



COMMITTED

LIFEGROUP STUDIES

CONTENTS

Devotions in Deuteronomy	3
Deuteronomy aka Devarim	4
The Structure of Deuteronomy	4
Committed to Love the Lord - Preaching Series Overview	5
Tips for studying the first two parashot: Devarim and Vaetchanan	5
Part I: Devarim meaning 'Words'	6
Study 1: Trusting the Lord's Guidance (Deut. 1:1-46)	7
Study 2: Trusting the Lord's Sovereignty (Deut. 2:1-25)	11
Study 3: Trusting the Lord's Power (Deut. 3:1-22)	14
Part II: Vaetchanan meaning 'And I pleaded...'	17
Study 4: Trusting the Lord's Plans (Deut. 3:23-4:8)	18
Study 5: Trusting the Lord's Faithfulness (Deut. 4:9-42)	21
Study 6: Trusting the Lord's Commandments (Deut. 4:43-5:33)	24
Study 7: Trusting the Lord's Love (Deut. 6:1-7:11)	28
Resources	32

DEVOTIONS IN DEUTERONOMY

Our world is changing. God does not change. Likewise His mission does not change, though His agents and their methods for making the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in the power of His Spirit change in context.

“Deuteronomy is a book for a people on the move; literally at first, spiritually and morally thereafter... [i]t presents, therefore, a God of sovereign worldwide purpose and a people with a sharp spiritual mandate and moral agenda.” (Wright 2012, loc. 360).

‘Deuteronomy’ may not be your first choice as a book to read from the Bible. Our hope is that as we prayerfully, carefully, explore these (nearly) seven chapters, we shall begin to see that it is rewarding, if not riveting, reading. The book does contain a lot of law! And yet, as George Athas describes in his excellent commentary, “I would go so far as to say that it is the theological backbone of the entire Old Testament.” (2016, p 96)

Reading ‘Deuteronomy’ or ‘Devarim’ devotionally depends upon reading the book in its context. For centuries, the Protestant and the Catholic Churches divided the Scriptures into a ‘Lectionary’ structure (from the Latin ‘legere’ meaning ‘to read’ and ‘to pick out’). Before this, Jewish readers of the Bible similarly divided the ‘Torah’ (or Law) into ‘portions’ or ‘parashot’ (plural) to be read weekly, alongside further ‘haftorah’ portions from the ‘Nevi’im’ (or Prophets) and ‘Ketuvim’ (or Writings).

Each ‘parashah’ (singular) is a portion of the Torah or ‘Pentateuch’ (meaning ‘five books’ in Greek) including Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Jewish people, Messianic Jews, and Christians still use this model, so it is not an unusual practice to read portions of the Torah within the ‘Tanakh’ (or Old Testament) within all the Bible.

Our hope is introduce or affirm your devotional time in Deuteronomy with these weekly LifeGroup Bible study portions.

References

Athas, G. Deuteronomy: One Nation under God (Reading the Bible Today). Anglican Youthworks: Sydney (2016).

Wright, C.J.H. Deuteronomy (Understanding the Bible Commentary Series, Second Edition) Baker Books: MI (2012).

DEUTERONOMY AKA DEVARIM

This final book of Moses in the Torah is called the Book of 'Deuteronomy' (meaning The Second [iteration of] Law). This is a phrase derived from the Greek translation of a phrase used in Deuteronomy 17:18 within chapters 12-26 which describe the collection of laws, some of which are new but mostly are repeated from the Exodus account (hence, the second iteration of Law).

In Hebrew the book is entitled 'Devarim' (meaning words) taken from the opening phrase "These are the words..." (Deut. 1:1). The book refers to the terms of the special covenant with God with Israel, His given Ten Commandments, and the requirements of Torah.

It is also Moses' valedictory speech to a new generation of Israel who have wandered for four decades and outlived their forebears. Moses reviews the history and laws given by the LORD to His people. He assures them that obedience to God's law will bring blessings, and disobedience will break them with bruising (literally 'curses').

The introduction to this book sets us up to hear Moses preaching, speaking out God's 'words' to the nation poised for entry into the Promised Land. There are four speeches in the book with Moses' farewell at the conclusion. Notice how it seems likely an editor writes to locate Deuteronomy geographically, historically, and theologically as a preface to the speech Moses then gives to Israel at the end.

THE STRUCTURE OF DEUTERONOMY

After the introduction (1:1-5), he speaks to give context for the covenant (1:6-11). Moses closes the collection of laws by declaring God's blessings for obedience and bruising for disobedience (27:1-28:68), followed by an encouragement (29:1-30:20). Finally, Moses' makes his farewell speech (31:1-34:12) comprising a poem of bruising (chapter 32) and a poem of blessing (chapter 33). There is an editorial account of his death (chapter 34).

