**Survey of Old Testament**

**Deuteronomy 1-3 Moses Reminds Them of God’s Guidance**

1. The very first phrase in the book, “These be the words which Moses spake”, gives an insight into what is to follow. Deuteronomy is a book of sermons. Israel is gathered on the east bank of Jordan, ready to enter the Promised Land. It had taken them thirty-eight years to get there since their rebellion at Kadesh-barnea. Verse 2 indicates that the journey would normally have taken eleven days. But they had wandered in the wilderness, led by a cloud during the day and by a pillar of fire at night.
2. Moses reminds the people of their problems and victories during their time of wandering in the wilderness.
3. Moses mentions the spies next. The people had asked for the spies; it had not been Moses’ idea (although he approved), nor had it been God’s idea. When Jehovah heard their request, He approved; and the spies were sent to search out the Promised Land. Moses gives a partial summary of the report of the spies, noting the good aspects of the land.
4. Moses describes Israel’s rebellion first by describing their murmuring in the tents (Num 14:2), and second, by referring to their outward rebellion (Num 14:4).
5. In Deuteronomy chapter 2 a tender picture of the Lord’s graciousness is seen in the phrase “thou hast lacked nothing”. The people who had insulted God and had not trusted Him lacked nothing, for the Lord had given them food, clothing, and protection. The Lord knew their path in the great wilderness, and for forty years He had taken care of them.
6. Moses traces the history of Israel and her travels through the nations. God gave a divine injunction not to attack Edom, Moab, or Ammon; for Israel might have coveted their land and settled down outside of the Promised Land. These people were blood relatives of Israel. The command “now rise up” was given after the thirty-eight years in the wilderness. It must have been a tremendous encouragement to journey with a purpose after having wandered for so long. The main purpose during the thirty-eight years was to allow unfaithful Israel to die.
7. Deuteronomy 2:15–23 A race of giants is mentioned as living in these territories. Zamzummin means “to murmur and meditate,” which implies demon worship and communication with spirits. These enemies had not died a natural death. The Lord destroyed them.
8. The Jews were kind to these nations when they arrived, offering to pass through peacefully. When the nations attacked them though, God conquered them.
9. Note that Joshua received a special commission at this time. Moses prayed to be allowed to enter the land, but God would not permit it.

**Deuteronomy 4–5 Moses Reminds Them of God’s Glory and Greatness**

1. In this section, Moses takes the nation back to Sinai where God’s glory and greatness were revealed, and where the nation trembled at God’s Law.
2. The people were in danger of forgetting the glory and greatness of God (4:9, 23, 31). Moses points out three dangers: 1. Forgetting the Word (4:1–13).  2. Turning to idols (4:14–49). 3. Neglecting His Law (5:1–33)

**Deuteronomy 6 Moses Reminds Them of God’s Goodness**

1. Verses 10–12 illustrate a basic weakness of human nature: we take God’s blessings for granted. “Beware lest you forget the Lord!” How prone we are to think that our wisdom and our strength have gotten us all that we have. Too often we want to enjoy the blessings, but we do not want to obey the One who gives us the blessings!
2. “God … is a jealous God” (v. 15). This takes us back to Sinai (Ex. 20:5) where God entered into covenant relationship with Israel. Just as a husband has the right to be jealous over his wife, so God has the right to be jealous over His people. See Josh. 24:19 and James 4:5. Idolatry is spiritual adultery, and Israel was often guilty of this sin.
3. The parents were to remind their children of what God had done for the nation, just as Moses was that day reminding Israel of God’s care (vv. 20–25). Verses 6–9 make it clear that the Word was to be made a part of the home, the center of conversation, and the means of instructing the children to love the Lord and obey Him.

