

Deuteronomy

Authorship: Moses

Date: c. 1446 BC – 1406 BC

The historical period during which Moses lived seems to be fixed with a fair degree of accuracy by 1 Kings. We are told that “the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel” was the same as “the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt” (1 Kings 6:1). Since the former was c. 966 BC, the latter—and thus the date of the exodus—was c. 1446 (assuming that the 480 in 1 Kings 6:1 is to be taken literally). The 40-year period of Israel’s wanderings in the desert, which lasted from c. 1446 to c. 1406, would have been the most likely time for Moses to write the bulk of what is today known as the Pentateuch.

Background: In about 1406 BC, having nearly completed their 40-year “sentence” of wilderness wondering (Numbers 15-36) due to their rebellion at Kadesh-Barnea (Numbers 13-14), the Israelites were encamped “in the land of Moab east of the Jordan River” (compare 1:5 with Numbers 36:13). Deuteronomy, which means “second law,” is a collection of history lessons and teachings by Moses, aimed especially at those Israelites who would have been younger than 20 at the time of the Exodus (Numbers 14:29-31), and therefore might never have heard a formal presentation of the law..

Purpose: (1) to give detailed instruction about God’s law and His covenant with Israel: (a) Genesis tells of Israel’s election; (b) Exodus tells of Israel’s redemption; (c) Leviticus tells of Israel’s sanctification; (d) Numbers tells of Israel’s direction; (e) Deuteronomy tells of Israel’s instruction. (2) To exhort Israel to pay close attention to God’s instruction (the words do, keep, and observe appear 177 times in Deuteronomy.); (3) To show that God rewards obedience and punishes disobedience.

Outline:

I. Sermon One (1:1-4:43)

- A. Remembering the wilderness (1-3)
- B. Remembering Sinai: A call to obedience (4:1-43)

II. Sermon Two (4:44-26:19)

- A. The Ten Commandments Reviewed (4:44-5:33)
- B. A call for wholehearted commitment (6)
- C. Blessings of the chosen people (7)
- D. Blessing of the chosen land (8)
- E. Remembering the rebellions (9)
- F. The Ten Commandments given again (10:1-11)
- G. A call for wholehearted commitment stated again (10:12-22)
- H. Love and obedience demanded and rewarded (11)
- I. False religions, true worship (12)
- J. False prophets (13)
- K. Various regulations (14-15)
- L. Three main festivals reviewed (16:1-17)
- M. Various regulations (16:18-25:19)
- N. Stewardship obligations (26)
- O. Stewardship obligations (26)

III. Sermon Three (27-28)

- A. Blessings and Curses (27-28)
- B. A call for commitment (29-30)

IV. Final Days of Moses (31-34)

- A. Deposition of the law; commission of Joshua (31)
- B. Song of Moses (32)
- C. Final blessings of Moses (33)
- D. Death of Moses (34)

The Shema - “Hear”

A Hebrew declaration in monotheism and allegiance to the only one true God: YHWH.

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one” (Deuteronomy 6:4 ESV).

The Doctrine of Two Ways
(or blessings and curses)

With the priest and the Ark of the Covenant in the valley between, half of the tribes were to stand on Mount Gerizim and the other half on Mount Ebal. Those on Mount Gerizim would pronounce blessings for obedience and those on Mount Ebal would pronounce curses on those who disobeyed the law.

Sources:

<https://www.biblica.com/resources/scholar-notes/niv-study-bible/intro-to-genesis/> (visited on: 09-08-2020).
 Arnold, Bill T. and Bryan E. Beyer, *Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999.
 Wilmington, Harold L. *Wilmington’s Bible Handbook*, Wheaton, Ill: Tyndale, 1997.