

THROUGH THE BIBLE

DEUTERONOMY



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Illustrations by VINAY KURUVILLA

DEUTERONOMY

Deuteronomy means " a 2nd law ". One way to divide it is to see it as looking in *three* directions:



Looking back :

God has **never** let us down in the past. This strengthens our **faith**. God has always **forgiven** us every time we **fell**. We **don't** look back in **discouragement** or **pride** but with **gratitude** for what God has done for us in the past.



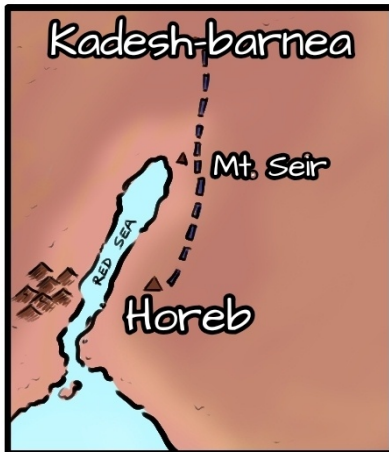
Looking upward :

We must see the **glory** of God. It is very **easy** for one who is **used** by God to get **proud**. Looking unto **Jesus**, the Author and Finisher of our **faith**, keeps us **humble**. A man gets proud when he looks at **other** people and imagines himself **better** than others



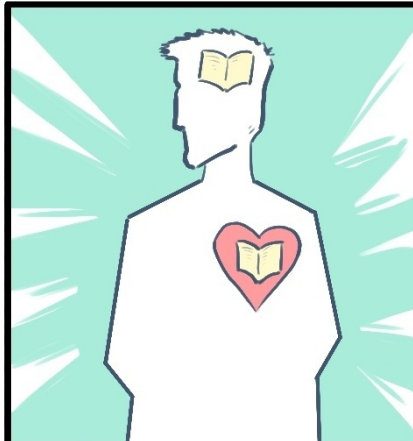
Looking forward :

We need to look forward in **faith**. God has **wonderful** things in **store** for us. He has a great **job** for us to do. We don't know when we will leave this world. But **before** the Lord **comes**, we look forward to doing something **useful** for Him



In Chapter 1: 13 Moses gives advice concerning **leaders**. He looked for 3 qualities - **wisdom**, **discernment** and **experience**. Wisdom comes by trials, applying knowledge to practical situations. One may have Bible knowledge, but no divine **wisdom**. The tree of knowledge brought death. **Knowledge** puffs up. The tree of life brings **wisdom** teaching us how to **live** and **react** in different situations of life

It was a 11 day journey from Mt Horeb to Kadesh-barnea via Mt Seir. (Chapter 1.2) But the Israelites took **38** years to make that journey! One can finish 12 grades of school in 12 years or in 20. We can always ask God to **forgive** the wasted years but we **can't** have the time back.



Discernment between what is **human** and what is **Godly** is required as well. The ability to discern between **Godly** and **demonic** is easy but not so between what is **spiritual** and what is **soulish**. We need to discern whether a person is speaking from his **head** or from his **heart**. What comes from the **head** will go to the head of people. Thirdly, **experience** through crushing in trials and tasting **God's power** is needed



Moses then warned the judges not to show **partiality** to the rich. When I was a young believer, **every** church I went to had an **influential** person in society, such as a **government** official or a rich **businessman**, on its **board**. I wondered **why** this was so. Surely every **big** man in the world was not a **spiritual** man. In fact, the Bible says "God has chosen the **poor** of the world to be **rich** in **faith**" James 2: 5



In Chapter 2: 2, 3 the Lord told the Israelites they had **circled** the mountain long enough. **Movement is not progress**, if we are staying in the **same** place **spiritually**. The Lord is calling us now to **move** on in victory.

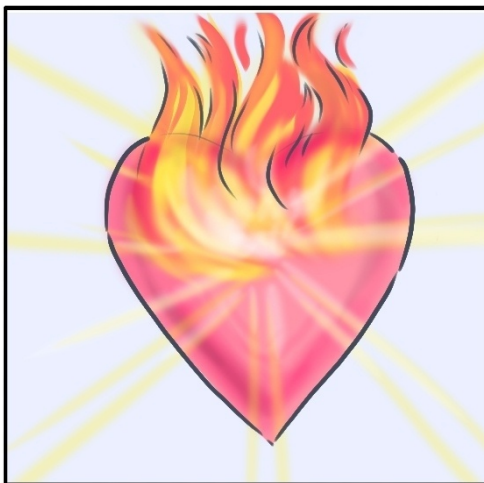
Chapter 4: 2 says "You shall **not add** to the word I am commanding you or **take away** from it"



"he who keeps the smallest.. will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."



