concerning manslaughter and murder, Deut. 19:1–13
- Laws concerning witnesses, Deut. 19:15–21
- Ritual atonement for an unsolved murder, Deut. 21:1–9
- Laws requiring death penalty for a rebellious son, Deut. 21:18–21
- Laws regarding the corpse of an executed criminal, Deut. 21:22–23
- Laws concerning adultery, seduction, and rape, Deut. 22:22–29
- Laws against kidnapping, Deut. 24:7
- Laws limiting punishment, Deut. 25:1–3

Civil Law

- Laws concerning debt cancellation in the seventh year, Deut. 15:1–11
- Laws concerning the freeing of servants, Deut. 15:12–18
- Laws against moving property boundary markers, Deut. 19:14
- Laws concerning the rights of the firstborn, Deut. 21:15–17
- Laws concerning lost property, Deut. 22:1–4
- Laws against transvestitism, Deut. 22:5
- Laws concerning treatment of animal mothers and their young, Deut. 22:6–7

Laws concerning the construction of safe roofs (with parapets), Deut. 22:8
Laws prohibiting the mixing of kinds, Deut. 22:9–11
Laws concerning ritual fringes or tassels for garments, Deut. 22:12
Laws concerning marriage and the violation of marriage, Deut. 22:13–30
Laws protecting a newly married woman from slander, Deut. 22:13–21
Laws against marrying a stepmother, Deut. 22:30
Laws requiring cleanliness in the camp, Deut. 23:9–14
Laws concerning refuge for escaped slaves, Deut. 23:15–16
Laws against charging a brother interest, Deut. 23:19–20
Laws concerning vows, Deut. 23:21–23
Laws concerning the crops of a neighbor, Deut. 23:24–25
Laws concerning divorce, Deut. 24:1–4
Laws concerning pledges for debts, Deut. 24:6, 10–13
Laws concerning leprosy, Deut. 24:8–9
Laws requiring fair wages to workers, Deut. 24:14–15
Laws concerning the innocent family members of criminals, Deut. 24:16
Laws requiring justice towards strangers, widows, and orphans, Deut. 24:17–18
Laws permitting crop gleaning by strangers, Deut. 24:19–22
Laws against muzzling an oxen during threshing, Deut. 25:4
Laws concerning levirate marriage (the kinsman-redeemer), Deut. 25:5–10
Requirements that women be modest, Deut. 25:11–12
Laws requiring fair weights and measures, Deut. 25:13–16

Laws Concerning Government Officials

Laws requiring judges to be appointed in every city, Deut. 16:18
Laws requiring impartiality of judges, Deut. 16:19–20
Laws requiring a central tribunal, Deut. 17:8–13
Restrictions on the king, Deut. 17:14–20
Laws concerning the rights of the Levites, Deut. 18:1–8

Laws Regarding Warfare

Laws concerning conduct in times of war, Deut. 20
Laws regarding marriage to women captured in war, Deut. 21:10–14

A Messianic Prophecy

A prophecy of the coming Messiah, Deut. 18:14–22

prophecy predicts the Babylonian captivity and dispersion (under the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar) which would take place as a consequence of the unbelief and disobedience of the people. After this comes a prediction of the Israelites' ultimate return to the land.

Embedded in this message are intriguing clues to the coming Messiah whom God would send—and whom the nation of Israel would reject. As a consequence of Israel's rejection of the Messiah, a strange nation—the Roman Empire—would one day rise up against Israel. Here is how Moses described those events:

The LORD will bring a nation against you from far away, from the ends of the earth, like an eagle swooping down, a nation whose language you will not understand, a fierce-looking nation without respect for the old or pity for the young. . . . They will lay siege to all the cities throughout your land until the high fortified walls in which you trust fall down. Because of the suffering that your enemy will inflict on you during the siege, you will eat the fruit of the womb, the flesh of the sons and daughters the LORD your God has given you (28:49–50, 52).

The Roman Empire conquered Israel in 63 BC and oppressed the Jewish nation until the people rose up in rebellion in AD 67. The prediction of Moses that this strange nation would come “from the ends of the earth, like an eagle swooping down” was literally fulfilled with the armies of Rome were called out from the four corners of the empire to converge on Israel—and every Roman legion marched behind a standard bearing the sculpted image of an eagle in flight. Ancient historians record

the destruction of nearly a thousand Israelite villages by the Romans.

The commander of the Roman forces was Titus, who later became the emperor of Rome. In AD 70, Titus laid siege to Jerusalem, causing starvation and terror within the city walls. Just as Moses predicted, the trapped citizens of Jerusalem began to kill and eat their own children. The historian Flavius Josephus records in horrifying detail the story of a wealthy woman who killed her own son and offered his flesh to the soldiers who guarded the city walls. The siege ended when the Romans entered the city, killed the inhabitants, toppled the walls, and destroyed the great temple of Jerusalem.

Moses warns in verse 64, “Then the LORD will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other.” After the fall of Jerusalem, the Jewish people were dispersed throughout the world. They remained a people without a homeland until the nation of Israel was restored in May 1948.

