

דברים Devarim Words (דבר *debar* word)

[Deuteronomy 1.1—3.22](#) /

[Isaiah 1.1—27](#) / [Acts 1—2](#)



2nd Law The book of דברים tells the same Law once more. So the Greek name for this book, Deuteronomy, literally means “second law,” from *deuteros* second + *nomos* law. Since the first giving of the Law in Exodus and Leviticus, almost the entire original generation above twenty years old, 1.5 million people or more, dies in the 40 years of wilderness wandering—or one death about every fifteen minutes. This new generation is hearing the Law for the first time.

The entire book of Deuteronomy takes place in about one month.



Just Do It [Deuteronomy 1.1-3](#) says it takes eleven days to travel from Horeb (Mt. Sinai, where תורה *Torah* the Law/Instruction was given the first time) to their current location on the side of the Jordan as *Yisra'el* ישראל prepares to enter the Land. Instead the journey takes 40 years. Why? Because of failure to act and take the Land when God first said to, that whole generation dies. When God tells us to do something, it's better to *just do it*.



Buried Treasure ישוע *Yeshua*

Jesus/salvation says in [Matthew 13.52](#) that

every γραμματεὺς *grammateus*

scribe/teacher of the Law who is instructed about the Kingdom of Heaven keeps bringing out of his storeroom new treasures as well as

old. ישוע wants us to search תורה to find

treasure. To ignore תורה is to keep the chest covered and never discover its riches.



Important Elements of דברים

ברית *b'reet* Covenant Each of the four consonants in ברית has a meaning. Hebrew is the only language which is both pictures like Chinese and letters like English. ב *bet* house, ר *resh* head/person, י *yod* hand/symbolically give, and ת *tav* covenant/(written as a cross in the time of משה *Mosheh* Moses). בר *bar* son/(as in Simon bar Jonah/Simon Son of Jonah). ברית could be read, “Person of the House/Son Gives the Covenant.”

אהב *ahav* Love א *aleph* ox/symbolically strength/leader/first, ה *hey* behold/reveal, ב *bet* house, אב *av* father/strength of the house. By putting ה in the middle of Father, it's like saying the heart of the Father is love/love reveals the Father. God says in [Deuteronomy 5.10](#) that He shows mercy to thousands of generations of those that love Him and keep His מצותי (plural of מצוה *mitzvah*) commandments. The New Testament agrees—[1 John 5.2-3](#) says we love God by obeying His commandments.

Many Christians think this is legalism and are surprised to read it in the New Testament. But think of the marriage covenant. When a man and woman promise to be true to each other and wear rings to remind themselves of that covenant, we don't call it legalism! And neither is it legalism to obey God's commands. Legalism is 1) ignoring the context or 2) thinking that by obeying תורה we will earn righteousness with God. Just as ישראל is saved first through deliverance from Egypt and then given תורה, so we are saved first, then given תורה. תורה tells us how to show our love for God.



[Deuteronomy 6.5](#) says to אהב God with all our heart, soul, and might. ישוע says in [Matthew 22.36-38](#) that this is the greatest commandment. Deuteronomy also says in [7.7](#) that His love is not given to ישראל because they are special, [7.9](#) that He keeps his love for 1000 generations (40 years for a biblical generation x 1000 generations = 40,000 years, less than 4,000 years since this promise was made, so we have 36,000+ years to go!), [30.6](#) אהב God so that you will live, and [30.16](#) אהב God so that you will live, multiply, and be blessed.

Remember! Moses' refrain to **ישראל** as he approaches death and delivers his last sermons in this book is **"Remember!"**

- [4.9-10](#) Do not forget...teach all these things to your children
- [4.23](#) Be careful not to forget
- [5.15](#) Remember that you were slaves in Egypt
- [6.4-6](#) These **דבריים** are to be upon your hearts...your children's hearts too
- [7.18](#) Remember what **יהוה YHVH** the LORD your God did to Pharaoh
- [8.2](#) Remember how **יהוה** your God led you all the way
- [8.11](#) Be careful that you do not forget **יהוה**, commands, laws, decrees
- [9.7](#) Remember this and never forget how you provoked **יהוה**
- [24.9](#) Remember what **יהוה** your God did to Miriam
- [32.7](#) Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past

A personal journal can help us remember how God has worked in our lives. Otherwise, no matter how grateful we are at the time, we may forget. My seven-year-old son's palm had an ugly wart that looked like a worm and had been there for months. One day, he grasped the words of **ישוע** in [Matthew 18.19-20](#) and applied them to his wart. I

remember how he **אמן amen** believed it and said, "What?! What?!"—shocked at this promise. It was a good time to pray about his wart. A few days later it was completely gone and never returned. As important as the event was at the time, writing it down is probably the only reason I still remember it. Write it down—remember God's grace!

