

# Introduction to Deuteronomy



## SABBATH—SEPTEMBER 25

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Isaiah 14:12–14; Genesis 3:1–7; Genesis 12:1–3; Exodus 19:4–8

**MEMORY VERSE:** “But anyone who does not love others [people] does not know God, because God is love” (1 John 4:8, WE).



Moses wrote Deuteronomy for a special reason.

### WHY WAS THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY WRITTEN?

Everything in life has a reason for being here. The same is true for Deuteronomy. Moses wrote this book for a special reason. When we understand why Deuteronomy was written, we will better understand the book and its purpose.

A lot of history happened before Moses wrote Deuteronomy. This history helps us understand why Moses wrote the book. You may wonder, Do we really need to know all about this history? Can we understand Deuteronomy, even if we do not know why Moses wrote this book? Let us think about an example to help us answer this question. What if you tried to tell someone why there is a windshield wiper on a car? But you did not talk about the car at all. The other person would not understand what you are talking about. In the same way, we will have trouble understanding Deuteronomy if we do not understand what happened in history before Moses wrote this book.

This quarter, we will study Deuteronomy and the present truth. The present truth is the Bible truth we need to understand today. This week, we will look at the most important parts of Bible history before Moses wrote Deuteronomy. Then we will learn how to understand the present truth in Deuteronomy.

**DO YOU WANT LOVE? THEN LOVE PEOPLE!  
(Isaiah 14:12–14)**

1 John 4:8 says, “God is love” (WE). These three words (four in Greek) show us an important idea about God. Do you see that John does not write “God loves”? Or that “God shows us what love is”? No, the verse says God **is** love. Love is not only what God does. But Love also is who God **is**. As sinners, that is hard for us to fully understand.

But we can understand enough to know that “God is love” is very good news. What if John had written, “God is hate”? Or what if John wrote, “God is mean and nasty”? Or “God does not care about us at all”? These ideas about God would give us something to worry about!

When we understand that God is love, we understand His government better. Everything God does, He does because of love. God loves us. So, we should love God back (read Deuteronomy 6:5; Mark 12:30).

Love must be freely given. Or love cannot really be love. God cannot force us to love Him. The instant that God forces us to love Him, then our love is no longer love. That is why God made everyone in heaven and on earth free to love. God made it possible for us not to love Him back. And that is exactly what happened in the past. One person chose not to love God: Lucifer. His choice started the great war between good and evil in heaven and on earth.

**Read about Lucifer (also known in Revelation as the dragon) in Isaiah 14:12–14; Ezekiel 28:12–17; and Revelation 12:7. What happens to Lucifer or the dragon in these verses? What do these verses show us about the freedom God gives us to love Him? What is the danger if we choose, as Lucifer did, not to love God? Can we really understand what happens to Lucifer in these verses if we do not fully understand that God is love?**

Ezekiel 28:15 is helpful. It shows us that God made Lucifer perfect. Even so, Lucifer had sin in his heart. God made Lucifer free to love. God gave Lucifer so much. But this angel wanted more. That caused war in heaven.

**Have you heard of the robot dog? The robot dog will obey your commands, never pee on your floor, and never chew your furniture. Is this dog free to love you? How does your answer help you understand why God wants people who can truly love Him back?**



**God made everyone  
in heaven and on earth  
free to love.**

## THE FALL AND THE FLOOD (Genesis 3:1–7)



God caused the people to move away from the tower and live in different places all across the earth.

God made humans with the freedom to choose. We can choose to love God back. We can choose between good and evil. This freedom is a basic part of love. Love must include the freedom to choose. Or love will not be love. This same freedom comes with a risk, as we saw in our study yesterday. We can make the wrong choice as Lucifer did. That is exactly what our first parents, Adam and Eve, did.

**Read Genesis 2:16, 17 and Genesis 3:1–7. These verses show us perfect people on a perfect earth. They were made by a perfect God. But they chose to sin. What do these verses show us about the freedom God gave us? What can this freedom lead to? Why must love include the freedom to choose?**

After the Fall, things got worse. People became so bad. The Lord saw that people “were very evil. He saw that they thought only about evil things all the time” (Genesis 6:5, ERV). Their behavior was bad, too. People became so evil that the Lord destroyed the whole earth with the Flood. The Flood was a second chance for humans. God gave them the chance to start over. But did humans use this second chance? Sad to say, we see from the story about the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1–9) that humans continued to turn away from God.

“When the builders finished only part of the tower, they started to live in it. People also decorated some of the finished rooms for the statues of their gods. The people filled these rooms with beautiful furniture and decorations. The people were filled with joy because of all they had built. So, they praised their gods of silver and gold. Their hearts turned fully against the King of heaven and earth.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 119, adapted. Before that time, all humans spoke one language and lived in one area. But then God punished humans so that they spoke many different languages. They no longer understood each other. So, they stopped working on the tower. Then God caused the people to move away from the tower and live in different places all across the earth.