At the conclusion of his great prophecy, Moses reminds the people that they are under the government of God. Moses has reminded them of their past so that they would walk faithfully before God in the future. In graphic terms, he has described to them what their future would be if they turned away from God in disobedience.

In his closing word to the people of Israel, Moses seems to look far into the future to see the people dispersed around the globe. He reminds them that if they will return to God with a whole heart, He will forgive their sin, restore their fortunes, and gather them again into the land.

Then, in Deuteronomy 30:11–14, Moses

utters the great words that the apostle Paul will quote centuries later in Romans 10:6–10. These words reveal why Deuteronomy is called “the second law.” Moses says to the people, “What I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach” (30:11). This speaks of the divine provision by which the demands of the law might be fully met. “It is not,” Moses continues, “up in heaven, so that you have to ask, ‘Who will ascend into heaven to get it’ . . . beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, ‘Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?’” (see 30:12–13); instead, as Moses puts it very plainly, “The word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it” (see 30:14).

In Romans 10:5, Paul writes that “Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: ‘The man who does these things will live by them.’” Here he quotes the words of Moses concerning the law given at Sinai and taken from the book of Exodus. Then, in Romans 10:6–9, Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 30, indicating that it refers to Christ: “The righteousness that is by faith says: ‘Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) ‘or ‘Who will descend into the deep?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? ‘The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,’ that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom. 10:6–9).

In this quotation from Deuteronomy 30, Paul declares that it is not necessary to bring

Christ down from heaven (the incarnation) or to bring Him up again from the dead (the resurrection), for this has already been done. It is only necessary that the heart believe and the lips confess that Jesus is Lord and that He is risen from the dead. Thus the second law, which Paul calls “the law of the Spirit of life [in Christ Jesus],” fulfills, by another principle, the righteousness that the law demands.

Moses clearly taught these principles to the people of Israel. He constantly reiterated the just and fair demands of God as expressed in the Ten Commandments. That is the first law. But Moses also reminded them of the gracious provision through the sacrifices and offerings by which they could receive the life of the living Lord, the coming Messiah, by grace through faith. If they would keep God’s Word in their mouths and in their hearts, they would be able to do all that God demanded.

Moses concludes this great address by saying, “See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction” (30:15), words which echo his earlier theme, “See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse” (11:26). With earnest words, Moses pleads with the people to choose life “so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land” (30:19–20).

From Moses to Joshua

Finally, Moses summons Joshua and gives him this solemn charge:

Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the LORD swore to their forefathers to give them,

and you must divide it among them as their inheritance. 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” (31:7b–8).

Then God tells Moses that the time had come for him to sleep with his fathers and that, in spite of his faithful warnings, the people whom he had led would not fulfill all his solemn predictions, and God would have to discipline the people as He had promised.

God commands Moses to write a song that will remain in the memory of the people long after Moses has gone. The song deals with the great themes of God’s everlasting covenant with Israel, His mercies to them, their failures, the penalties of their disobedience, and the promise of final deliverance. Then Moses offers the people his last benediction, reminding them that “the eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms” (Deut. 33:27).

The final chapter is undoubtedly added

by another hand, perhaps the hand of Joshua, for it recounts how Moses ascended Mount Nebo, and there, with his eyes not dim, with his natural force undiminished, Moses stretched out on the ground and died. The Lord Himself buried Moses in an unknown place in the valley of Moab, and we do not see Moses again in Scripture until we find him on the Mount of Transfiguration, along with Elijah the prophet and Jesus the Messiah, talking together about the crucifixion that awaited Jesus at Jerusalem (see Matt. 17:1–13; Mark 9:2–13).

Though the people rallied around Joshua and gave him the obedience they had shown to Moses, they knew they would never see anyone like Moses again—a man who spoke to God face-to-face, a man whose deeds were great, terrible, and often miraculous. Not until the Messiah Himself appeared would the achievements and wonders of Moses be surpassed.

DEUTERONOMY

THE LAW THAT BRINGS DELIVERANCE

1. Here in Deuteronomy, the Israelites stand at the doorstep of the Land of Promise. God has brought them out of bondage in Egypt, delivered them through the depths of the Red Sea, sustained them through forty years of wandering in the wilderness, and is about to lead them into the land of Canaan, a land which flows “with milk and honey.” It is a land that is symbolic of a life of victory and joy. As you look at where you are in your life’s journey, are you:

- in bondage in Egypt?
- going through the Red Sea?
- wandering in the wilderness?
- about to enter the Land of Promise?
- drinking milk and honey in the Promised Land?

Explain your answer.

2. In Deuteronomy 8:3, Moses reminds the people that “man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.” Jesus Himself used these words to overcome His temptation by Satan in the Judean wilderness (see Matt. 4:4). What does this verse tell us about the value of memorizing Scripture? What steps can you take this week to memorize God’s Word so that His words will be available for times of temptation and adversity?