God wrote the **דבריים** of His **תורה** for us so that we will remember.

Remember תורה In the last three verses of [Malachi](#) (chapter 3 in Hebrew) God tells us to remember the **תורת משה Torat Moshe** Law of Moses and God will send Elijah before the Day of **יהוה**. [2 Kings 2.9-14](#) tells how Elisha sees Elijah **עלה alah** go up to heaven in a whirlwind, and he goes on to perform twice as many miracles as Elijah.

In [Matthew 5.17-20](#), **ישוע** reinforces the **תורת משה**. **ישוע** tells His disciples in [Matthew 11.14](#) that John the Baptist is Elijah, "if you are willing to accept it." (If you receive this truth, then you prepare your heart to receive the King, as some do. If you don't receive this truth, you reject Elijah and the King, as many do.) Like Elijah speaking to Elisha before going up, **ישוע** tells His disciples in [Acts 1.8-11](#) that they will receive power from the Holy Spirit and then He goes up! Two angels tell the disciples that **ישוע** will return just as He left. The disciples go on to keep **תורה**, spread the good news of salvation, and perform miracles. Now it's our job to do the same.

תורה on Our



Many Christians believe the “Old Testament God” is angry and demanding about Law, while the New Testament is about a loving God, grace, and tossing the Law. But that’s not what the Bible says. [Jeremiah 31.30-33](#), quoted in [Hebrews 8.8-12](#), says that the New Covenant is about God writing His תורה on our hearts and forgiving sin. We don’t toss the תורה; we are to let God write it on our *hearts*, not just on stone, parchment, or web sites.

שמע *shema* Hear AND Obey Too often, because of our Greek-influenced minds, we split our thinking into “hear” and skip the “obey,” but שמע commands us to do both.

שׁוֹעַ” said in [Luke 6.46](#), “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?” If we say, “Lord,” we should obey. There are 613 commandments in the Old Testament, but over 1,000 in the New! Deuteronomy says,

[6.4](#) שמע Hear and Obey!

[30.11-15](#) The commandment is near, so we can שמע

[30.17-18](#) If we don’t שמע, we will perish

Trust God and Don’t Whine It’s so easy to point out how much whining ישראל did in the wilderness, but I doubt we would do any better. Still, it’s useful to see why they complain and learn from it. In [Deuteronomy 1.27](#), Moses reminds the people they murmured in their tents, saying God brought them out of Egypt to be killed by the Amorites. They had forgotten or didn’t believe God’s promise to Abraham in [Genesis 15.13-21](#) that the Amorites were one of the nations whose land God would give to Abraham’s seed after bondage (in Egypt). God was being patient with the Amorites, but they continued to grow in evil until ישראל faced them in their wanderings. ישראל did defeat the Amorites as God said they would, but at first they would not believe it.

God Provides Even as they wander in the wilderness, God provides ישראל everything they need. משה reminds them in [Deuteronomy 2.7](#) how God blessed them for all of those forty years. We should praise God for the blessings that He gives us, [Psalm 145.4-6](#), praise and not forget! From דור לדור *dor l’dor* generation to generation. God has no grandchildren. Are your children praising God?

If not, why not?



God is Bigger than Giants, so Get Going! As a review and also as an encouragement as **ישראל** is about to enter the Land and face their own giants, **משה** reminds them in [Deuteronomy 2.9-11](#) that the Moabites defeated the giants they called Emims to get their land, and in [Deuteronomy 2.19-21](#) that the Ammonites defeated giants they called Zamzummims. Paraphrase, “Those nations weren’t afraid of giants when taking their land, don’t be afraid of giants when taking your Land!” Who are the giants believers face—and are afraid of—in modern countries today?

In [Deuteronomy 1.21](#), [3.2](#), and [3.22](#), **משה** reminds **ישראל** how, when they went up against the Amorites and Bashan, God encouraged them, for He had already given those enemies into their hand. Too often, we are afraid of the giants in our Land, giants God has already defeated. Here is an encouraging poem, *Footprints* with a twist:



Butt Prints in the Sand

Anonymous

One night I had a wondrous dream,
One set of footprints there was seen,
The footprints of my precious Lord,
But mine were not along the shore.

