



BIBLETRACK 1

TALK 2 THE PENTATEUCH (PART 2) DR ANDREW EMERTON

Talk Outline

Introduction to Deuteronomy

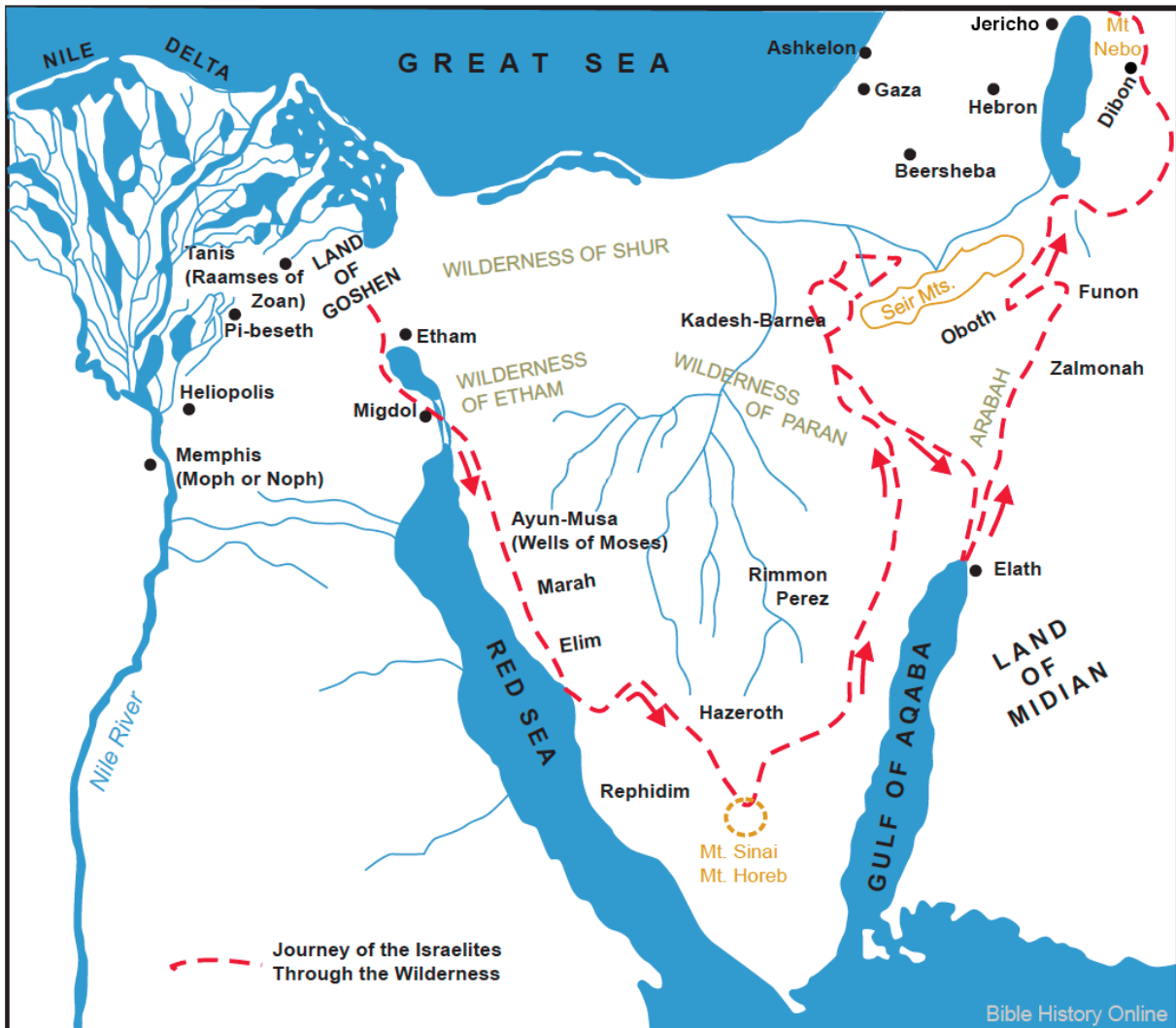
- Final book of Pentateuch
- Majority of book centred around Moses
- *'These are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel beyond the Jordan'* (Deuteronomy 1:1)
- Name 'Deuteronomy' means 'second law'

'Beyond the Jordan in the land of Moab, Moses undertook to expound this law as follows' (Deuteronomy 1:5).

i. Significance of text

- Death of Moses
- Executive summary: Deuteronomy reviews Israel's past failure and looks to the future
- Comparison of Deuteronomy 1:19–46 with Numbers 13–14
- Journey of Israel
- Learn the lessons from the past

ROUTE OF THE EXODUS OF THE ISRAELITES FROM EGYPT



'So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe' [Deuteronomy 4:1].

'So be careful not to forget the covenant that the Lord your God made with you, and not to make for yourselves an idol ... if you act corruptly by making an idol in the form of anything you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to occupy' (Deuteronomy 4:23, 25-26).

ii. Origins of text

- Deuteronomy considered to come from one source
- Many theories about when Deuteronomy was written
- Possibly written around time of King Josiah 7th Century BC

'You must demolish completely all the places where the nations whom you are about to dispossess served their gods, on the mountain heights, on the hills, and under every leafy tree. Break down their altars, smash their pillars, burn their sacred poles with fire, and hew down the idols of their gods, and thus blot out their name from their places. You shall not worship the Lord your God in such ways. But you shall seek the place that the Lord your God will choose out of all your tribes as his habitation to put his name there. You shall go there, bringing there your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and your donations, your votive gifts, your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and flocks. And you shall eat there in the presence of the Lord your God, you and your households together, rejoicing in all the undertakings in which the Lord your God has blessed you' [Deuteronomy 12:2-7].

