

Deuteronomy in the Later Writings of the Bible



SABBATH—DECEMBER 4

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: 2 Kings 22; Deuteronomy 10:12–15; Deuteronomy 4:23–29; Micah 6:1–8; Daniel 9:1–19.

MEMORY VERSE: “The LORD loved your ancestors very much. He loved them so much that he chose you, their descendants, to be his people. He chose you instead of any other nation, and you are still his chosen people today” (Deuteronomy 10:15, ERV).

DID YOU KNOW that later writers in the Old Testament often used the words from earlier writers to show their ideas?

Let us look at an example from the Psalms. The writer of Psalm 81 says almost the exact words Moses wrote in his introduction to the Ten Commandments: “I, the LORD, am your God. I brought you out of Egypt” (Psalm 81:10, ERV).

All through the Old Testament, many writers talk about how God made the earth. These writers use the same words Moses wrote in Genesis 1. Just look at what Jeremiah says: “I looked at the earth. It was empty; there was nothing on it. I looked at the sky, and its light was gone” (Jeremiah 4:23, ERV; compare what Jeremiah wrote here to the words of Moses in Genesis 1:2).

Many Old Testament writers often talk about God and His agreement. So, we should not be surprised that they include parts of Deuteronomy in their own writings. The book of Deuteronomy is all about the special agreement. This week, we will see how other Bible writers use quotes from Deuteronomy. Which parts of Deuteronomy did these writers use? How important are their ideas for us today?



Many Old Testament writers talk about how God made the earth.

THE BOOK OF THE LAW (2 Kings 22)

Josiah became king of Judah when he was eight years old. He was king for 31 years, from 640 B.C. to 609 B.C. When Josiah was king for 18 years, something big happened. This happening changed the history of Israel for a long time.

What lessons can we learn from 2 Kings 22?

Bible experts believe that the “Book of the Law” in 2 Kings 22:8, NIV, is Deuteronomy. The book was lost for many years. Then it was found when Josiah was king.

“Josiah heard the warnings from the Book of the Law for the first time. His heart was deeply touched. Josiah understood the law in a new way. He saw that God gave Israel a choice between two ways: ‘life or death’ (Deuteronomy 30:19 [ERV]) and ‘blessings or curses’ (Deuteronomy 30:19 [NIV]). . . . Josiah saw that God wanted to save His people fully, just as He saved them from Egypt. God promised to bless His people in the Land of Promise. He promised to make them the most powerful people on earth.”—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, page 393, adapted.

King Josiah tried very hard to please the Lord after that. Josiah “promised to follow the LORD and to obey his commands, the laws, and his rules. He promised to do this with all his heart and soul [spirit]” (2 Kings 23:3, ERV; read also Deuteronomy 4:29; Deuteronomy 6:5; Deuteronomy 10:12; and Deuteronomy 11:13). Josiah improved life in his land in many ways. “Josiah got rid of those [people] who got messages from people who had died. He got rid of those [people] who talked to the spirits of people who had died. He got rid of the statues of family gods and the statues of other gods. He got rid of everything else the LORD hates that was in Judah and Jerusalem. He did it to carry out what the law required. That law was written in the book that Hilkiah the priest had found in the LORD’s temple” (2 Kings 23:24, NIV). Josiah also killed the religious leaders in Samaria who worshiped statues (2 Kings 23:20).

Josiah made many big changes. These changes show us just how far the people turned from God in their hearts.

We want to serve the Lord with all our hearts, right? So, what things do we need to get rid of from our homes or churches so we can do that?



Josiah became king of Judah when he was eight years old.

ALL OF HEAVEN BELONGS TO GOD (Deuteronomy 10:12–15)

Deuteronomy shows us that the law and the agreement are important to the friendship Israel had with God. The law and the agreement also were an important part of the plan God had for His “chosen” people (Deuteronomy 7:6, NIV; read also Deuteronomy 14:2 and Deuteronomy 18:5).

Read Deuteronomy 10:12–15. These verses talk a lot about the law and the chosen people. What does the Bible mean by the words “the highest heavens” (Deuteronomy 10:14, ERV)? What idea does Moses show us by these words?

We do not really know what “the highest [the very top part of] heavens” means exactly. But we may guess that Moses uses these words to show us that God is a beautiful and powerful King. That is why Moses says that the sky and all of heaven, too, belongs to Him. So, the “highest heavens” shows us that God has full control over everything in heaven and earth.



God gives life to everything.

Read the verses below. Do you see that each verse in some way talks about the idea of the “highest heavens”? What is the message of each verse? How does each verse show us the idea from Deuteronomy about the “highest heavens”?

1 Kings 8:27 _____

Nehemiah 9:6 _____

Psalms 148:4 _____

In Nehemiah 9, we really see the idea about God from Deuteronomy. Nehemiah writes, “You are God. LORD, only you are God. You made the sky and the highest heavens and everything in them. You made the earth and everything on it. You made the seas and everything in them. You give life to everything. All the heavenly angels bow down and worship you” (Nehemiah 9:6, ERV). In Nehemiah 9:3, NIV, “the Levites read parts of [from] the Book of the Law.” For sure, this must be the same book that Josiah heard in his time: the book of Deuteronomy. Now we can understand better why the Levites a few verses earlier talk about the “highest heavens.”