Moses' speech opens on the first day of the eleventh month 'Shevat' in the fortieth year since the Exodus from slavery in Egypt. Israel is in Moab, east of the river Jordan river, awaiting entry into the promised land. Moses was committed to making God's Torah concise and clear as they entered in.

**DEUTERONOMY SUMMARY VIDEO
FROM THE BIBLE PROJECT**



bibleproject.com/explore/video/deuteronomy

COMMITTED TO LOVE THE LORD

PREACHING SERIES OVERVIEW

Our annual commitment series in 2024, Committed... to the Lord our God, is based on Deuteronomy 6:1-7. We reference the gospel accounts in which Jesus is described as directly relating back to these words and John's gospel which has drawn a thematic thread from the Deuteronomistic tapestry.

The structure of our series is as follows:

- 6 October
Love the Lord your God with all your Heart
(Deuteronomy 6:1-7, John 15:9-17)
- 13 October
Learn from the Lord your God with all your Mind
(Deuteronomy 6:1-9, Matt. 22:34-40)
- 20 October
Long for the Lord your God with all your Soul
(Deuteronomy 6:20-19, Mark 12:28-34)
- 27 October
Live through the Lord your God with all your Strength
(Deuteronomy 6:20-24, Luke 10:25-37)

Here's some tips for studying Deuteronomy 1-7:11 with your LifeGroup:

- Our seven studies, which can be explored over seven weeks, will be looking at the first two parashot, namely Devarim (meaning 'words') and Vaetchanan (meaning, 'And I pleaded'), taking us to Deuteronomy 7:11.
- God speaks to His people Israel and to all who seek Him today through His word, the Bible, and through His Word, Jesus. Jesus simplifies this to 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, your mind, your soul, your strength', and 'Love your neighbour as yourself'. If you are left wondering about the relevance of a verse or passage in Deuteronomy, bring to mind the vertical relationship you and we have with God, and the horizontal relationship with have with one another as church and with our neighbours in community.
- Themes repeat across the Book of Deuteronomy, the Torah, the Old Testament, and the Bible. You may find that looking ahead to later studies will give some clues to questions arising in the current study.
- Each study is structured loosely on a SOAP model: Each begins with prayer, an icebreaker, an illustration, a brief Scripture summary, an opportunity for observations in the text, a point of application, and a prayer to finish. In the hope to add variety there are brief excurses and points of interest to explore on the journey.

Let's pray and get into the word(s)!

PART I: DEVARIM MEANING 'WORDS'

I:I-3:22

The first parashah, or portion, is entitled Devarim, and it begins with Moses recalling Israel's journey with the LORD from Mount Sinai to the promised land. We are introduced to Moses, the main speaker, the nation of Israel, of whom Moses has been leader, and to God ('Yahweh' or 'Adonai') whom Moses represents to Israel. They are poised to enter the land Yahweh had promised them by their forefathers.

Moses explains the need to appoint judges to assist him in the administration of justice amongst the twelve tribes. He reminds them of the sin of the faithless spies and the rebellion of some in Israel at Kadesh Barnea. The consequences of these were that God would not allow Moses, or any of

this generation, to enter the promised land, with the exceptions of faithful Joshua and Caleb. He recalls how Israel were further disobedient in trying to enter the land in their own strength. The judgment for this Godless effort led to their crushing defeat by the Amorite nation.

Moses gave Israel a potted history of their exile from the Sea of Reeds to the desert which took them across many borders. During this time, they were trained by God for war and defeated Sihon king of the Amorites and Og the king of Bashan. The land they acquired was divided between the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh. Moses concludes this portion reminding Joshua it is the LORD who fights for Israel.

STUDY I | TRUSTING THE LORD'S GUIDANCE

DEUTERONOMY 1:1-46

Pray: Heavenly Father, as we open Your Word today, help us to learn from the experiences of Your people, Israel. Teach us to trust Your guidance, even when our hearts are gripped by fear. May we live by faith in Your promises and avoid the consequences of disobedience. Only in Jesus' name. Amen.

Icebreaker:

Have you ever been tentative in taking a decision or step in life, even though you knew it was the right thing to do?

Imagine...

...standing at the edge of a deep chasm with a bridge spanning out before you. The bridge is solid but you hesitate, gripped by fear. How often do we, in our spiritual lives, face moments where the bridge is God's sure presence and promise, but our fear keeps us from stepping out in faith?

The Story so far...

Moses recalls Israel's journey from Mount Horeb (aka Sinai) to the edge of the Promised Land and their refusal to enter for fear of the "giants" in the land, despite God's promises to provide and protect them as He has done. Their failure to trust God led to a generation wandering in the wilderness. In this passage we reflect on God's covenant faithfulness despite Israel's unfaithfulness. It reminds us how we, in the light of His promises fulfilled in Jesus, can trust and obey God's Word.

