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Lessons from the **Book of Deuteronomy**

By Ken Raggio

Deuteronomy

One year before his death, Moses had thirty-nine years of experience leading Israel. His perspective was mature, and in Deuteronomy (meaning "repetition of this law"), he covered all the bases one more time. This book is very rich. Many primary codes and laws are explicitly documented. Moses emphatically admonished the people that God would bless them if they obeyed the commandments of the Lord, but warned of horrific curses if they rebelled. Even under New Testament grace, that principle still stands.

Deuteronomy 11:26 - "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse."

He Shall Fight For You

In the fortieth year of their wilderness journey, Moses stood before the Israelites and reminded them of their successes and failures since leaving Egypt. Although they were about to engage the Canaanites in many wars of conquest, Moses did not speak of military tactics. Instead, he preached to them about the rewards of trusting God and the evils of doubting God. Then, he prophesied: "God is going to fight for you!" God STILL fights for His people.

Deuteronomy 1:30 - "The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you..."

God Hears It All

God hears more than just the prayers we pray. He hears everything we say. It is possible to say all the right things in prayer, and then nullify them with negative talk. Let your words be "Yes, Yes," or "No, No." Make your everyday conversation support your prayers. Otherwise, your prayers will be rendered worthless.

Deuteronomy 1:34,35 - "And the LORD heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying, Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers."

I Will Not Give You Their Land

God rules the affairs of men. God told Moses not to meddle with the descendants of Esau or Lot who dwelled east of Jordan. "I have given..." their lands to them; and "I will not give you of their land." They had a divine posterity. Everyone must find their God-given place, and respect everyone else's place, too. You cannot have theirs.

Deuteronomy 2:5 - "Meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot breadth; because I have given mount Seir unto Esau for a possession."

When God Says "No"

Moses desperately wanted to go into the Promised Land, but God's punishment stood. God loves to hear and answer prayer, but we must understand that even prayer must sometimes yield to His greater sovereign purpose.

Deuteronomy 3:24-26 - "O Lord GOD ...I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter."

Seek Him, Find Him

Moses knew that Israel would be sorely tempted by the gods of the heathen. He sternly warned them that if they worshiped idols or images of any kind, or if they worshiped such as the sun, moon or stars, God would drive them out of the land and destroy them. Moses urged them to always quickly turn back to God anytime they erred, and God would save them.

Deuteronomy 4:29 - "But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul."

When Thou Art In Tribulation

Just before the second coming of Jesus Christ, will come a time called "Jacob's Trouble," (Daniel 12:1), better known as the Great Tribulation. This will precipitate a national spiritual revival for Israel.

Deuteronomy 4:30,31 - "When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are

come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them."

Afraid to Pray

The Israelites were terrified of the voice of God that spoke from Mount Sinai. They asked Moses to relay their prayers. They promised that they would obey whatever God told Moses to tell them. God knew better. "Oh, that there were such a heart in them!" He promised many, many blessings if they would simply walk in His commandments.

Deuteronomy 5:27 - "Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it."

The Lord is One

Jehovah is not Allah. [The Koran contradicts the Bible again and again.](#) Both cannot be true. Let the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob be God. He is the only one, true God. He is a singular spirit, ONE LORD, beside whom, there is no other. Jesus is the bodily incarnation of the one true God. Love Him with all your might.

Deuteronomy 6:4,5 - "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

In Time To Come

Moses published the Ten Commandments the second time in Deuteronomy 5. He emphasized that God's laws, testimonies, statutes and judgments were the script for a holy nation to come.

Deuteronomy 6:20-25 - "And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies...? Then thou shalt say unto thy son,the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments."

Saved By Entering Into Covenant

God completely destroyed Noah's hopelessly sinful generation. But He offered a holy covenant to Abraham, promising to show favor and make a great nation of his descendants, Israel, if they would enter into a covenant to keep His commandments. God jealously rules the earth and all mankind, and vows to destroy all nations who hate Him. He will give everything to those who love Him and keep His commandments.