**Deuteronomy 7 Compromise with the Enemy**

1. It was God’s purpose to drive out the heathen nations and establish Israel in Canaan. But He had to warn Israel to utterly destroy these nations and in no way compromise with them. There was a two-fold reason for this complete destruction: (1) the nations were wicked and ripe for judgment (Gen. 15:16; cf. Deut. 9:4–5); and (2) if left in the land, the nations would lead Israel into sin. People who do not understand the judgment of God or the awfulness of sin argue that God was “wicked” to destroy these nations. If they understood the sinfulness of these pagan religions and the way these nations had resisted God, such critics would instead be grateful that Israel wiped them out.
2. This principle of separation runs throughout the Bible; God separated light from darkness (Gen. 1:4). He commanded Israel to be separate from the other nations (Ex. 23:20–23; 34:11–16). He commanded the church to be separate from the world (2 Cor. 6:14–7:1; see Rev. 18:4). When God called Abraham to found the Jewish nation, He separated him from the heathen around him. God promises to bless when His people are separated from sin (Deut. 7:12–16). Fear usually leads to compromise; we “give in” that we might protect ourselves. Moses warns the people not to be afraid of the enemy because God will be with Israel to give them the victory.

**Deuteronomy 8 Prosperity and Self-satisfaction**

1. In this section Moses warns his people about the perils of prosperity. They would forget the forty years of God’s care, when He alone provided food and clothing. They would even forget God’s chastening hand when they had sinned. And this forgetting would lead them into sin: in their prosperity and blessing in the “land of milk and honey,” they would become self-satisfied and think their own strength had accomplished all these things. Is this sin not with us today?

**Deuteronomy 9:1–10:11 Pride**

1. After they had conquered the heathen nations in Canaan, Israel would be tempted to be proud, thinking it was because of their own righteousness that God had given the victory.
2. Moses reminds them that their victories will all be by the grace of God. To begin with, God would give them the land to fulfill His promises to their fathers (Gen. 15), promises that He had made because of His grace.

**Deuteronomy 10:12–11:32 Deliberate Disobedience**

1. This section is Moses’ closing appeal before he starts to review and apply the various laws that will govern their lives in the Promised Land. “I will be giving many laws,” Moses is saying, “but the Lord actually requires only this: fear Him, love Him, serve Him, and He will bless you” (v. 12). Moses makes it clear in chapter 11 that the real issue is the heart: if they truly loved God, they would obey His Word (John 14:21).

**Deuteronomy 12 The command concerning a central place of worship**

1. The main emphasis in this chapter is on the place where Israel should worship. God demands that Israel worship in a specific geographical place. I think we see the local church in this chapter. God had a place for public worship in the Old Testament, so He also has a place for corporate worship in the New Testament. In the Old Testament the place was central; in the New Testament it is local.

**Deuteronomy 13 Commands Concerning False Prophets**

1. Moses warns Israel against two sins in this chapter. First, he warns them against the false prophet who would lead them away from the Lord; and second, he warns them against the danger of idols if they do not eliminate them from the cities that they occupy.

**Deuteronomy 14 Commands Concerning Food**

1. In this chapter, Moses deals with foods, prescribing which were acceptable and which were prohibited to Israel. The Israelites could not eat anything that was abominable. During the time of Moses, however, Israel manifested their separation as children of God by abstaining from certain meats. The dietary laws are no longer applied today but are still symbolic to the Christian, who should not feed upon the filth of this world, but upon Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life.
**Deuteronomy 15 Commands Concerning the Sabbatical Year**
2. Here Moses gives the regulations regarding the year of release (every seventh year). Israelites were not to be pressed to pay their debts during this year. The phrase “At the end” is included because debts were not paid until the crops were gathered and the farmer had made his profit. However, the seventh year was different.
3. This does not signify a remission of the debt, or that debtors were to be released from all claims against them. It meant simply that the time of payment was extended for one year. At the end of seven years all of the debts that had been contracted were extended for another year. The debts were forgiven in the year of jubilee (every fiftieth year). This was seven sabbatical years plus one (Lev 25:10).