1. To whom did Moses deliver his speech? Where was he? Why did he do this?
2. What is the significance of Moses recounting Israel's journey in verses 1-3, and how does this frame the context of Deuteronomy?

FUN FACT!

The Amorites and their kings (1:4) were the descendants of Noah's fourth son Ham (Genesis 10:16). In time they settled, having been nomadic in Mesopotamia, as Babylon. The Amorites are one of seven Canaanite nations earmarked for destruction under God's command (Exo. 34:11-12; Deut. 7:1, 20:17-18; Acts 13:17-19). King Sihon of Heshbon and king Og of Bashan were brothers who are described as Nephillim or 'giants'.

3. Did God originally intend to give all the land promised to Abraham? Why does Moses emphasize that the land was already promised to Israel (1:7-8)?
4. When Moses said the people were a burden for him, what did he do to lighten the load? (1:9-17, cf. Exo. 18:8-27)
5. God led the people directly from Sinai to Kadesh Barnea to take possession of the land, but what happened there (Read 1:19-40 then compare with Num. 13 cf. Num. 14:1-12, 20-35)?
6. What did Moses say to encourage Israel to keep faith in God? (1:29-31) How do the people respond (1:32-33)?

STUDY I | TRUSTING THE LORD'S GUIDANCE

7. Why did Moses say that God denied his request to enter the land as a result of the people's unbelief at Kadesh Barnea, when earlier we learn this decree came from striking the rock at Meribah? (Deut. 1:37 cf. Num. 20:2-12)

8. What does the punishment of wandering in the wilderness for 40 years (v. 34-36) teach us about the consequences of unbelief (cf. Heb. 3:19)?

9. What is the theological significance of Israel's presumption to fight the Amorites without God's blessing (1:41-44)? Why is Moses' reflection on Israel's defeat by the Amorites (1:44) included, and how does it serve as a warning (Rom. 15:4)?

10. What is the significance of the people weeping after their defeat (1:45), and how does this illustrate the difference between godly repentance and worldly remorse (cf. 2 Cor. 7:10)?

Application to Life:

What areas in your life do you find yourself hesitating out of fear, and how can you move forward in faith, trusting in God's promises?

Closing Prayer:

Lord, help us to trust You in every aspect of our lives. Teach us to overcome fear with faith and to walk confidently in assurance, knowing You keep Your promises. May we learn from the past and seek to follow You wholeheartedly in future. In Jesus' name, Amen.

STUDY 2 | TRUSTING THE LORD'S SOVEREIGNTY

DEUTERONOMY 2:1-25

Pray: Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your Word and the lessons You teach us about Your sovereignty and loving care. Enable us to see Your hand in history and in our lives, guiding and directing according to Your perfect plan and purposes. May we trust in Your sovereignty, recognising Your rule over all peoples. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Icebreaker:

Can you think of a time when you had to trust someone else's plan or guidance, especially if you didn't fully understand it? How did it go?

Imagine...

...an elite architect overseeing the construction of a large, intricate building. The workers at ground level can only see a small part of the project. They do not always understand why decisions are made. However, the architect has the blueprint, knows the end result, and ensures every step leads toward the completion of the grand design. If God is the Grand Designer of history, guiding nations and individuals according to His sovereign purpose, we may not always understand His plans, but we can trust in His infinite wisdom and goodness.

The Story so far...

Moses recounts Israel's disastrous attempt to enter the promised land without God! He makes it clear God must be with them and for them to achieve His will for them. He describes their journey through the wilderness and their encounters with nations enroute. This was now a new generation (2:8,14-15) and Moses is primed to warn His people.

The command comes with an injunction to

respect the boundaries of the land that God sovereignly promised Esau, Jacob's twin brother (2:4-8; cf. Gen. 36:8) as well as the two sons of Jacob's grandfather's (Abraham) nephew, Lot (Moab's portion in 2:9-15; Ben-Ammi's portion, 2:16-19; cf. Gen. 19:36-38 and 13:5-12).

There is to be no conflict with Edom, Moab, and Ammon because God has given these nations their lands. He is sovereign over all nations, not just Israel, and is faithful in fulfilling His promises. God is in control over history and His unfolding redemptive plan for both Israel and the nations will not be thwarted by any peoples.