Adding to it means, we make rules that are **not** in Scripture and try to be **more** spiritual - like Eve who said "we must not **touch** the fruit"



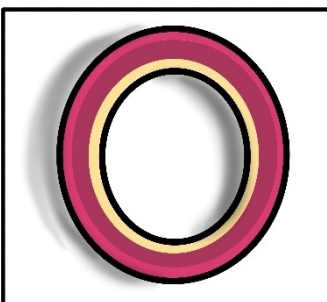
Chapters 4: 24 and 31, we read two statements: "God is a **consuming fire**" and "God is **merciful**". The **glory** of God was seen in **Jesus Christ**, full of **grace** and **truth** (John 1: 14). God is **love** and He is **holy**.



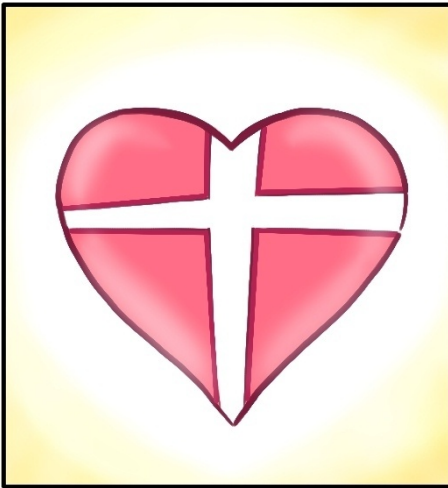
In Chapter 4: 29 Moses said the Israelites could **find** God if they searched for Him with **all** their **heart** and **all** their **soul**. Many don't find God because they seek like they would look for a lost 10 **paisa** coin at night. **What if** they had misplaced 10000 rupees instead - how **long** would both the searches take? God is a **rewarder** of the **diligent seekers**. (Hebrews 11: 6)



In Chapter 5 the Sabbath is commanded to be kept for another reason - to remember that they did **not** get **deliverance** by their own power but through the **Lord's** strength. **Trusting** God accomplishes more than busy **activity**.



In Chapter 5: 29, we read of God's greatest **longings** for His people. It is rare to find the word "O" in Scripture. Here God uses it saying "O that they had such a heart in them that they would **fear** Me and **keep** all My **commandments** always that it may go **well** with them and with their sons forever." His commandments in the Bible are like "Manufacturer's **instructions**". Since we are manufactured by God, the Bible has instructions on how to **best** function as human beings. God wants the **best** for us.

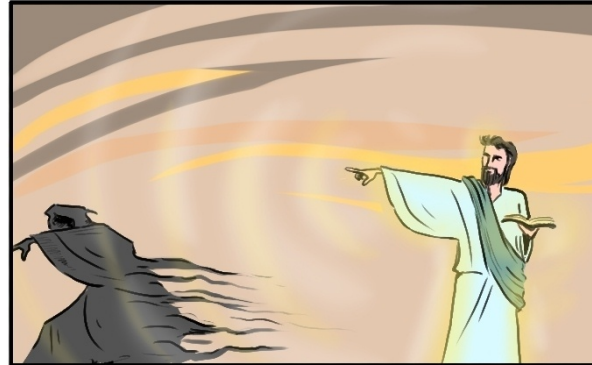


The first commandment is "Love the Lord your God with *all* your heart, with *all* your soul and with *all* your might"

This is the first manufacturer's instruction. In this way we love our neighbour and love our wives *better*! We will even love our *enemies*!



We overcome sin not by battling sin primarily but by loving God. This is the *expulsive power of a new affection*. Like a girl who loses all love for one man when she meets a far better man. The *new* love drove out the old. When we love God with all our hearts, the love of money, property and evil lusts will thus be driven out. Our intellect and faculties are to be used for God



When Jesus was tempted, He said "it is written". He quoted two verses, both from Deuteronomy (6: 13 and 8: 3). God's word has the answer to every temptation and problem in life.



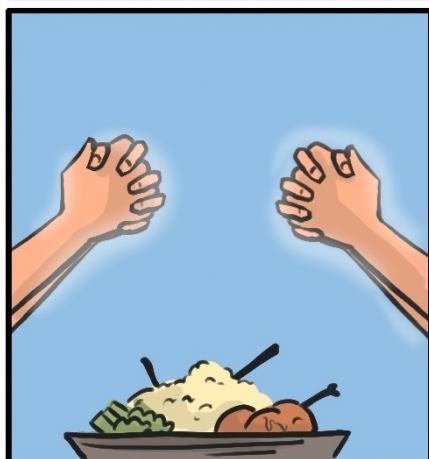
In Chapter 8: 11- 15, Moses warns them: "Beware lest you forget the Lord .. when you have eaten and are satisfied and have built good houses, your flocks and herds multiply and your heart becomes proud." It is *easier* to think of God when we are in the wilderness, *struggling* than when we blessed and rich. Noah had *no time* to get drunk when he was building the ark. But when he came through the flood triumphantly, he did. When David was running from cave to cave, he wrote psalms and was close to God. When he had *ease* and money, he didn't have to go to battle himself but could *send others* to do the fighting for him while he *relaxed*. That was when he sinned with Bathsheba. Solomon sinned because he had plenty of *ease* and *wealth*. When we have plenty we are in danger. Let us be content with what God has decided to give us, even if it is only a little.