But then some stranger prints appeared,
And I asked the Lord, "What have we here?"
Those prints are large and round and neat,
"But Lord they are too big for feet."

"My child," He said in somber tones,
"For miles I carried you alone.
I challenged you to walk in faith,
But you refused and made me wait."

"You disobeyed, you would not grow,
The walk of faith, you would not know.
So I got tired, I got fed up,
and there I dropped you on your butt."

"Because in life, there comes a time,
when one must fight, and one must climb.
When one must rise and take a stand,
or leave his butt prints in the sand."

Vision vs. Rebellion This portion includes [Isaiah 1.1-27](#), which begins Isaiah's vision. God promises in [Isaiah 1.18-21](#) that He will take away sin for obedience, but bring judgment for rebellion. Judgment is the sword. Today that could mean terrorism, nuclear-tipped cruise missiles, or foreign armies invading. In [Isaiah 10.5-15](#), God makes it clear that although Assyria destroys **ישראל**, Assyria is wrong to take credit for it—Assyria is God's tool like a woodsman uses an axe or a saw. The ancient enemies of **ישראל** are enemies of **ישראל** and America today: Assyria/Syria, Babylon/Iraq, and Persia/Iran, which also funds Hezbollah in Lebanon and Gaza. It's reckless to think that we can ignore God's warnings about disobedience and judgment.

This Shabbat before [Tisha B'Av](#) when the Temple was twice destroyed, is called **שבת חזון** *Shabbat Chazon* Sabbath of Vision, referring to Isaiah's vision and the need for vision: "Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; but he that keepeth **תורה**, happy is he," [Proverbs 29.18](#). Most physical vision is a result of light from the sun. It's interesting that the first days of Av for 2008 (August 1st), 2009 July 22nd), and 2010 (July 12th) each experienced a solar eclipse.



The [first chapter of Isaiah](#) shows four ways Israel disregards **תורה**:

- Verse 4 They provoke God by their sin.
(The Church may imply sin doesn't matter, since "Jesus abolished the Law.")
- Verse 11 They practice empty religion that only irritates God. What good are sacrifices if God is being insulted? For example, think of a man who brings flowers to his wife every week, but then starts an affair. When the wife learns of the affair, she will throw the flowers in the trash. When the man repents of the affair, the wife may relent and accept the flowers again.
(The Church has incorporated secular feasts and attitudes, while disregarding God's appointed times and **תורה**. Many Christians consider the Old Testament irrelevant. But many in the church truly love God, even though they've created their own methods of worship.)
- Verses 16-17 They don't repent and they don't exercise justice.
(Many in the Church act like there is no need to repent, since the Law is done away. Three benchmarks of the reformation were Scripture, sacraments, and church discipline. The 3rd has almost completely disappeared.)
- Verse 23 Their rulers are corrupt.
(It can be depressing to watch some Christian television evangelists. Many of them have created their own religions of prosperity and faith doctrine. And many churches are telling people what they want to hear, rather than encouraging repentance and a fresh relationship with God *according to תורה*.)

False Confidence [Jeremiah 7.4-15](#) adds that **יְהוָה** says, “The Temple of the LORD! The Temple of the LORD! The Temple of the LORD!” but continues to sin. God asks (v 9-10), “(Will you sin) and come and stand before Me in this house, whereupon My Name is called, and say: ‘We are delivered,’ that ye may do all these abominations?” God then promises to destroy the Temple! In fact, God destroyed His Temple twice. Today, many Christians sin and say, “Jesus covered my sin, so I can sin and it’s OK!” Or when confronted with sin respond, “Judge not!” Can we sin and escape the consequences of God’s judgment? Paul himself argues the folly of thinking that, [Romans 6.1-2](#). In [Isaiah 1.18-21](#), we see the often-quoted passage, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD...” But how many know that this passage continues to say that while obedience brings blessing, rebellion brings the sword?

The Temple today is the worldwide congregation of believers. [2 Corinthians 6.16](#) says, “ὁμῆϊς *hymeis* you (plural) are the Temple of the living God.” [1 Corinthians 3.16-18](#) uses the word ἔστέ *este* you are (second person plural of “to be”). In each case, the point is that the Temple today is not an individual believer or location, but all believers, the Church. Paul continues to say that if anyone defiles this Temple, God will destroy him.