1. When the camp of Israel began to move from Kadesh Barnea, why did God forbid them from attacking the kingdom of Edom? (2:1-7) How does this reflect His sovereignty over nations?
2. Why did God forbid war with the kingdom of Moab (2:8-9) and how does this reflect God's broader concern for the nations?
3. What is the significance of Israel purchasing food and water from Edom instead of taking it by force (2:6 cf. Rom. 12:18)?
4. What is the importance of the historical references to the Emim and Rephaim (2:10-11) in the context of trusting God's sovereignty today (cf. 1 Cor. 15:51-57)?
5. What is significant about the "brook of Zered"? (2:13-16)

STUDY 2 | TRUSTING THE LORD'S SOVEREIGNTY

6. Why did God forbid war with the kingdom of Ammon (2:19-23)? How do we see God's grace similarly expressed in Acts 10:34-35?
7. What does the reference to the Caphtorim (2:23) show us about the transient nature of nations and the permanence of God's plan?
8. Why did Moses offer terms of peace to king Sihon, when God instructed the Amorites to be removed from the land? (2:24-29 cf. Num. 21:21-30)
9. What happened to Sihon's kingdom? (2:30-35)
10. What role does obedience to God's specific commands regarding nations (2:5, 9, 19) play in Israel's success? How does this relate to our obedience today (Matt. 28:18-20, John 14:15)?

Application:

In what areas of your life do you struggle to trust God's sovereignty, especially when you do not understand His plan or purposes? How can you grow in faith to trust that God is in control, even in uncertain times or when things go in a direction other than what you pray for?

Closing Prayer:

Sovereign Lord, thank You for reminding us that You are in control of all things, including all nations and the circumstances of our lives. Help us to trust Your plan, even when we do not fully understand it. Enable us to live in obedience and faith, trusting Your sovereign purposes are good, You work all things for Your glory and for the good of those called according to Your purpose. In Jesus' name, Amen.

STUDY 3 | TRUSTING THE LORD'S POWER

DEUTERONOMY 3:1-22

Pray: Heavenly Father, as we open Your Word today, we ask for understanding and wisdom to see how You act powerfully on behalf of Your people. Help us to trust in Your strength and to stand firm in faith, knowing that You are able to overcome every obstacle in our lives. May Your Spirit guide us in applying these truths to our hearts. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Icebreaker:

Have you ever faced a situation that seemed impossible to overcome, only to see it resolved in a way that you could never have imagined? What did that experience teach you about trusting God?

Imagine...

...a scrappy insurgency going up against a powerful, seemingly invincible opponent. Every strategic calculation concludes victory is impossible. However, this army has one advantage: the unshakable knowledge that they are backed by an Almighty God who guarantees their success.

This is what Israel experienced in Deuteronomy 3:1-22 as they faced King Og of Bashan. Their enemy appeared invincible, but God had already promised them victory. They had military success, but God's powerful love is available to win over heart, mind, soul, and strength.

The Story so far...

We encounter Israel's battle against King Og of Bashan, a fearsome ruler with a mighty army. God commands Israel to not be afraid, promising He will give Og and his land into their hands. This victory is significant as Og represents one of the last major hurdles

before Israel enters the promised land. Moses recounts the details of this victory to encourage the Israelites to trust in God's power as they face future challenges. In this passage, we see God's faithfulness in delivering His people and His assurance that nothing is too difficult for Him.

1. Why did the king of Bashan attack Israel? (3:1) Why is it significant God tells Moses, "Do not be afraid" (3:2)?
2. What does the reference to King Og's iron bed (2:11) tell us about the scale of the challenge Israel faced, and how does this magnify God's power?
3. How does this victory over Og connect to God's covenant promises to Israel?
4. What role does obedience to God's commands play in Israel's victory over Bashan (3:6-7), and how does this parallel the call to obedience in the New Testament?
5. Why does Moses emphasize the division of the land (3:12-17), and how does this reflect God's faithfulness in providing for His people?
6. What is the significance of Moses reminding the Israelites of their past victories as they face future battles (3:21)?
7. What did Moses say to encourage Joshua regarding the future? (3:21-22) How does Moses' role as a leader and encourager in this passage point to Jesus Christ's role as the ultimate leader and encourager of His people?

STUDY 3 | TRUSTING THE LORD'S POWER

8. As the boundaries and recipients of land east of the Jordan are described (3:15–17), what did Moses say to the tribes that settled east of the Jordan (3:18-20 cf. Heb. 4:9-11)?
9. How does God's provision of land in this passage foreshadow the eternal inheritance promised to believers in Jesus Christ?
10. What does the repeated phrase "the Lord your God" (2:3, 18, 21) emphasize about the relationship between God and His people, and how is this relationship fulfilled in Jesus?

Application:

How does the victory over King Og encourage believers to trust God in the face of their own personal "giants" or challenges today? What are the "giants" in your life - challenges or fears that seem impossible to overcome? How can remembering God's power at work in the past give you confidence in His ability to overcome those challenges? What might it mean if these challenges are greater than we are and overcome us?

Just as God overcame the mighty King Og for Israel, believers today can trust that God will fight their battles and overcome whatever challenges they face. Nothing is too difficult for a powerful God Who works all things for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28, Eph. 6:10-12).

