Alright, welcome to the Bible in Five. You are going to be spending about two weeks reading the book of Deuteronomy. You know it 34 chapters, so it’s kind of long. It has a big section of laws for ancient Israel in the middle. So it might seem kind of intimidating or boring while you are reading especially the middle section. But this is actually very powerful book. It is actually one of the books of the Bible that repeats the word “love” more than almost any other book. I will talk about why in just a second.

So you remember the setting where the people are? They have come from Mount Sinai, they are in the wilderness right now and they are just about to go to the Promised Land. So Moses has been leading people to on the way to the Promised Land. They are basically standing right on the border and they are looking across the Jordan River into the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy is sort of like, I think of it as basically, the locker room speech before the big game. So it’s Moses and people right before they are going to go into the Promised Land. It’s three speeches of Moses; three separate speeches that he gives to the people as a rally to rally the people before they go into the land. Each of the three parts of the book is pretty clear how it fits in to that rallying speech.

So chapters 1 to 11 are kind of like a little short retelling the story of people of Israel so far. How God showed grace to them, how he rescued them out of slavery in Egypt, how he has been faithful to them in the wilderness even though they were rebellious and how he is going to bring them into the Promised Land.

These chapters are very powerful in that they call Israel to remember the love that God has had towards them, showing grace, and rescuing them. So what he calls to do in these chapter is when you get into the Promised Land don’t forget but remember Yahweh’s his love for you, how he has shown grace to you, how he provided love for you. The word “remember” or the word “forget” appears over and over and over especially in these chapters but throughout of the whole book. So this is Moses
passionate plea to the people to remember the love of God shown to them in rescuing them and to not forget what he has done for them.

So what essentially happens as you enter chapter 12 is a long block, 14 chapters of chapters 12 through 26, actually I guess that is fifteen chapters, many chapters of laws. Now you may think, “No, wait there are already laws in Leviticus and Numbers and Exodus there is more laws?” Yes, dude there more laws there actually 613 of them total in the five books of the Torah.

Basically there are the laws for the generation of people who are going to go into the land. A lot of them are repetition or rehashing the laws that you read in Numbers or that you read in the book of Exodus. These laws have as their main concern some of the same themes that you already had. God wants his people to be holy, that is, distinct, different than the world and the nations around them. In a number of areas ritual purity like the book of Leviticus focused on but also on moral purity. They were to be a nation of justice and generosity and so on. So that’s most of these laws do.

They are all set in the context of ancient Near Eastern farming culture. So you can’t just pluck these laws out and think, “O, this God’s law for all people of all time” or something like that. No, these are the laws given to the people of Israel as they enter the Promised Land. Obeying is their way of responding to God’s love and their way of remembering.

The capstone of the book here is in chapters 27 through 34 and this is Moses’ last speech. Chapters 32 and 33 are especially important because they are two long poems attributed to Moses. Basically they are kind of like a musical. He is singing. One of them is distinctly a song. It is chapter 32. In these chapters Moses calls people to obey. You’re going to go into the Promised Land. Are you going to obey or you are not going to obey? Are you going to choose life or are you going to choose death. Are you going to choose blessing or are you going to choose curse? The choice is up to you, whether or not Israel is going to obey the laws.

In these songs right here Moses kind of tips his hat, he says I know how the story is going to go. The people are not going to obey the laws they are going to be rebellious
just like they were in the wilderness. Things are not going to go well in the Promise Land. They are going to worship gods, they are going to turn away and they are going to be carried away into exile. Moses says, “I know this what’s going to happen.”

But he has very important qualification he gives these final chapters, “but I know that God will be faithful to do something in the peoples’ hearts. One day the people would be able to truly obey and love and remember God’s grace and actually live it out. So he talks about how something is going to happen to people’s heart in the future. He prays for it, he hopes for it and he calls the people to anticipate what God can do in their hearts.

So the book ends with Moses dying. He doesn’t get to enter the Promised Land. The book kind ends on a cliff hanger. God’s people has been rescued by his grace. They been called to obey, to be a holy people. They are about to enter the Promised Land. They are about to enter the playing field after being in the locker room. They have a new leader, Joshua, who is a big figure in the next book.

That’s how the Torah ends. So remember the whole big story: God is trying to rescue the world and bring blessing and salvation to all nations through this family. This family is going into the Promise Land. How they are going to behave? What they are going to do? God’s plan for the whole world rides on what these people are going to do in the Promise Land. So it’s kind of page turner, bite your finger nails. What’s going to happen? Turn the page to the next book and that will be the next “Bible in Five.” So see you next time.