



in the midst of the land whither ye go in to possess it.

6 Observe therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, that, when they hear all these statutes, shall say: 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' **7** For what great nation is there, that hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is whensoever we call upon Him? **8** And what great nation is there, that hath statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?

COMMENTARY:

The basic theme of Deuteronomy, meaning the "second law," is the renewal of the covenant. Here the legal tradition of the book of Exodus (for example, the Decalogue or the Covenant Code) is not just repeated; it is reinterpreted in contemporary terms, so that the promises and demands of the covenant were brought near to every worshiping Israelite.

At the end of the book of Numbers Israel is encamped in the plains of Moab, prepared for an attack upon Canaan from the east. Deuteronomy is essentially Moses' farewell address to the people in which he rehearses the mighty acts of the Lord, solemnly warns of the temptations of the new ways of Canaan, and pleads for loyalty to and love of God as the condition for life in the promised land.

Actually Deuteronomy contains not one address by Moses, but three. The first is found in 1.6 to 4.40; the second in chs. 5-28; and the third in chs. 29 and 30. The remaining chapters (31-34) pick up the story where it was left at the end of Numbers (see Introduction to Pentateuch).

A distinctive teaching of Deuteronomy is that the worship of the LORD is to be centralized in one place, so that the paganism of local shrines may be eliminated (ch. 12). When Deuteronomy was published, the Jerusalem temple was regarded as the central sanctuary. Indeed, Deuteronomy was probably the "book of the law" which prompted Josiah's sweeping religious reform in 621 B.C. (2 Kg. chs. 22-23) and led to the revision of the history found in Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. Although Deuteronomy rests upon ancient tradition, fundamentally it is a rediscovery and reinterpretation of Mosaic teaching in the light of later historical understanding.

Handout for week of 8/27/18 Mk. 7:1-8, 14-5, 21-3 & Dt. 4: 1-2, 6-8

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Dt. 4: **1** And now, O Israel, hearken unto the statutes and unto the ordinances, which I teach you, to do them; that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, giveth you. **2** Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

3 Your eyes have seen what the LORD did in Baal-peor; for all the men that followed the Baal of Peor, the LORD thy God hath destroyed them from the midst of thee. **4** But ye that did cleave unto the LORD your God are alive every one of you this day. **5** Behold, I have taught you statutes and ordinances, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so