Closing Prayer:

Gracious God, we thank You for the example of Your power and faithfulness in delivering Your people from seemingly impossible situations. Help us to trust You in our own challenges, knowing that You are more than able to overcome every challenge we face. Strengthen our faith as we walk with You, and may we always remember the final victory belongs to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

PART II: VAETCHANAN MEANING 'AND I PLEADED...'

3:23-7:11

Vaetchanan begins by recalling how the Israelites are encamped near the land of Moab, east of the Jordan river, and waiting to enter the promised land. Moses' address gave a summary of their forty years wandering in the desert including their exile in Kadesh Barnea and their recent victories over the Amorite kings Sihon and Og.

Moses now recalls how he pleaded with God to allow him to enter the land, though God had forbidden Moses to enter due to his disobedience at Meribah. God keeps His promises, assuring Moses that he would die in the desert. It is Joshua who would take Israel into the land; however God did allow Moses to ascend the mountain to see the promised land from afar.

Moses experienced this bruising of God's righteous denial for his disobedience. So, he speaks to Israel to earnestly warn them to obey the laws God has given them, lest they experience bruising judgment. He warned them not to add to or take away from God's commands, specifically reminding them of the consequences for 24,000 of their number for their rebelliousness at Baal Peor.

Moses then shares how God delighted to choose Israel to be His light to the nations and how their obedience to Torah would commend them as a wise people. He wanted them to be careful, 'keeping their soul committed' in order to remember their extraordinary privilege as God's covenant people. He recalls their deliverance from Egypt, the giving of Torah at Mount Sinai, hearing the voice of God, warning them not to be drawn into idolatry or immortality even though He knows they will!

Moses is pointed in sharing the future hope of restoration after their exile and God's provision of sanctuary cities of refuge and for Torah learning among Israelite tribes. We read how '[t]his is the law Moses set before Israel: decrees, statutes, and laws as given...' underlined with a repeat of the Ten Commandments and then highlighted and amplified with the central commandment of Torah: the Shema:

"Hear and heed, O Israel. The Lord our God the Lord is One... teach your children these across the generations.' (6:4-7)

We also encounter a difficult command to hear in which Israel is to devote the Canaanite nations to destruction. This is explained in the context of the need for Israel to reflect the holiness of God and to flee idolatry and immorality. Israel is a people upon whom the Lord God graciously chose to set His gracious affection, "because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that He swore to your forefathers... know He is faithful and keeps His covenant and steadfast love with those who love Him and keep His commandments."

STUDY 4 | TRUSTING THE LORD'S PLANS

DEUTERONOMY 3:23-4:8

Pray: Gracious Father, as we turn to Your Word, we ask for wisdom and clarity to understand Your will. Help us to trust in Your plans and learn what it means to live as Your people in obedience to Your commands. Open our hearts to hear Your voice today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Icebreaker:

Have you ever experienced a situation where you asked for something, but were denied? How did that impact your trust in the bigger picture?

Imagine...

...an artist painting a masterpiece. Every stroke is intentional, though the observer might not always see the big picture until it's complete.

Moses similarly learns, though he cannot enter the Promised Land, he still plays an important role in God's plan. His personal disappointment gives way to God's grander design, reminding us that while we may not always receive what we ask for, God is working out His plans for the good of His people and the glory of His name.

The Story so far...

Forbidden to cross the Jordan, Moses recounts his pleading with God to allow him personal entry into the Promised Land (3:23–29 cf. Num. 20:8–12). Instead, Moses is instructed to encourage and strengthen Joshua for the task ahead. Moses uses this moment to remind Israel of their unique relationship with God, emphasizing the greatness of God's laws and His closeness to His people. This passage reveals God's sovereignty, Moses' humility, and the central role of obedience in the life of God's people.

1. What does the word Vaetchanan mean (3:23)?
2. What was the substance of Moses' request to God (3:24-25)?
3. Why did God refuse Moses' plea (3:26 cf. Num. 27:12-17)? What concession did God make for Moses (3:27)?
4. What does Moses' acceptance of God's decision teach us about humility and submission to God's will (cf. Matt. 26:39)?
5. What role was given to Joshua bin Nun (3:28 cf. Num. 13:30)?

How does Moses' encouragement of Joshua parallel God's call to us to encourage one another in leadership roles?

