

Text: Dt 31.1-30

THEOLOGICAL OUTLINE OF DEUTERONOMY¹

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)

We've concluded the major addresses of Moses. Before we get into tonight's chapter, I'll give an outline of the rest of the book:

1. Leadership Transition (31)
2. The Song of Moses (32)
3. The Blessing of Moses (33)
4. The Death of Moses (34)

As I look ahead, we might have to break the Song of Moses into two parts, it is quite long. In any case, you can see the path forward to the end.

Today: *Leadership Transition*

Proposition: Men's ministries are limited in time. Wise transition builds for eternity.

I. Moses' Last Counsels (1-13)

- A. To Israel: Trust God (1-6)
- B. To Joshua: Trust God (7-8)
- C. To Levi: Proclaim the Law (9-13)

Questions and comments:

1. What repeated words form the heart of Moses' counsel?
be strong and courageous
2. What basis did Moses offer for this confidence? (see v. 4)
God's enabling the victories over Sihon and Og
3. What did God offer as a key to perpetuating confidence in future generations?
reading again and again the word of God

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

“An unusually full account of this being done in later times (and perhaps an almost unique instance) is that of Neh 8:13–9:38. Having brought at least a measure of political and religious stability to the postexilic Jewish community, Ezra and Nehemiah convened a great throng for the Feast of Tabernacles and, in connection with it, read from the ‘Book of the Law of God’ (Neh 8:18). There can be little doubt that this was the covenant text of the Book of Deuteronomy (cf. 8:1, 14). Once the reading was over, the people confessed and repented of their sins as a community (9:1–3) whereupon the Levites, as their forebears had done on the occasion of the invocation of blessing and curses at the beginning (Deut 27:9–14), led the assembly in a ceremony of covenant renewal (Neh 9:5–37). Having heard the address, the people, leaders and all, made a ‘binding agreement,’ put it in writing, and affixed their seals to it (v. 38). Thus one generation at least took the instruction about covenant renewal seriously though the record of history is silent about other times when this might have occurred in precisely this way (see, however, 2 Kgs 23:1–3 = 2 Chr 34:29–33).”²

II. YHWH’s Last Assignment (14-23)

- A. Joshua and Moses called (14)
- B. Disobedience prophesied (15-19)
- C. Song of Moses commissioned (20-22)
- D. Joshua Commissioned (23)

Questions and comments:

1. Why did God call Moses to write out his song and teach it to Israel?
because of the prophecy: Israel would fall away
2. What does this suggest to us about the power and significance of music?

² Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, The New American Commentary, v. 4 (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 400.

music is a powerful way to communicate ideas and have them retained

“Since it was a song, the people would, once having learned it by heart, remember these words easily and be able to repeat them frequently. The singing of it would later haunt them with how much they had lost for having disobeyed Yahweh—since they would depart from wholehearted commitment to Yahweh.”³

3. What does this teach us about our own hearts? (21)
even when in spiritual victory, we can be making provision for the flesh

III. Moses' Last Testament (24-30)

Questions and comments:

1. What is the purpose of keeping the book of the law in the Tabernacle, beside the ark of the covenant?
as a witness against Israelite disobedience
2. Who is to receive Moses' song as the preventative measure against disobedience? (28)
the elders and officers of the tribes

Conclusion:

Proposition: Men's ministries are limited in time. Wise transition builds for eternity.

Many things can complicate transitions.

- The Old Guy
- The New Guy
- All the people under the new guy

This transition was orchestrated by God, and is a model for us of how to conduct (and prepare for) the transitions that inevitably must come (but hopefully not soon!).

³ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Dt 31.14.