In fifty years of church, I’ve only seen a service disrupted once. Years ago, I had been called as a police officer to the scene of a man walking down the road waving a knife at passing cars. My partner and I found Gary. Even though I got along with Gary, I knew better than to trust him while he held a knife. I ordered him to drop the knife. He refused, so I drew my gun and continued to order him to drop it. Finally, he dropped it. We released him with a warning. He came to the congregation that week and, while I was filling in for preaching, interjected with no connection to the message, “Yeah, it’s just like cops who stop people on the road for no reason and harass them!” I knew nothing would be gained by defending my actions so I just said, “Yes, some things are hard to understand.” In a fit of anger, he got up and stomped out. That same week, he was killed by a car while hitchhiking. I took a statement from the woman who hit him, who said that she didn’t even see Gary in the dark and rain until he was bouncing over her windshield. That’s the only time I’ve seen a service disrupted. And the person who caused the disruption died the same week.

Twice God has destroyed His holy Temple in Jerusalem because of sin. If we are His Temple now, how can we entertain that it’s OK to sin and escape the consequences?

Near the end of Isaiah’s first chapter, [1.24-27](#), God says that He will avenge Himself of His enemies, purge away the sin, restore judges and counselors, and Zion ([verse 27](#)) will be **פָּדָה** *padah* redeemed/ransomed/rescued with judgment. What will it take to **פָּדָה**? [Psalm 49.6-10](#) says that no amount of riches can ransom a soul. Our souls are costly, but we sin and God promises to redeem. How will He do it? [Ephesians 1.7](#) says that in **יְשׁוּעָה** we have redemption through His blood. The blood of **יְשׁוּעָה** dying on the cross is the only price that can be paid to redeem our souls.

Suzerainty Treaty The book of Deuteronomy is patterned on a Suzerainty Treaty. This type of treaty originated about the time of Moses and the purpose is to guarantee that a smaller state remains faithful to the empire. In this case, that Israel would remain faithful to God. It's fascinating to me that God would adopt this type of treaty for His people. By arranging this treaty, God is allowing Israel to function as it pleases within guidelines. And that's how God "treats" us today. We have tremendous freedom: where we live, what we do for a living, whom we marry, what hobbies we enjoy. God just asks that we work within the guidelines He has established and keep Him first in our hearts. Too often, we focus on the restrictions and feel cramped. Look instead at the freedom, and that God loved us enough to send His one and only Son to **פדה** us with His blood!

A Suzerainty Treaty consists of a covenant formulary, which is a sequence of steps. As found in Deuteronomy, they are:

1.1-5	Preamble	משה will state the treaty between God and Israel
1.6-4.49	Historical Prologue	How we got to this point
5.1-26.19	Stipulations	The specific demands of תורה on ישראל
27-30	Blessings/Curses	Results of keeping or breaking the treaty
30.19	Witnesses	Heaven and earth testify
31.1-8	Succession	משה transfers authority to Joshua
31.9-13	Deposition/Reading	Priests maintain תורה and read it publicly/7 years

Here's an example of a Suzerainty Treaty in modern times between the United States (empire) and the Philippines (smaller state)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutual_Defense_Treaty_\(US-Philippines\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutual_Defense_Treaty_(US-Philippines)):

(Preamble)

Mutual Defense Treaty Between the Republic of the Philippines and the United States of America, August 30, 1951 in Washington, D.C.

(Historical Prologue)

The Parties to this Treaty, Reaffirming their faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and their desire to live in peace with all peoples and all Governments, and desiring to strengthen the fabric of peace in the Pacific Area,

Recalling with mutual pride the historic relationship which brought their two peoples together in a common bond of sympathy and mutual ideals to fight side-by-side against imperialist aggression during the last war, Desiring to declare publicly and formally their sense of unity and their common determination to defend themselves against external armed attack, so that no potential aggressor could be under the illusion that either of them stands alone in the Pacific Area,



Desiring further to strengthen their present efforts for collective defense for the preservation of peace and security pending the development of a more comprehensive system of regional security in the Pacific Area,
Agreeing that nothing in this present instrument shall be considered or interpreted as in any way or sense altering or diminishing any existing agreements or understandings between the United States of America and the Republic of the Philippines,
Have agreed as follows:

(Stipulations)

Article I

The Parties undertake, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, to settle any international disputes in which they may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purpose of the United Nations.

Article II

In order more effectively to achieve the objective of this Treaty, the Parties separately and jointly by self-help and mutual aid will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.