Excursus - Setting the Scene

Moses pleads directly with Israel, pleading for them to follow God and live in covenant faithfulness, trusting the promises of the covenant and obeying the obligations of the covenant. Moses pleads with Israel for fidelity to God based on:

- a. their recent past experience (4:1-4; cf. Num. 25)
- b. the resulting testimony of greatness that will glorify God (4:5-8)
- c. their distant past experience at Mount Horeb (4:9-24; knowing and following the one true God means fleeing idolatry)
- d. their future experience of grace (4:25–31)

STUDY 4 | TRUSTING THE LORD'S PLANS

- e. their unique relationship with God, whereby He freed them from slavery, covenanted with them at Sinai (also Horeb), and is now beginning to grant access to the promised land (4:32–40; cf. Ps. 147:19–20).
6. What does the reference to God as “a great God” (3:24) reveal about Israel’s view of God? How is this reflected in the New Testament (Heb. 12:28–29, Matt. 20:28, Phil. 2:5–11)?
7. In 4:1, what does the word ‘shema’ mean? Why is Israel called to follow the statutes and rules (4:5)? How does this obedience set them apart from other nations?
8. Why did Moses forbid changing even one word from his words (4:2)? Why must the Israelites keep the laws Moses taught them (4:5–8)?
9. What was the incident at Baal Peor (4:3, cf. Num. 25)?
10. How does Moses’ focus on God’s law (4:8) emphasize the relationship between law and righteousness in the Old Testament, and how is this fulfilled in the New Testament (Rom. 8:3–4)?
11. What does Moses’ final plea teach us about intercessory prayer (4:23–25)? How is this idea addressed in the New Testament (Heb. 7:25, John 16:23–24)?

Application:

When faced with disappointment or unmet expectations, how can we trust that God’s plan is ultimately for our good, especially when we have asked for a completely different journey or outcome?

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank You for showing us through Moses and Jesus that Your plans are greater than our own. Help us to submit to Your will, trusting that You are working all things together for our good. Strengthen us to be faithful in our calling and help us to pray for and encourage others in their walk with You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

STUDY 5 | TRUSTING THE LORD'S FAITHFULNESS

DEUTERONOMY 4:9-42

Pray: Heavenly Father, we come before You with hearts ready to learn from Your Word. Open our minds to the depth of Your truth in Deuteronomy. Teach us to remember Your faithfulness and obey Your commands, living as a reflection of Your grace in the world. Guide us in understanding how this passage applies to our lives today. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Icebreaker:

Can you share a memory of a time when you were deeply aware of God's work in your life? How has time shaped your journey with Jesus?

Imagine...

...a family that has passed down a treasured heirloom for generations - a priceless artifact that tells the story of their origins and the struggles they endured to preserve their heritage. Each generation has the responsibility to remember and uphold the legacy. The importance of the heirloom will fade as newer stories eventuate until, eventually, the artifact can be lost, and with it, the story of the family's past.

Moses urges Israel not to forget their spiritual heritage. God's mighty deliverance and His covenantal law. Remembering God's past actions is not merely about history but about shaping our ongoing relationship with Him. If Israel forgets His gracious interventions, they lose their identity as God's people. Today, if we forget God's work in and through Jesus in our lives, we can lose our foundational identity in the gospel.

The Story so far...

Moses warns Israel not to forget the things their eyes have seen, namely God's mighty acts of deliverance and His giving of law at Sinai. Moses tells Israel that their future depends on their obedience to God's commands, the rejection of idolatry, and their covenant loyalty.

He warns of the dire consequences of idolatry and forgetting God's statute. He also reminds them of God's mercy if they turn back to Him. This passage is foundational to understanding Israel's unique relationship with God, how Jesus redeems their failings as a nation, and how we may live as faithful followers of faithful Jesus today.

1. Why does Moses stress the need to "watch yourselves closely" and not forget what they have seen (4:9)?
2. What is the significance of passing down God's commands to future generations (4:9-10)? How does this relate to us today?
3. How does the recounting of the Sinai experience (4:11-12) emphasise God's transcendence and immanence?
4. What did the Voice say out of the fire to the people and Moses (4:13-14)?
5. What does the warning against idolatry (4:15-19 cf. Ezek. 6:1-7) reveal about God's nature and Israel's temptation? How might this impact us today?

STUDY 5 | TRUSTING THE LORD'S FAITHFULNESS

6. Why was God angry at Moses and what was his punishment (4:21-22)? Why does Moses call God a 'consuming fire' and 'jealous God' (4:23-24)?
7. What punishment will come to Israel if they forsake the Lord and what promise did God give to His people for their future days (4:25-29)?
8. What does Moses mean when he says, "The Lord your God is a merciful God" (4:31)? How is God's mercy highlighted in Jesus' time?
9. What rhetorical question did God want His people to ask (4:32-34) and why did He deliver them from slavery (4:35)?
10. Why are the Jews called God's 'chosen people' (4:37-38)? Why does Moses stress that obedience to God's commands brings "life" (4:39-40), and how is this concept reflected in Jesus' teachings?

Application:

In what ways are you tempted to forget God's faithfulness or become distracted by other things in your life? How can you actively remember and prioritize God's commands, especially when the pressures of life draw your attention elsewhere? What do you plead with God for in prayer (James 4:3)? How faithfully are you pleading with those with whom you live and work to know and follow God in covenant fidelity?