**Look into your heart as you go through your day. Are your thoughts good or evil? What does this information show you about your heart, and why you cannot save yourself?**

**GOD CHOOSES ABRAM (Genesis 12:1–3)**

We first read about Abram in Genesis 11. (Later, God changes the name of Abram to Abraham.) In Genesis 11, Abram is included in a list of the future sons of Shem. Shem was the oldest son of Noah. The list of names comes right after God sends humans away from the Tower of Babel.

**Read Genesis 12:1–3. What promise does God make to Abram in these verses? How do we understand this promise today?**

Hundreds of years after Abram lived, Paul writes to the Galatians. The Galatians have wrong ideas about the Good News. So, Paul tells the Galatians the real meaning of the promise God made to Abram. The promise was really about giving the Good News to everyone on the earth. “You see then, the people who believe God are children of Abraham. The holy writings [Bible] say that he will put people right with himself if they believe him, even those [people] who are not Jews. It [this promise] was written down before God did it. God told the good news to Abraham ahead of time. It [the Bible] said, ‘God will make you a blessing to all nations and people.’ Abraham believed God and was blessed. And so those [people] who believe God are blessed too, along with him” (Galatians 3:7–9, WE).

After God chooses Abraham, the rest of Genesis is mostly about the future children of Abraham. As Genesis shows, these men and women lie or kill. For sure, they are one messed-up family! Yes, these men and women are far from perfect. But God works in their lives anyway to make His promise to Abraham happen. An important part of the promise happens when God chooses Moses to free Israel from Egypt.

**Read Acts 7:20–36. In these verses, Stephen talks about Moses and how he leads the Israelites from Egypt. How does this story show us the promise God made to Abraham?**

The Lord frees the children of Abram from Egypt. Then God makes the Israelites His people. God chooses them to tell other people on earth about Him and His plan to save them from sin.

**How are we, as Seventh-day Adventists, the same as the Israelites in Bible times? What job has God given to us?**



**The promise God made to Abram was really about giving the Good News to everyone on the earth.**

## THE AGREEMENT AT SINAI (Exodus 19:4–8)



Moses seals with blood the agreement between God and His people.

The story about how God frees Israel from Egypt is powerful: from the destroying angel that passes over Egypt to the Red Sea opening. Wow! Think about the people who live through this time! (Do not forget the ones who die, too: the oldest sons of the Egyptians and the soldiers of the Egyptian king at the bottom of the Red Sea.) As the Lord says, “ ‘ “You have seen for yourselves what I did to Egypt. You saw how I carried you on the wings of eagles and brought you to myself” ’ ” (Exodus 19:4, Nlrv).

Why does the Lord save His people in this powerful way? Moses asks the Israelites the same question: “ ‘Has any other god ever tried to go and take a people for himself from inside another nation [country]? No! But you yourselves have seen everything that the LORD your God did for you. He showed you his power and strength. You saw the troubles that tested [showed the thoughts and feelings in the hearts of] the people. You saw miracles and wonders. You saw war and the terrible [wonderful] things that happened’ ” (Deuteronomy 4:34, ERV).

### Read Exodus 19:4–8. Why does the Lord free His people?

God frees His people from slavery so they can serve Him and tell other people about Him. God makes an agreement with His people at Sinai. God tells His people what He will do if they obey Him: “ ‘ “If you do this, you will be my own special people. The whole world [all people on the earth] belongs to me, but I am choosing you to be my own special people” ’ ” (Exod. 19:5, ERV).

Do you see the words “special people”? We must be careful not to misunderstand this idea. God does not choose the Israelites to be His special people because they are special or holy. God chooses them because He loves them.

God gives His people some important rules (Exodus 20). Then Moses puts drops of animal blood on the agreement. This blood shows us that both God and the people accept the agreement. Then Moses “took the Book of the Agreement and read it for the people to hear. They said, ‘We will do all that the Lord has spoken. We will obey’ ” (Exodus 24:7, NLV).

**Moses puts blood on the book and on the people (read Hebrews 9:19, 20). What is the blood a word picture for? Why is this blood so important to us today?**

## FALLING BACK INTO SIN AND GETTING PUNISHED (Exodus 19:4, 5)

“All the people answered together. They said, ‘We will do everything the LORD has said’ ” (Exodus 19:8, NIV; read also Exodus 24:3; Exodus 24:7.) For sure, the people meant these words each time they said them. But the Bible shows us, again and again, that the behavior of the people of God did not match their promise to obey Him. What was the reason that the people disobeyed? We will see that there is only one reason.

**What does God ask His people to do to keep the agreement? For the answer, read Exodus 19:4, 5.**

God asks His people to obey Him and keep His law. This command does not mean that the people are saved by their good behavior (read Matthew 7:24–27; John 14:15; James 2:20; Romans 6:11, 12). But again and again, the children of Israel fail to keep their agreement with God.

Soon, the people sin. Moses is on Mount Sinai talking to God (read Exodus 32:1–6). As history shows, the people disobey God more than they obey Him. That is why they do not enter the Promised Land right away after they leave Egypt. No, the people of God must wander in the desert for 40 years.