- Unity of the text

Understanding Deuteronomy

i. Deuteronomy as Law

- Deuteronomy 17:18 mentions a copy of the law for future kings
- Moses reflects on the giving of the law at Horeb: Deuteronomy 5–11
- Deuteronomy 12–26 parallels structure with the 10 commandments, proposed by Kaufman:

CHAPTER:	REFLECTS COMMANDMENT:
12–13	1, 2 and 3
14–16	4
16–18	5
19–22	6
22–23	7
23 and first part of 24	8
Rest of chapter 24 and beginning of 25	9
25	10

ii. Deuteronomy as sermon

- Moses last words to the nation of Israel
- Deuteronomy is three speeches:
 - Deuteronomy 1:6–4:43

'The Lord our God spoke to us at Horeb saying ...' (Deuteronomy 1:6).

- Deuteronomy 5:1–28:69

'Moses convened all Israel and said to them ...' (Deuteronomy 5:1).

- Deuteronomy 29:1–30:20

'These are the words of the covenant ... Moses summoned all Israel and said to them...' (Deuteronomy 29:1–2).

- Impassioned plea for Israel to not repeat mistakes of the past

iii. Deuteronomy as prophecy

'Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face' (Deuteronomy 34:10).

- Moses is speaking God's word to Israel
- Deuteronomy 18:15–22: Moses as the typical prophet for the nation

Themes in Deuteronomy

i. Love of God

'There is no doubt that the love of God is one of the most striking features of the book of Deuteronomy.' (Gordon Wenham, *Exploring the Old Testament*, p.130.)

'It was not because you were more numerous than any other people that the Lord set his heart on you and chose you ... It was because the Lord loved you ... that the Lord has bought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery' (Deuteronomy 7:7-8).

'Know therefore that the Lord your God is your God, the faithful God who maintains covenant loyalty with those who love him and keep his commandments ... and who repays in their own person those who reject him' (Deuteronomy 7:9-10).

- In Deuteronomy to love is to be obedient
- John's Gospel: *'If you love me you, will keep my commandments'* (John 14:15)
- *'Moreover, the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live'* (Deuteronomy 30:6)
- Echoes of this message in the rest of the Old Testament and in to the New Testament

ii. Worship of God

- From beginning of Israel's relationship with God He is to be worshipped

'... there he built an altar to the Lord and invoked the name of the Lord' (Genesis 12:8).

- Jacob built an altar at Shechem in Genesis 33 and worships at a pillar at Bethel in Genesis 35
- Worship is an appropriate response to an encounter with God
- Passover as form of worship

'... You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord' (Exodus 12:14).

- Exodus 15: song of praise
- Worship is natural response to God
- Centralisation of worship
- God is at the heart of His people: tabernacle
- Instructions for worship: Leviticus
- Worship is linked to holiness

'You shall fear the Lord your God; him alone you will worship; to him you shall hold fast and by his name you shall swear' (Deuteronomy 10:20).

- Leviticus: practical holiness
- Day of atonement
- Link between atonement and blood

'For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you for making atonement for your lives on the altar; for, as life, it is the blood that makes atonement' (Leviticus 17:11).

- Worship is central to the developing life of Israel

'He is your praisee; he is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things that your own eyes have seen' (Deuteronomy 10:21).

iii. Justice and compassion for all

- Direct echo of Abrahamic promise of blessing to the nations
- Focus on compassion for the poor
- Sabbath rest for everyone

'[God] executes justice for the orphan and widow loves the strangers providing them with food and clothing. You also should love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt' (Deuteronomy 10:18–19).

- Parallel in Exodus 23:9: 'You shall not oppress a resident alien'
- Deuteronomy goes further and says to love the stranger

'the Levities ... as well as the resident aliens, the orphans, and the widows in your towns may come and eat their fill' (Deuteronomy 14:29).

- Everyone should be able to join in the worship of God
- Blessing to the nations

'You shall not abhor any of the Edomites, for they are your kin. You shall not abhor any of the Egyptians, because you were an alien residing in their land' (Deuteronomy 23:7).

- More negative understanding of how Israel deals with those occupying the land

'... He will destroy the nations before you' (Deuteronomy 31:3–6).

Deuteronomy calls the Israelites:

- To love God and to be obedient to him
- To worship God and to put him first
- To seek justice for the oppressed
- Deuteronomy 28: warnings

'The Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other; and there you shall serve other gods, of wood and stone, which neither you nor your ancestors have known. Among those nations you shall find no ease, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There the Lord will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and a languishing spirit' (Deuteronomy 28:64–65).

'See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess' (Deuteronomy 30:15–18).

- Lots of potential but curse of Genesis 3 is hanging over Israel's relationship with God

Acknowledgments

Gordon Wenham, *Exploring the Old Testament – Volume 1: A Guide to the Pentateuch* (SPCK, 2003), p.130.

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