Closing Prayer:

Lord, we thank You for Your faithfulness throughout the ages and for Your warnings to keep us from falling into idolatry and forgetfulness. Help us to remember Your great works, to meditate on Your Word, and to teach the next generation the truths of Your gospel. Strengthen us in our daily walk to live lives that honour You in faithfulness, knowing You are a merciful and loving God. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

STUDY 6 | TRUSTING THE LORD'S COMMANDMENTS

DEUTERONOMY 4:43–5:33

Pray: Heavenly Father, as we open Your Word, we ask for wisdom and understanding. Help us to see the grandeur and the truth of Your commandments and how You intend them to shape our lives. Teach us, through Your Spirit, how to live in light of Your commands and to reflect You in all we pray, say and do. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Icebreaker

What are some rules or principles with which you grew up that helped shape your understanding of right and wrong? How do they compare to the moral guidance in the Ten Commandments?

Imagine...

...a ship navigating stormy waters. The captain has been given a map and a compass, essential tools to avoid the rocks and make it to the safety of the harbour. Without these essential tools, the ship would be left at the mercy of the waves, tossed around with no clear direction.

The Ten Commandments are like the compass and map that God gave to Israel and, through Jesus, the true North, to all His people. They guide us through the moral and spiritual storms of life, showing us how to respond to Jesus, live in a way that honours His heavenly Father and loves others. These commands are not arbitrary rules but reflect God's character and are the foundation for His covenant relationships with His people calling us to live as His image-bearers.

The Story so far...

Moses recounts the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, the foundational role they play in Israel's covenant relationship with God, a historical framework for understanding the commandments, and a reminder to Israel of their obligation to obey as part of their covenant with God. The passage culminates in the recitation of the Ten Commandments (5:6-21), setting out God's moral expectations, and concluding with a reaffirmation of Israel's responsibility to follow God's laws as they prepare to enter the land He promised them.

Israel is shown to have a unique relationship with God and a crucial responsibility to live out their calling by hearing and heeding to His law. In the New Testament, Jesus confirms His unique role in fulfilling the perfect law, reaffirms and deepens the moral essence of the commandments, and calls His followers to a life of holiness that fulfills the heart of the law (Matt. 5:17-20) empowered now by His Spirit.

1. Why are the cities of refuge mentioned in 4:43, and how do they relate to the context of the Ten Commandments?
2. Why do you think Moses gives a brief historical review of recent events with reference to Torah (Deut. 4:44-49)?
3. What is the significance of Moses' reminder in 5:1-5 about hearing the law directly from God?

STUDY 6 | TRUSTING THE LORD'S COMMANDMENTS

4. Why does Moses begin reciting the Ten Commandments in 5:6 with a reminder of God's deliverance from Egypt (cf. Eph. 2:8-10)?

Excursis - The Ten Commandments

Read Deuteronomy 5:1–21. The Ten Commandments (in relation to God 5:6-15, in relation to neighbour 5:16-21, cf. Exo. 20:1-17) are given context here to show how God's obligations are part of His covenant (5:1–21). These obligations, however, are only dead works of the flesh for us today if not fuelled by faith (Rom. 14:23). The Lord Jesus spoke of these very same obligations with His followers with the same goal as Moses: calling people to covenant fidelity and instructing them in how to do that in relationship with a holy God (Matt. 5:17–48).

5. What is the importance of the first commandment (5:7), "You shall have no other gods before me"? How does this apply to us today?
6. How might the third commandment, "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain" (5:11) reach beyond speech to lifestyle?
7. Why is the Sabbath command (5:12-15) linked to both creation and the deliverance from Egypt? How does Sabbath rest apply to us now?
8. How may the command to honour parents (5:16) reflect Israel's and our broader social responsibilities?

9. What do commands against murder, adultery, theft, and bearing false witness (5:17-20) reveal about God's concern for relationships?

10. What is the deeper meaning behind the command, "You shall not covet" (5:21)? How may this apply for Christian discipleship?

Application

How do you see the relevance of the Ten Commandments in your daily life? In what ways are you challenged to live more faithfully in response to God's grace and covenant with you through Christ? Which one of the Ten is the most difficult for you? Talk to one another and Jesus about it in prayer, following Him and His example in pursuing God's obligations, trusting Him and bringing Him glory in every way at all times.