Deuteronomy 7:9 - "Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments."

What Does Your Heart Say?

We usually think of prayer as the way we communicate our requests to God. In reality, God is influenced by all our words, spoken or not. He discerns our thoughts and intentions and acts accordingly. That is why we must be extremely careful of all our thoughts and words. God knows when our hearts are not pure. You do not have to say evil things out loud. God reads you like a book.

Deuteronomy 8:17,20 - "And thou say in thine heart, 'My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth,' ...so shall ye perish."

Things NOT to Say

God does not want to hear us making proud, false claims. He did not save us because we were good or righteous, but because He hates the wickedness of the heathen and will replace them with people who will sanctify themselves unto Him. Be thankful He considered you.

Deuteronomy 9:4 - "Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee."

Forty Days of Prayer

Most modern believers cannot comprehend a forty-day vigil of prayer and fasting. Nevertheless, it was the crucial key to Israel's survival. God had purposed to destroy the children of Israel for worshiping the golden calf, but Moses pressed hard on God. It worked. You can make excuses for anything, but when things get really critical, nothing works like prayer and fasting.

Deuteronomy 10:10 - "And I stayed in the mount, according to the first time, forty days and forty nights; and the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also, and the LORD would not destroy thee."

Praying to the Wrong God

Not long before the wilderness journey came to an end, Moses reminded the people of all the mighty works God did for them in the previous forty years. Then He issued a stern warning: do not EVER turn toward any other gods! In these modern times, there is no shortage of people who believe in prayer. But the problem lies in WHO they are praying to! Praying to the wrong god stirs God's worst wrath.

Deuteronomy 11:16 - "Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them."

Speak the Word

Moses taught the people to speak the Word of God continually in their homes and around their children, "...that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children." This is a commandment with a promised blessing attached. Teach your children the Word of the Lord. Speak it in your house continually.

Declare the mind and will of God by positive affirmations and prayer.

Deuteronomy 11:19 - "And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

Thou Shalt Rejoice

Here is one of the earliest directives for praise and worship. God certainly delights to hear our prayers, but He also wants us to bring our offerings and rejoice about what He has already done. Try that today!

Deuteronomy 12:18 - "But thou must eat them before the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates: and thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto."

False Gods and Deceivers

CAUTION! God allows deceivers to test our love for Him, even showing deceptive signs, wonders and miracles. God demanded that anyone who enticed an Israelite to follow another god was to be put to death. False prophets, dreamers, close friends, or even family members had to die. God despises our associating with false religions and perverse doctrines. Stay away from them.

Deuteronomy 13:5 - "...that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt."

No Markings On Your Flesh

God claims the human body as His property, and gives instructions concerning its appearance. "Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD," (Leviticus 19:28). Markings, cuttings, tattoos, and piercings, etc. were condemned as the ways of the heathen. Consecrate your body in holiness.

Deuteronomy 14:1,2 - "...ye shall not cut yourselves, ...For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth."

Forgiving Loans and Releasing Servants

God commanded Israel to forgive loans and release their servants every seventh year. He called it "the LORD'S release." He promised to bless and prosper those who obeyed this law, and to make Israel a lender and not a borrower; a ruler and not a servant, if they would comply. It reminds me of Jesus' words: "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." In His coming Kingdom, Jesus will release us from all our debts and oppressions. FOREVER FREE - at last!

Deuteronomy 15:1 - "At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release."

The Men of Israel

God required the men of Israel to faithfully execute their religious duties three times a year during the feasts of Unleavened Bread, Weeks, and Tabernacles, bringing their sacrifices to the Priests at the Tabernacle. He also instructed them to establish judges and officials in every city, who would judge with just judgment, having no respect of persons, not taking gifts or bribes, nor perverting the words of righteous men, not allowing idolatry in Israel. God is not the God of slackers, but of duty-driven men.

