

## Devarim “Words”

**Torah Reading: Deuteronomy 1:1 - 3:22**

**Haftarah Reading: Isaiah 1:1-27**

### Study Notes

#### Title and Usage

- As is the custom in the Torah, the first parasha is also the name of the book, hence, *Devarim*, or “words.”
- Another Jewish name for the book is *Mishnah HaTorah* which means, “the repetition of the Torah” (17:18-19)
- The word Deuteronomy means “second law”, and is taken from the Greek in the LXX.
  - A. This does not imply a “second Torah” but a repetition.
- Devarim was one of the most widely used books in the sectarian literature of Qumran.
- There are over eighty quotations from Devarim in the Brit Hadasha.

#### Structure of Devarim

- An immense amount of study has been devoted to comparing the structure of Devarim to that of secular treaty documents in the second millennium BC.
- The basic observation is that Devarim is organized in a very similar way to other ancient Near Eastern treaties dating from 1300-1800 BC.
  - A. The treaties delineated the relationship between the great king and his subject people.
- The Torah was not a law code, it was clearly a covenant and must be understood as the grace of God.

#### Covenantal Structure

- Preamble (1:1-5) - The opening five verses serve as the preamble to this covenant. It introduced the Great King.
- Historical Prologue (1:6 - 3:22) - Relates the historical acts which the Great King did for his subjected people with who he made a covenant.
  - A. Acts of kindness would be detailed here. (1:8 for example).
  - B. Another use for this area would be to teach the next generation about God.
- Stipulations (4:1 - 26:19) - The stipulations describe the full nature of the covenantal relationship.
  - A. God loved Israel and chose them out of His grace.
  - B. He wanted Israel to love Him and obey His teaching.

- Document Clause (27:1 - 26) - This portion made provision for recording and renewal of the covenant.
- Blessings and Curses (28:1 - 28:68) - It is important to remember that the purpose of the blessings and curses was to bring Israel back to God when they walked away from Him (curses), and to encourage Israel to walk with Him (blessings).
- Recapitulation (29:1 - End) - A restatement of the main covenant theme and a provision for the continuation of leadership.

#### Key Words

- Covenant - Used twenty-seven times in Devarim.
  - A. "...a people redeemed from slavery and bound to their God by a covenant needed some guidelines for a happy life in fellowship with God and with one another."
- Love - Seven times Devarim speaks of God's love for us and teaches us to love the Lord eleven times.
  - A. The covenant relationship is to be governed by love from both parties to each other.
- Listen and Obey - Often the same Hebrew word expresses both concepts.
  - A. The most practical expression of our love for God is to obey Him. (John 14:23).
- Remember - Used at least fifteen times.
  - A. One reason why the relationship between God and His people is expressed in written form is that people may remember it more easily.