JEREMIAH AND DEUTERONOMY (Deuteronomy 4:23–29)

Years ago, a young man wanted to find the “Truth.” He was willing to go wherever he needed to go to find it. His search led him to God the Father and His Son, Jesus. Then the young man became a Seventh-day Adventist. His favorite verse in the Bible was Jeremiah 29:13, NIRV: “ ‘When you look for me with all your heart, you will find me.’ ”

Read Deuteronomy 4:23–29. Why does God make this promise to Israel? What meaning does this promise have for us today, as Seventh-day Adventists?

As we already have seen, the book of Deuteronomy was lost for a very long time until Josiah was king. During the time of Josiah, Jeremiah started his work for God. So, we can see that the book of Deuteronomy is very important to Jeremiah and his writings.

Read Jeremiah 7:1–7. In these verses, what does Jeremiah tell the people to do? How do these words from Jeremiah show us the message in Deuteronomy 4:23–29?

Again and again in Deuteronomy, Moses tells the people that their success in Canaan is possible only if they obey. If the people disobey, then God will remove them from the land He gave them. Look at the warning in Jeremiah 7:4, 5. These verses show us that obedience is very important. Yes, God chose Israel. Yes, the temple of God was in their land. But if the people failed to obey God, then these two blessings will not save them.

Their obedience included being nice to strangers, orphans, and widows. Where does this idea come from? Deuteronomy, of course. Moses commanded the people: “ ‘Do what is fair for a stranger or a child whose parents are dead. Do not take the clothing of a woman whose husband has died to make sure she will pay what she owes’ ” (Deuteronomy 24:17, NLV; read also Deuteronomy 24:21; Deuteronomy 10:18, 19; and Deuteronomy 27:19).

Read Jeremiah 4:4 and compare it to Deuteronomy 30:6. What is the message in these verses to the people of God? Why is the rule in these verses important to the lives of the people of God today?



The people’s obedience included being kind to strangers, orphans, and widows.

WHAT DOES THE LORD WANT? (Micah 6:1–8)

Read Micah 6:1–8. (Also read Amos 5:24 and Hosea 6:6.) What does the Lord tell the people in these verses? How does His message show us the same ideas in Deuteronomy?

In Micah 6:1–8, God is upset with His people. The people broke His agreement. So, the Lord takes His people to court. Micah explains that “ ‘The LORD has a complaint against his people’ ” (Micah 6:2, ERV). The word “complaint” in the Hebrew language shows a legal disagreement. This information tells us the Lord brings a legal charge against His people. This idea shows us that the agreement is really a contract about the law. We should not be surprised by this idea at all. The law was very important to the agreement God made with His people.

Do you see in the verses for today how Micah borrows language straight from Deuteronomy? Let us look at the quote from Moses that Micah uses: “ ‘Now, Israelites, listen [hear and obey]! What does the LORD your God really want from you? The LORD your God wants you to respect him and do what he says. He wants you to love him and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul [mind]. So obey the laws and commands of the LORD that I am giving you today. These laws and commands are for your own good’ ” (Deuteronomy 10:12, 13, ERV). Now how does Micah say these verses? “O man, He has told you what is good. What does the Lord ask of you but to do what is fair and to love kindness [being nice], and to walk without pride with your God?” (Micah 6:8, NLV). Micah wants the Israelites to be fair and to show people mercy.

The verses we studied today from both Moses and Micah show us the most important thing that God wants from His people. He wants them to show mercy and to be nice. What good are all the animal gifts the people bring God if they hurt the poor? The people “want fields, so they take them. They want houses, so they take them. They cheat a man and take his house and his land” (Micah 2:2, ERV). God chose Israel to show people His love. God wanted the people on the earth to say about Israel, “ ‘For sure this great nation is a wise and understanding people’ ” (Deuteronomy 4:6, NLV). That is why God wanted the Israelites to behave wisely and show everyone His mercy.



What good are all the animal gifts the people bring God if they hurt the poor?

THE PRAYER OF DANIEL (Daniel 9:1–19)

One of the most famous prayers in the Old Testament is Daniel 9. Daniel learns from the book of Jeremiah that the time for Israel to go home will happen soon. So, Daniel starts to pray for God to keep this promise to His people.

With tears, Daniel confesses his sins and the sins of Israel. Daniel understands that Israel caused their own suffering. God was fair and right in His actions when He allowed the Babylonians to take Israel out of the Promised Land.

Read Daniel 9:1–19. What ideas do you see in these verses that come from Deuteronomy?

The prayer of Daniel shows us exactly what God in Deuteronomy warned His people about if they broke His agreement. Twice, Daniel talks about the law of Moses (Daniel 9:11, 13). For sure, this law includes Deuteronomy.

As Deuteronomy tells us, the people will be made prisoners for disobeying the law Moses gave them from God. Then they will be carried away from the Promised Land (read Deuteronomy 4:27–31 and Deuteronomy 28). Everything happens just as Moses warned them (Deuteronomy 31:29).