Deuteronomy 16:18 - "Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates."

Transgressing His Covenant

Christians love talking about "covenant" as if God's covenant means irrevocable blessings. From the beginning, the covenant was God's promise to bless His people IF they would faithfully love and obey Him. So covenant is a two-way agreement. You owe your part to the covenant. Covenant with God is worthless if you still love the world, the flesh or the devil.

Deuteronomy 17:2,3 - "If there be found among you, ...man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant, And hath gone and served other gods..."

Seeking Counsel from Men of God

Sometimes, God wants us to consult with those men He has ordained as ministers. They walk with God. They study His ways. They know His will. You can pray and search all over the place, but the answer may be in the house of God. They are only men, but God uses men. Men of God certainly know better than laymen. God made it that way.

Deuteronomy 17:9 - "And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and enquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment."

Diviners, Witches and Wizards

Never forget that God chose to raise up a holy people because He hates the ways of the heathen: paganism, idolatry, spiritualism and that whole lot (including Disney and Potter).

Deuteronomy 18:10-12 - "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. ...and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee."

A Prophet Like Moses

Moses prophesied that a prophet like himself would come. Paul said that

Jesus Christ is that prophet (Acts 3:20; 7:37). Jesus is the greatest prophet of all times, revealing the Kingdom of God.

Deuteronomy 18:15,18 - "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; ...I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."

Two or Three Witnesses

The laws of justice wield a heavy blow to a convicted wrong-doer. Because of its enormous power, the law must not be abused. God set safeguards to protect the innocent from unfair accusations and convictions. God would not allow a criminal to be convicted on the testimony of only one man. Multiple witnesses were required.

Deuteronomy 19:15 - "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established."

Be Not Afraid

Fear is a subject mentioned in almost every book of the Bible, because fear is deeply ingrained in the fiber of all people. It can become a fatal disease in the absence of faith in God. Trusting God is the antidote to fear. He is the best guardian you can possibly have. Be not afraid.

Deuteronomy 20:1 - "When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

Rebellious Sons

God called Israel to be holy, unlike heathen nations. When sons became rebellious, they provoked God's wrath and judgment.

Deuteronomy 21:18 - "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother ...say, ...our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die."

Dress Code

The twentieth century was a revolutionary period for gender identity. Never in history was there such a massive, radical shift in dress codes. Women in war defense jobs began wearing masculine garments. Hollywood starlets promoted the trend. Since that time, [sexual identities](#) have become muddled and homosexuality is epidemic. God says men should be men, women should be women.

Deuteronomy 22:5 - "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God."

Prayers that Backfire

God is never going to answer a prayer that contradicts His word, His will, or His promises. If you ask God to do something that is evil in His sight, do not be surprised if He does exactly the opposite of what you ask. God may turn your blessing into a curse, or your curse into a blessing. Sanctify your prayers by understanding and seeking His will.

Deuteronomy 23:5 - "Nevertheless the LORD thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the LORD thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the LORD thy God loved thee."

The Bill of Divorcement

God requires sexual faithfulness in marriage. Fornication or adultery betrays a marriage. God allows an innocent person to divorce one who is an adulterer. But, "...whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery," (Matthew 5:32). Jesus added that a woman who puts away her husband and marries another commits adultery (Mark 10:12). What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Deuteronomy 24:1 - "When a man ...hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand."

The House Of Him That Hath His Shoe Loosed

If any man in Israel died without leaving children, his brother was to take his widow and bear a child for his brother's namesake. If a man would not do this, the widow reported it to the city elders. They witnessed as she removed the man's shoe and spit in his face. His name was then called, "The house of him that hath his shoe loosed," (verse 10).

Deuteronomy 25:6 - "...the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel."

A Certificate Made by Prayer

Moses required Israel to pray a specific prayer shortly after they settled in the Promised Land. They must bring the first tithes of their crops to the Levites and certify that it was God who brought them into the land and blessed them, that God was their God, and that they were His people. Verbally certify (confirm) your relationship with God occasionally.