(Reading)

Article III

The Parties, through their Foreign Ministers or their deputies, will consult together from time to time regarding the implementation of this Treaty and whenever in the opinion of either of them the territorial integrity, political independence or security of either of the Parties is threatened by external armed attack in the Pacific.

(Blessings)

Article IV

Each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific Area on either of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common dangers in accordance with its constitutional processes. Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall be immediately reported to the Security Council of the United Nations. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security.

Article V

For the purpose of Article IV, an armed attack on either of the Parties is deemed to include an armed attack on the metropolitan territory of either of the Parties, or on the island territories under its jurisdiction in the Pacific or on its armed forces, public vessels or aircraft in the Pacific.

(Stipulation)

Article VI

This Treaty does not affect and shall not be interpreted as affecting in any way the rights and obligations of the Parties under the Charter of the United Nations or the responsibility of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security.

(Deposition)

Article VII

This Treaty shall be ratified by the United States of America and the Republic of the Philippines in accordance with their respective constitutional processes and will come into force when instruments of ratification thereof have been exchanged by them at Manila.

(Succession)

Article VIII

This Treaty shall remain in force indefinitely. Either Party may terminate it one year after notice has been given to the other Party.

(Witnesses)

Signatories

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the undersigned Plenipotentiaries have signed this Treaty.
DONE in duplicate at Washington this thirtieth day of August 1951.
FOR THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES:
(SGD) CARLOS P. ROMULO etc...

It seems the concept of the Suzerainty Treaty still works in modern times. There are no obvious curses in this treaty, the only part of the covenant formulary that seems to be missing. If either the United States or the Philippines were attacked, the Philippines would more likely be the one to benefit from the aid of the United States, just as we benefit more from God's aid than He from ours.

This treaty was an extension of a sort of the 1898 Treaty of Paris, which ended the Spanish-American War and resulted in the United States gaining the territory of the Philippines, among other countries. Two of the interesting comments made before the treaty barely passed the U.S. Senate were
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Paris_\(1898\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Paris_(1898)) :

Opposed: Senator George Frisbie Hoar of Massachusetts, "This Treaty will make us a vulgar, commonplace empire, controlling subject races and vassal states, in which one class must forever rule and other classes must forever obey."

In Favor: Senator Knute Nelson of Minnesota, "Providence has given the United States the duty of extending Christian civilization. We come as ministering angels, not despots."

I include these comments because they seem to reflect the attitudes toward God in this country today. On one hand are the atheists and agnostics, who view Christianity as a way of making ourselves vassals who must ever obey an overpowering God. On the other hand are the believers who consider God a benevolent Power with our own best interests at heart.

Are you willing to submit to God's Suzerainty Treaty?

Glossary, in order of appearance:

דברים	<i>devarim</i>	words
דבר	<i>debar</i>	word
	<i>deuteros</i>	second
	<i>nomos</i>	law
תורה	<i>Torah</i>	the Law/Instruction
אשראל	<i>Yisra'el</i>	Israel
ישוע	<i>Yeshua</i>	Jesus/salvation
γραμματεύς	<i>grammateus</i>	scribe/teacher of the Law
ברית	<i>b'reet</i>	covenant
		“Person of the House Gives the Covenant”
		“Son Gives the Covenant”
ב	<i>bet</i>	house
ר	<i>resh</i>	head/person
י	<i>yod</i>	hand/symbolically give
ת	<i>tav</i>	covenant/“cross” in the time of משה
משה	<i>Mosheh</i>	Moses
בר	<i>bar</i>	son
אהב	<i>ahav</i>	love
		“The Heart of the Father is Love”
		“Love Reveals the Father”
א	<i>aleph</i>	ox/symbolically strength/leader/first
ה	<i>hey</i>	behold/reveal
ב	<i>bet</i>	house
אב	<i>av</i>	father/strength of the house
מצות	<i>mitzvot</i>	commandments
מצוה	<i>mitzvah</i>	command
יהוה	<i>YHVH</i>	the LORD/God's holy Name
אמן	<i>amen</i>	believe
תורת משה	<i>Torat Moshe</i>	Law of Moses
עלה	<i>alah</i>	go up
שמע	<i>shema</i>	hear and obey

דור לדור	<i>dor l'dor</i>	generation to generation
שבת חזון	<i>Shabbat Chazon</i>	Sabbath of Vision
ὕμεις	<i>hymeis</i>	you (plural)
ἐστέ	<i>este</i>	you are (second person plural of “to be”)
פדה	<i>padah</i>	redeemed/ransomed/rescued