



# Bible Readers Club

Covenant Presbyterian Church

Week

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## Deuteronomy 1-17 & Deuteronomy 18-34

Week

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Dear Friends, We come in our reading now to the Book of Deuteronomy, the last Book of what is called the Pentateuch (the 1<sup>st</sup> five books of the Bible) or what Jews traditionally call “The Books of the Law.” The name “Deuteronomy” means “Second Law” which clues us in that it contains a second presentation of Israel’s History with God and of God’s regulations for right living as His people which we have already read in Genesis through Numbers.

Some have seen this book as a kind of “farewell speech” from Moses to his people. It offers a deep and consistent expression of the relationship between God and His people captured by the word “covenant.” The Living God has acted to save His people, He has promised His covenant faithfulness to them, and He has called them to live in steadfast covenant loyalty to Him. The stipulations of His Law are intended to help them live in this wholesome covenant relationship for God’s glory and their benefit.

It is particularly interesting to note that the whole of Deuteronomy follows the basic patterns of Hittite treaties between kings and vassals from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Millenium B.C. In this way it presents Yahweh as Israel’s sovereign Lord, King, Defender and Judge and Israel as His loyal servant whose absolute loyalty is required and whose betrayal will be met by severe consequences. As you read along, you can see the outline of this treaty form:

Chapters 1-3 – Historical prologue, reviewing the parties’ past relations

Chapters 4-11 – General presentations of treaty stipulations

Chapters 12-26 – Details of the treaty stipulations

Chapter 27 – Instructions for recording the treaty

Chapter 28:1-14 – Treaty sanctions: Blessings invoked for loyalty

Chapter 28:15-68 – Treaty sanctions: Curses invoked for breaking the treaty

Chapter 29-30 – General terms of treaty repeated

Chapter 31-34 – Provisions for continuing the treaty through future generations

Deuteronomy is an important book, mentioned more than 80 times in the New Testament and providing the content for the daily recitation for observant Jews called the “Shema” (which means “hear” or “listen”)...

*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.*

(6:4-9)

*So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today—to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul—then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil. I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied. (11:13-15)*

May your reading in God’s Word this week bring refreshment to your heart, satisfaction to your soul and strength to your life.

**Pastor Jay**