Closing Prayer:

Lord, we thank You for Your Word and the commands You have given us. Help us to live in obedience to Your law, not as a means of earning Your favour, but in thankful response to Your grace in our lives. May we reflect Your character in our relationships, our work, and our worship. Guide us by Your Spirit to live in a way that honours You, in Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

STUDY 7 | TRUSTING THE LORD'S LOVE

DEUTERONOMY 6:1–7:11

Pray: Gracious God and our Loving Heavenly Father. We come before You, seeking to understand Your Word and Your love more deeply. Open our hearts to hear the command to love You with all that we are and to live in faithful obedience. May we be transformed by Your grace and led by Your Spirit. Teach us what it means to honour You as our Lord, that we may love you with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Icebreaker:

What is something you learned by heart as a child, perhaps a song, a prayer, or a lesson from your parents, that still shapes you today?

Imagine...

...a wedding ceremony where the couple exchanges vows. They commit to love, to honour, and to be faithful to one another, not just in words, but in actions for the rest of their lives. These vows become the foundation for their relationship. God similarly calls Israel to a special covenantal love relationship with Him, where love for God is not only expressed in devotion but in the obedience of their everyday lives.

This covenant relationship between Israel and God is rooted in God's grace. The commands that follow, especially the Shema (Deut. 6:4-5), are a call to a holistic love for God that shapes all aspects of life.

Jesus reaffirms the centrality of this love when He teaches how the greatest commandment is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:30-31 cf. Matt. 22, Luke 10). May we be shaped by His love this final Bible study. Only by His grace!

The Story so far...

God's call is for Israel to love Him with undivided loyalty. The Shema ("Listen," 6:4) and Vahavta ("and You shall love," 6:5-9) continue to call God's people to exclusive covenant fidelity and steadfast love (6:10-15). Shema is His call to Listen, where God commands Israel to love Him with all their heart, soul, and "muchness".

Moses emphasises the importance of teaching this love to future generations of Israel and warns against the dangers of forgetting their God amidst prosperity. Chapter 7 transitions into God's promise to drive out the nations before Israel and outlines Israel's obligation to remain faithful to God, rejecting idolatry and immorality, rather embracing His covenant commands.

In the New Testament these themes echo in fulfillment, particularly through Jesus' teachings on love and obedience. He longs for His followers to love God in enriching fullness and keeping His commands as evidence of this love (John 14:15, 1 John 5:3).

1. What is the significance of Moses' introduction in 6:1-3, where he connects obedience to the commandments with possessing the land?
2. Why is the proposition in 6:4, "The LORD our God, the LORD is one," central to Israel's faith? How does it relate to Christian theology?
3. What does it mean to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and strength" (6:5)? How does Jesus expand this teaching?

STUDY 7 | TRUSTING THE LORD'S LOVE

4. Why must God's commandments be taught to the next generation (6:6-9)?
5. What warning does Moses give in 6:10-12 about forgetting God in times of prosperity? How may his warning impact us today?
6. How does the command to fear the LORD and serve Him only (6:13) connect to Jesus' response to Satan during His temptation in the wilderness?
7. Why is Israel warned against testing God (6:16), and how does Jesus apply this teaching during His temptation?
8. What is the connection between obeying God's commands and Israel's witness to the nations (6:24-25)?
9. What does it mean that Israel is "a holy people" chosen by God (7:6). How is this concept applied to Jesus' people today?
10. Why does God command Israel to completely destroy the nations in 7:1-2? How may this relate to teaching on spiritual warfare now?

Application:

In what areas of your life do you need to deepen your love for God and express that love through greater obedience to His Word? How can you ensure your love for God shapes your actions, thoughts, and relationships? God's call to know Him personally and obey Him faithfully is the consistent appeal throughout the ages. How is God leading you to more faithfully hear and heed this call? How is God leading you to more faithfully proclaim His love and live His love out?

Closing Prayer:

Lord, we thank You for Your commands and the call to love You with all our heart, soul, and strength and love our neighbour. Help us to live out this love in every aspect of our lives. Strengthen our commitment to You and lead us to obey You in everything we do. May we be faithful witnesses of Your love and truth in the world. In Jesus' name, Amen.

RESOURCES

These are the commentaries used (and recommended*) in preparing these studies:

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*Miller, P.D. Deuteronomy: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Second Edition). John Knox Press: KY (2012)

Sacks, J. Covenant & Conversation: A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible. Maggid Books: CT (2019).

*Wright, C.J.H. Deuteronomy (Understanding the Bible Commentary Series, Second Edition) Baker Books: MI (2012).

These are the online resources used in developing these studies:

[BibleProject.com](https://www.bibleproject.com)

[Hebrew4Christians.com](https://www.hebrew4christians.com)

[ParashahProject.com](https://www.parashahproject.com)

[Wikipedia.com](https://www.wikipedia.com)

[MacGPT.com](https://www.macgpt.com)

These are the resources used as translation guides:

[HebrewGreekBible.online](https://www.hebrewgreekbible.online)

[BibleHub.com](https://www.biblehub.com)

[BibleGateway.com](https://www.biblegateway.com)



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