

Book of Deuteronomy

I like to paint especially with watercolor. When my boys were small, I drew a few paintings of cartoon characters for them. In each painting, I wrote down a Bible verse that matches the theme of the painting. I hung them on the wall right in front of their bedroom. I think this is a very good way to remind them of God's word. Actually, one of the applications in the book of Deuteronomy described similar method.

Book of Deuteronomy was written about 1400B.C. by Moses. Deuteronomy means "second law" in Greek. The first four chapters are about Moses reviewed the past including the exodus and wandering in the wilderness. He urged them to obey God. Chapters 5-28 are about Moses restated the Ten Commandments. He included some details on the instructions for a holy living. The consequences and penalties are also stated for the Israelites. Then, Moses in chapters 29 to 30 committed themselves as a nation to obey the Laws and place God as the top priority. Chapters 31 to 34 described the change of leadership, Moses to Joshua. Joshua was commissioned, and Moses blessed the tribes. Finally, God showed Moses the promise land even though he can not enter it.

There are a lot of contents in this book. Many are focused on the law and the applications for the Israelites at that time including laws for worship and offering, marriage/laws in relationship, justice, witness criteria, etc. It also included a section about setting up a system with Kingship for the country (Deut. 17:14-20) which expected to happen (I Samuel). Today, we want to focus on the key theme and few applications found in Deuteronomy for today's living.

1) The Commandments

a. Second time the commandments was delivered

The first time the ten commandments were given is shown in Exodus 20. Here in Deuteronomy, Moses repeated it in chapter 5 to this new generation that was ready to enter the promised land. The overall summary of the law is stated in chapter 6:5 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." Moses also stated the covenant God made with the Israelites that is bilateral, unlike the one made with Abraham

that is unconditional. God would keep His promise to bless them if they remained faithful.

b. God's teaching was applicable in Jesus' time as well as today

Jesus cited Deut. 6:5 as the greatest commandment. Jesus used the verses in Deuteronomy during His trial in the wilderness. As stated in Matt. 4:1-11, He used Deut. 8:3, Deut. 6:16 and Deut. 6:13 to fight against the devil's temptations. Similarly, we can use God's commandments and Words to keep us Holy today.

2) Look back and look forward

Chapters 1 to 4 are mainly about Moses talked about the past. These 40 years the Lord your God has been with you, and you have not lacked anything (Deut. 2:7). However, the Israelites failed and stayed in wilderness for about 38 years due to disobedience. Later chapters of this book described Moses was giving the forward-looking view to the new generation. God set the blessings and curses before them when they arrive the promised land, and reminded them they need to love and obey God. It is important for us to remember our past especially our blessings from God, and to look forward with a positive and joyful heart by trusting God. He will bless you when you follow Him.

3) How many times I have to tell you

Parents often say to the children "How many times I have to tell you!". It is not easy for people to remember and follow teachings. Moses told the Israelites the laws, but it didn't mean they have listened and followed. There is a better way to remind them as stated in Deut. 6:4-9. "Write them (commandments) on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates" (Deut. 6:9). The Bible verse paintings that I hanged on the wall implemented what Deut. 6:9 described. It is like God tells you His word every time you walk by. This helps my children as well as myself to remember God's Words.

In conclusion, the Israelites were reminded of the laws again. God wants the Israelites as well as us to know and remember His words so that we can love and obey Him. In return, we will have blessings.