3. In Deuteronomy 18:15, we encounter the promise that God would “raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.” Later, in chapter 25, God establishes the law of the kinsman-redeemer. These are just two of the many Old Testament prophecies of the coming Messiah, Jesus, who perfectly fulfilled the Old Testament ideal of priest, prophet, and king. How does it affect your faith to see prophetic references to Jesus in these earliest pages of the Old Testament?

4. There's no denying that the Old Testament is filled with bloodshed and war. Deuteronomy 20 gives the Israelites instruction for going to war. Some people find it disturbing that God would order the Israelites to slaughter the idol-worshiping people who lived in that land. Yet the author points out that the Canaanites maintained horrible religious practices, involving sacrificing infants, even tossing their own children into the fires of the demon-god Molech. In light of this information, does God seem cruel or merciful in ordering Israel to eradicate these people and their vile and bloodthirsty religion? Explain your answer.

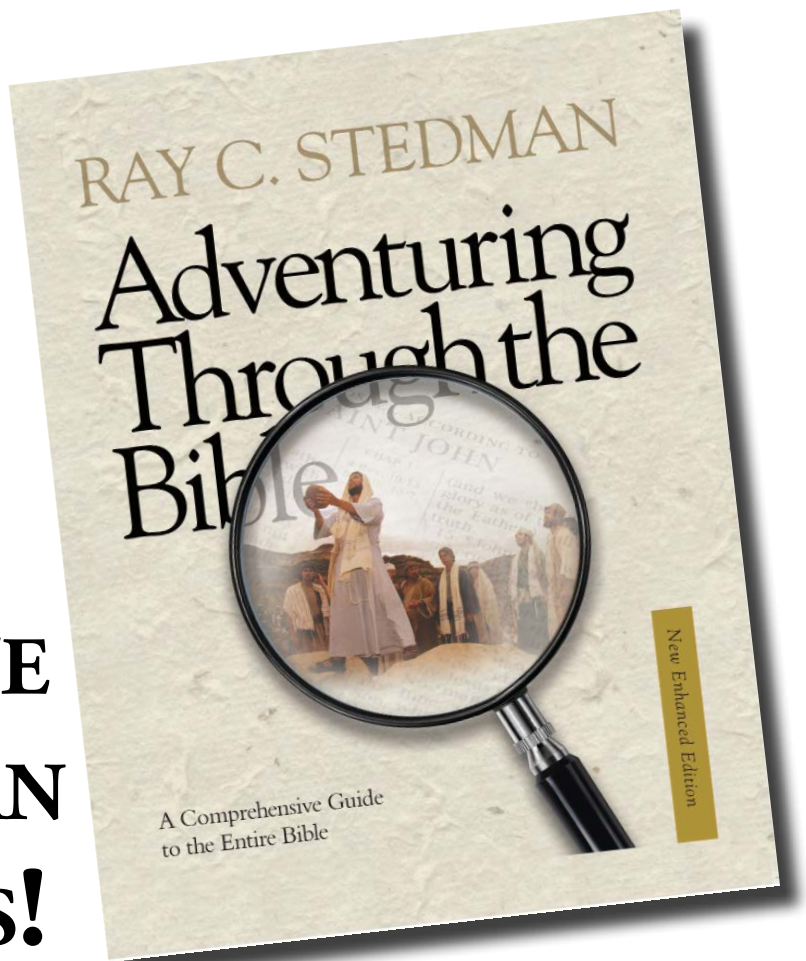
Personal Application:

5. In Deuteronomy 1, Moses begins by reciting God's love and care toward the people. Throughout their wanderings God led them and fed them. Moses underscores God's continual provision and deliverance of His people in spite of their unbelief. Can you recall times in your own life where, as you look back, you can see that God provided and delivered you in spite of your unbelief? Explain your answer.

6. In his second sermon, Deuteronomy 5 through 26, Moses warns the Israelites of three spiritual dangers—the peril of prosperity, the peril of adversity, and the peril of neglecting to teach their children about the love and law of God. Which of these three perils hits home with you right now? What steps could you take this week to address that peril and make yourself and your family more spiritually safe and strong?

7. The third sermon of Moses lays out the choices Israel must make. "See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse," he says in 11:26. Later, he adds, "The word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it" (30:14). So the people of Israel had to make a choice—and every human being on earth must still make that same choice: life or death, blessing or cursing. God, through Moses, pleads with us to choose life "so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land" (30:19–20). The refusal to choose is itself a choice—and a tragic one. Have you chosen life? Have you chosen blessing? If not, why not?

THE COMPLETE BOOK CAN BE YOURS!



If you enjoyed reading through this segment of Ray Stedman's book, *Adventuring Through the Bible*, the complete book, over 900 pages in length, can be purchased at Discovery House Publishers.

[View more information about *Adventuring Through the Bible* and purchasing information.](#)

Note to Reader

The publisher invites you to share your response to the message of this book by writing Discovery House Publishers, P.O. Box 3566, Grand Rapids, MI 49501, U.S.A. For information about other Discovery House books, music, videos, or DVDs, contact us at the same address or call 1-800-653-8333. You can also find us on the Internet at www.dhp.org or e-mail us at books@dhp.org.