**Read Numbers 14:28–35. How does God punish His people when they refuse to trust in Him and do what He asks?**

Then, as now, people disobey God because they fail to trust Him. Sure, people disobey God because of the evil in their hearts. But most of the time we fail to obey God because we do not trust His promises. In the same way, Israel fails to trust in God. What makes their sin worse is that Israel saw all the miracles God did. But they sin anyway. As God says, “‘Not one of these people will see the land I promised to give them. They have seen my glory. They have seen the signs I did in Egypt. And they have seen what I did in the desert. But they did not obey me. And they have tested [failed to trust] me ten times’ ” (Numbers 14:22, NIV).

**Think more about this idea: we often disobey God because we do not trust what He tells us in the Bible. Why is this true? How can we learn to trust God more?**



The behavior of the people of God did not match their promise to obey Him.

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read John C. Peckham, *Theodicy of Love: Cosmic Conflict and the Problem of Evil* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018). This book helps us to see in the Bible the worldwide war between good and evil.

“In short, I say that the love of God is at the center of a worldwide war between good and evil. That is why we must have a correct understanding about the love of God. The love of God is the reason why He puts up with any evil at all. And this idea about the love of God helps us to understand how God acts in the war. God follows the rules of His agreement. These rules show us what God will do and will not do.”—John C. Peckham, *Theodicy of Love: Cosmic Conflict and the Problem of Evil*, page 4, adapted.

“God announces that Israel will not enter Canaan for 40 years. This breaks the hearts of Moses, Aaron, Caleb, and Joshua. But these men do not complain. They accept the decision God makes. But the people do not. They cry when God takes away from them blessings they never cared about. They complain about how God acts. The people announce they will go back to Egypt. The people cry for no reason. Now God gives them something to really cry about. But the people do not cry because they are sorry for their sin. Now what if the people show they are sorry for their sin? Then God will not punish them by making them wander for 40 years in the desert. But the people cry only because they are upset with God for punishing them. That is why their crying does not cause God to change His decision about punishing them for 40 years.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 392, adapted.



The people cry when God takes away from them blessings they never cared about.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Why must love, to be love, be freely given by someone? Some people may say that love is not worth much at all because of all the suffering on earth. What can you say to someone who thinks this way?
- ② How is obeying God different from trying to save yourself by your own good behavior?
- ③ What are some of the ways that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the same as Israel in Bible times? What same things has God made us responsible for that He made Israel responsible for in Bible times? Why is the answer so important?

## I MET JESUS AT THE SHOP

I do not think life can get much worse. Doctors find bone cancer in my husband. Then his parents die. I must pay for the funeral for my mother-in-law. I needed to help my family by working to pay all our bills. I do not even have enough money to buy school supplies for my son. His school supplies cost 1,000 Korean won. 1,000 Korean won equals one dollar in U.S. money. My paycheck is not enough to cover the hospital bills for my husband. Every day, I worry that I will not have enough rice to feed my family. I cry a lot. I feel so alone.

Then I meet Park Yeon-sook. She is not a family member or even a friend. She sees that I need money. So, she gives me some work at her shop in Hanam. Hanam is near Seoul, the capital of South Korea. The extra money I make at her shop helps me pay for water, food, and hospital bills.

I am so grateful for the work Yeon-sook gives me. I see Yeon-sook is different. She is happier than other people. I wonder why she is so happy. Her joy makes me happy!

Yeon-sook goes to church on Saturdays. She does not worry about the money she loses by closing her shop on the Sabbath. I do not believe in God. But I want to go to church with her. I want to find out why Yeon-sook has so much joy and peace.

Yeon-sook never invites me to her Seventh-day Adventist church. But I decide in my heart I will go. So, I start to study the Bible on my own. I learn about God. The peace of heaven comes into my life. I give my heart to Jesus and join the West Hanam Seventh-day Adventist Church. I serve there now as a deaconess together with Yeon-sook. A deaconess is a woman church worker.

I have a lot to learn about the Bible. But I believe in God with all my heart. Yeon-sook never talked to me much about Jesus. But I saw Jesus in her life. I met Jesus by the way she lived her life. Now this same Jesus lives in my heart today.

This year, my husband and son also were baptized and joined the Adventist family. Now I have a hard time seeing how my life can be any better! Thank God that He used Yeon-sook and her shop to reach me and my family.

This story shows Mission Purpose number 1 of the “I Will Go” plan for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Purpose number 1 is: “Pastors and church members will share the Good News about Jesus with other people worldwide. We will show that sharing Jesus is a way of life. We will do whatever God asks us to do to share Jesus with other people.” Learn more at [IWillGo2020.org](http://IWillGo2020.org). This quarter, your 13th Sabbath offering will support church work in South Korea. Read more about Yeon-sook next week.

INSIDE  
*Story*  
by HONG SOON-MI



**My paycheck is not enough to cover the hospital bills for my husband.**