In Chapter 11: 21 Moses told them that God's **longing** for them was "that your days and the days of your sons maybe multiplied on the land like the **days of heaven upon earth**." God wants us, even now, to have a **foretaste** of the joy, peace, love, purity and goodness of heaven in our homes and churches. We can be joyful if we live by the principles of heaven on earth. This is God's will for us. Let us determine to do this **throughout**, not just at the start of, our Christian lives, looking at **Jesus**.

Chapter 13 has a section on **false prophets**. God uses them to **test** our **real** desires and longings. They have **two** methods. The first is to **flatter** us and tell us we will prosper where we are planning to go - some **wealthy** country. We will do as they have "prophesied" and thus **fulfill** their "prophecy" **ourselves**! This psychological **gimmick** is called "self- fulfilling prophecy". We are **happy** because we got what we **thought** as "God's approval" to go where we **wanted** and we give the "prophet" a handsome **gift**. Thus the prophet is happy as well. The **devil** is also **happy** because he **deceived both** us and the prophet. God and the **angels** of heaven, however, are **unhappy**. Another trick is to "**save**" us from **non existent danger** they "prophecy".



While some foods were unclean for the Israelites, this is **not** applicable to us today since Jesus declared **all** foods **clean** (Mark 7: 19). All food is **sanctified** when we **pray** and eat it (1 Timothy 4: 1-5)



Chapter 15 speaks of **releasing** people on the Sabbath year. It also speaks of not being **tight-fisted, stingy and hard-hearted**, but **generous** towards their **poor** brother (verses 7 and 8) The Lord took a great interest in poor people.



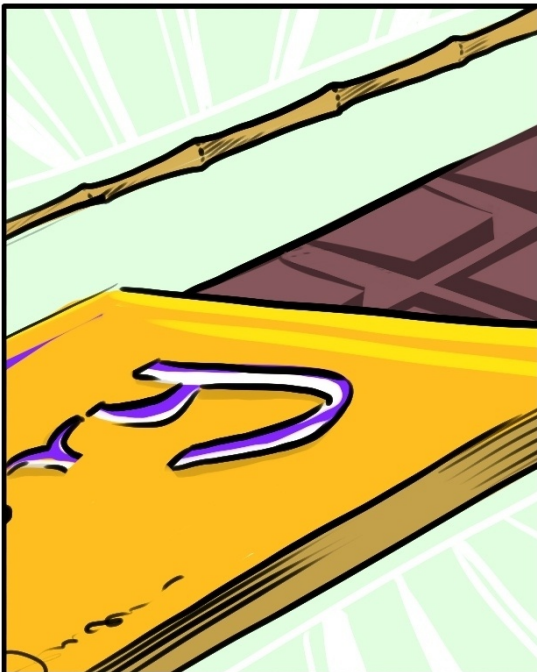
Chapter 17: 14 - 19: It was **not** God's will for Israel to have a **king** for **He** was to be their king. (1 Samuel 8: 7) But God **always** gives people the **freedom** to choose His **second-best** if they don't want His **best**. So He told them that if they **chose** to have a king, he must read this law everyday, fear God and **obey** it fully. This is a good reminder for Christian leaders



In Chapter 18: 1-7 Moses forbids spiritism, fortune- telling, divination and witchcraft.(Also in Leviticus 19: 26) Instead of this, the Lord said He would raise up a prophet in the future whom they were to listen to (v 14-19) - a clear reference to the coming of **Jesus Christ**.



In Chapter 18: 20, they are warned against saying something in the Lord's name which He has not commanded. Many today prophesy saying " **Thus says the Lord** .. " - to give an air of authority to what they are saying. Then they continue to say **whatever** is on their minds. Such prophets were to be killed in the Old Testament. God says in Jeremiah 23: 21 " I did not speak to them, **yet** they prophesied" . Yet, **multitudes** of **Christians** are lead **astray** by false prophecies today. We have **no** right to say " Thus says the Lord " **except** when quoting something that God has **actually** said in the **Scriptures**.



Chapter 28 is divided into **two** parts. The first 14 verses are **promises** about how God would **bless** them if they kept His laws. The next 54 verses are about how God would **punish** them if they **disobeyed** His laws. This was the only way God could get man to **obey** Him under the **Old** Covenant - by **hope** of reward and **threat** of punishment (**chocolate** and **stick** approach), a method we use with little **children** - the promise of a **chocolate** if they **obey** and punishment with a **stick** if they **disobey**. Under the old covenant, God treated all **men** like little **children**. Under the **new** covenant , God treats us like adults. Jesus said " **if** you love Me keep my **commandments** " (John 14: 15) - to obey God out of love and **reverence**, not out of **fear**.
This is how an adult son obeys his father.

