

## THEOLOGICAL OUTLINE OF DEUTERONOMY<sup>1</sup>

1. **Consider:** a review of God's faithfulness (1.6–4.40)
2. **Covenant:** an exposition of the law (5–26)
3. **Commence:** preparations for renewing the covenant (27.1–28.68)
4. **Commit:** an exhortation to obedience (29.2–30.20)

**Chapter 1** rehearsed the Kadesh-Barnea predicament, “the fateful decisions that put Israel on the plains of Moab instead of already occupant in the promised land.” (my summary of the chapter)

**Chapters 2-3** rehearsed the recent past, the victories over Sihon and Og, which is “the core of Moses' first sermon, a look at recent events that put Israel on the plains of Moab, ready to march across the Jordan to occupy the promised land.”

Why do you think Moses focuses his farewell message on these events?

Today we look at **chapter 4**, the conclusion of Moses' first sermon in Deuteronomy.

Dt 6.4-5 is very well known as “the Shema” — “Hear!”

Dt 6.4 ¶ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: <sup>5</sup> And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. (KJV)

The word *shema* occurs 92 times in the book of Deuteronomy, including 9 times in Dt 4, our chapter tonight.

Dt 4.1 ¶ “Now, O Israel, **listen** to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you to perform, so that you may live and go in and take possession of the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you.

Occurrences in Dt 4: 1, 6, 10, 12, 28, 30, 32, 33 (2), 36 (2)

“You have heard, now hear!”

Another key word is “keep” or “watch” found 7 times in Dt 4: 2, 6, 9 (2), 15, 23, 40

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from an outline in Lawrence O Richards, *The Bible Readers Companion*, electronic ed. (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1991), 117.

“Keep the commandments and keep yourselves.”

## Deuteronomy 4 summarized by paragraphs

1. Opening exhortation: hold fast to the Lord and live (1-4)
2. Observe the statutes of the Lord that make you unique among the nations (5-8)
3. Give heed to yourself:
  - a. So that you do not forget Sinai (9-14)
  - b. So that you do not act corruptly [and make a visible image of the invisible God] (15-20)
  - c. So that you do not forget the covenant (23) [illustration: my own punishment] (21-24)
4. When you fail, and are scattered, return to the Lord (25-31)
5. The logic of complete obedience (32-40)

The chapter concludes with Moses assigning the sanctuary cities on the east side of the Jordan (41-43) and then offering a preamble to the lengthy second sermon (44-49).

**The concept of “the land”** — *ha ‘eretz* (In Israel, there is a daily newspaper called, “Haaretz” – “the Land”)

1. Listen to the statutes so that you may possess the land (4.1)
2. God gave you the statutes so you could live in the land (4.5)
3. The Lord commanded me to teach the statutes so you would do them in the land (4.14)
4. The Lord would not allow me to enter the land (4.21) [because Moses did not obey]

Dt 4.22 “For **I will die** in this **land**, I shall not cross the Jordan, but **you shall cross and take possession of this good land.**”

5. When you have lived long in the land, but act corruptly... [judgement is coming] (4.25)

Dt 4.26 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will surely perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. You shall not live long on it, but will be utterly destroyed.

6. God has done great things for you, driving out the pagans, giving you this land (4.38, *cf.* 4.32-37)

Last, there is another word for the land used in the last verse of the sermon:

Dt 4.40 “So you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may live long on the **land** which the LORD your God is giving you for all time.”

“Erets (אֶרֶץ), which is very largely used, signifies a territory, or even the whole earth. It is systematically adopted by Moses and other writers in the expression, ‘A land flowing with milk and honey.’ Adamah (אֲדָמָה) properly means the soil, regarded as a productive agent. It is used of the land or ground in the sense in which a farmer would speak of it. This word is used with remarkable consistency of the land of Canaan, of the Jew’s own land, and of the fruits of the land.”<sup>2</sup>

- When *eretz* is used as “a territory” it depicts Canaan as the political location of the nation.
- When *adamah* is used, it signifies Canaan as the productive ground that allows Israel to live.

The big point of the OT call to hear and obey was so that Israel might live long in the land.

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Baker Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament : Their Bearing on Christian Doctrine*. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1998), 261.