Deuteronomy 26:17 - "Thou hast avouched the LORD this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice."

Inaugurating the Promised Land

Moses instructed Israel to do several things upon entering the Promised Land. 1.) Keep all the Commandments I taught you. 2.) When you cross over Jordan, build a stone memorial, and write the Commandments on it. 3.) Build an altar, offer sacrifices and rejoice. 4.) Stand half the tribes on Mount Gerizim and recite the blessings I promised. 5.) Stand the other tribes on Mount Ebal and recite the curses I promised if you forsake. 6.) Have the Levites curse everyone who breaks the laws of God.

Deuteronomy 27:11 - "And Moses charged the people the same day..."

Blessings and Cursing

God's blessings are inextricably linked to obedience. Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments." You have to obey God to be blessed. He curses disobedience.

Deuteronomy 28:1,2,15 - "...if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments..., ...all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments..., ...that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee."

Moses Prophesied Of Nebuchadnezzar

Sometime around 1355 BC, Moses prophesied the invasion and conquest of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (ca. 587BC) as consequence for forsaking the LORD. Warnings from God should not be ignored.

Deuteronomy 28:47-52 - "Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God, ...The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, ...whose tongue thou shalt not understand; A nation of fierce countenance, ...which also shall not leave thee ...until he have destroyed thee. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down." V. 63 "...and ye shall be plucked from off the land."

Shamed Before All Nations

Moses warned the people that if they failed to keep their covenant with the LORD, eventually God would remove them from the Promised Land and all the nations would know it was because of their backslidings. That prophecy has been profoundly fulfilled. It is a solemn warning to backsliding Christianity, even to a nation like America.

Deuteronomy 29:24-25 - "Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers."

The Word is in Thy Mouth

Moses prophesied lavish blessings on the people if they obeyed God's commandments, but cruel curses if they rebelled. Our divine purpose can only be realized through faithful obedience to God. Disobedience wrecks that. But obedience is entirely possible by believing and speaking the word of God. Speak the word daily. Life and blessing is in it.

Deuteronomy 30:11 - "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off, ...But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."

The Song of Moses

Sometimes prayer is difficult. It would be wonderful if God would just put words in our mouth. Sometimes He does. God told Moses to write a song for Israel to sing, so that when they found themselves in evil times, they could turn to God and recite all the words Moses had given them. Deuteronomy 32 is that song. Try it yourself.

Deuteronomy 31:19 - "Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel."

Fire in Hell

The Old Testament concept of Hell is two-fold. The Hebrew word "sheol" is translated "hell" in more than half the verses it is used, and "grave" in the others. In most cases you can clearly see the references to burning, fire, pain, destruction and punishment. A lifeless human body may rest quietly in its grave, but that person's sinful soul will be tormented endlessly in hell. Moses taught that God's anger causes the fire that burns in hell.

Deuteronomy 32:22 - "...a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell."

Moses Blesses The Tribes

Each of the twelve tribes of Israel had a divine posterity. Moses took time to speak to them again before he died. Each tribe received a blessing, except for Simeon. Jacob, their father, had prophesied that Levi and Simeon would be scattered because of the war over Dinah at Shechem. Moses affirmed that Levi would be scattered among all the tribes, but completely ignored Simeon. Over time, Simeon left an erratic history. Blessings and curses are very real.

Deuteronomy 33:1 - "And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death."

The Death of Moses

At 120, Moses viewed the Promised Land from Mounts Nebo and Pisgah, across Jordan, near Jericho. He could see where several tribes would settle. Then he died in the mountain. God buried him in a secret place near Bethpeor. Michael the archangel contended with Satan over Moses' body, rebuking him in the name of the Lord (Jude 1:9). Peter, James and John saw Moses standing on the mount with Jesus 1400 years later.

Deuteronomy 34:5 - "So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD."

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Raggio". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small dash below it.

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