Sadly, the people around the Jews now no longer said, “ ‘For sure this great nation is a wise and understanding people’ ” (Deuteronomy 4:6, NLV). Daniel says that the people who live around Jerusalem do not think well of Israel at all. “ ‘Jerusalem and Your people have been put to shame by everyone around us’ ” (Daniel 9:16, NLV).

Do you see that Daniel never asks the question, “Why?” Why is all this awful stuff happening to Israel? Daniel knows exactly why. He read the book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy helps Daniel and his people understand why the evil and suffering happened to them. Their experience is not bad luck. They lost their homes and land because they disobeyed God. At the same time, the prayer of Daniel shows us hope. God had not forgotten His people. He promised to bring them home again soon.

Read Daniel 9:24–27. These verses tell us about the coming of Jesus and His dying on the cross. Why do you think God gives Daniel this special message about the future? What hope do you think this special message gave to Israel about their going home soon?



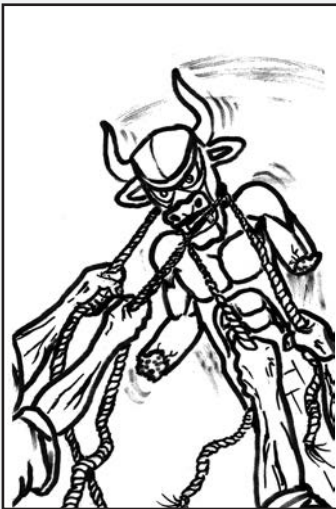
The people will be made prisoners for disobeying the law Moses gave them from God.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “Big changes started to happen. During this time, King Josiah worked hard to destroy all the statues of false gods in the land. Josiah removed the worship of these false gods and their religions from the land, too. This job was almost too much for any human to do. The people had bowed down to the statues of wood and stone for so long. But Josiah did not give up. He worked hard to remove every last bit of false worship from the land and to make it clean.”—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, page 401, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

① Sure, we are Seventh-day Adventists. We have a present-truth message to give to the people on the earth. Present truth, you will remember, is the truth people need most for their time. As Seventh-day Adventists, we see ourselves chosen by God in the same way Israel was chosen to be His special people. We are correct to think this way about ourselves. God chose us to be His people and to do a special work for Him at this time. He gave us Bible truth that the people around us need to know about. God has honored us very much. How well are we doing the important work God has given us to do?

② Put yourself in the shoes (or sandals) of Daniel. As Daniel, you saw the army of Babylon force their way into your country. You saw the enemy beat your people in war. They destroyed the temple of God. The temple was the center of religious faith for your whole country. Worse, your temple was destroyed by people who worshiped statues of false gods and the gods of nature. How do you think the book of Deuteronomy gave hope to Daniel (and any other Jew) during this time? How do you think the book of Deuteronomy helped Daniel understand all that happened and why it happened? In the same way, how does our understanding of the Bible help us deal with difficult times? Without our knowledge about Bible truth, these hard times might cause us to feel disappointed, for sure. What should our answer to all these questions teach us about how important the Bible is to our faith?



King Josiah worked hard to destroy all the statues of false gods in the land.

GOD DOES EVERYTHING RIGHT ON TIME

Marcia Yuassa is one of thousands of Brazilians who come to Japan to work in the factories. Marcia works many long hours. Soon she gets very sick and is forced to stay home.

Marcia feels much pain. She does not know how she will take care of her family or if she will live. She cries to God not to let her die.

Because Marcia cannot do very much, she spends a lot of time on the internet.

Soon, she discovers some health classes online. The classes are taught by a Seventh-day Adventist doctor in Brazil. Marcia watches every YouTube video by the doctor she can find. She learns how to be healthy. She learns about the seventh-day Sabbath, too.

Marcia also looks for friends online that she knew when she was a young girl in Brazil. She finds an old classmate. Marcia is happy to connect with her friend again. Marcia tells her friend all about the health message and the Sabbath.

When Marcia finishes talking, her friend tells her that she worships Jesus on the Sabbath. Her friend became a Seventh-day Adventist many years ago. But Marcia did not know that. The two women start to study the Bible together.

After some time, the friend sends Marcia the address and phone number for an Adventist church and its pastor in her area. But when Marcia looks up the address for the church, she discovers that the church is far away in another city. Marcia cannot visit because she does not drive. But she decides to call the church anyway. She talks with me, Eliane. I wrote this story. I am also the wife of the pastor.

Marcia is surprised when I tell her that she can join a small Bible study group was started in Iwata, where she lives. The group will meet for the first time that same week.

Three days later, the group meets less than a mile (a kilometer) from the home of Marcia. The meeting is so close that Marcia can walk there. God healed Marcia, too. Now Marcia, who is 54, has not missed a single meeting.

Marcia learned about the seventh-day Sabbath on the internet. Part of the 13th Sabbath Offering this quarter will help many Japanese people, including young people. The offering will help them learn more about Jesus from the internet. Thank you for giving a big offering.

INSIDE *Story*

by ELIANE HOSOKAWA IMAYUKI



Marcia learns how to be healthy. She learns about the seventh-day Sabbath, too.

