

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Read the Bible in a Year Challenge
Week 10

Monday	Deuteronomy 1-3	Psalm 53	Luke 11
Tuesday	Deuteronomy 4-6	Psalm 54	Luke 12
Wednesday	Deuteronomy 7-9	Psalm 55	Luke 13
Thursday	Deuteronomy 10-12	Psalm 56	Luke 14
Friday	Deuteronomy 13-15	Psalm 57	Luke 15
Saturday	Deuteronomy 16-18	Psalm 58	Luke 16

Sunday: *Enjoy the lessons from Scripture as they are read aloud in Sunday worship. The Bible study summary for each Sunday of the year is found as a separate document on the parish website, under “Adult Education, Bible Study”.*

The Deuteronomy readings:

1. Deuteronomy is the fifth and last book of the Pentateuch or *Torah* (the Law). (See the week 1 summary *re.* Genesis for additional background on “the five books of Moses”.)
 - a. The title comes from the Greek version of the Old Testament (the *Septuagint* or LXX). *Deuteronomion* means “second law,” and derives both from the book reflecting later (6th C. B.C.) editing of earlier writings and the book’s restatement of the Law as superseding the “covenant code” of Exodus 20.23-23.19.
 - i. In Jewish tradition, the book is referred to as *dēbārīm* (“words”), from the opening verse.
 - b. Deuteronomy is the first book which speaks, consistently, not of “laws” but of “the Law”.
 - c. Authorship is traditionally ascribed to Moses, but it is evident that the description in this book of the death of Moses serves as an editorial tool to complete the five books of the Law, and thus reflects more than one authorial and editorial hand.
 - i. This insight is not incompatible with much material originating with Moses.
2. Deuteronomy is first and foremost a law book. It is concerned with the regulation of life by law, and the adaptation of ancient practice to changing circumstances.
 - a. The Law’s purpose is to outline a level of moral performance compatible with the self-revelation of the LORD to Israel, and with Israel’s high calling as the people of God.
 - i. This high calling includes a focus on the poor and disadvantaged.
3. The readings this week include all of Moses’ first and second addresses to the people (*i.e.*, from Horeb to Moab, 1.1-4.49, and a homiletic introduction to the Law, 5.1-11.32), and the first eight of seventeen chapters of statement of the Law.
4. Much of the first three chs. parallel accounts in Numbers. The people remain rebellious as well as fearful, not fully trusting of the LORD.
 - a. Ch. 4 begins with evidence that more than one editorial hand is at work, for it recites (4.1) that statutes and ordinances *have* been given, when they come later in the book.
 - b. Ch. 4 contains a long teaching discourse on the purpose of observing the Law.

- i. One the rhetorical high points is at 4.32ff, in which God's closeness to His people is recited as evidence of His saving hand.
- 5. In ch. 5 the Ten Commandments (which were first encountered in Exodus 20) are restated. The Decalogue is the foundation of all of the Law.
 - a. This foundation is extended at 6.5, the "Great Commandment" recited by Jesus at Mtt. 22.37-40; Mk. 12.28-34; Lk. 10.25-28).
- 6. The balance of the addresses include:
 - a. Caution against disobedience (6.10-25).
 - b. Israel as a chosen people (7.1-11), and the blessings which flow from obedience (7.12-26).
 - c. A warning not to forget God when the people are blessed (ch. 8).
 - d. The consequences of rebelling against God (ch. 9).
 - e. The origin of the second set of tablets of the Law (ch. 10), reciting events described in Exodus.
 - f. The rewards of obedience to God (ch. 11).
 - g. That pagan shrines are to be destroyed (12.1-14); where worship is to take place (12.15-28), and a warning against idolatry (12.29-13.18).
 - h. Pagan practices are forbidden (ch. 14), and laws are stated concerning the sabbatical year (ch. 15).
 - i. High holidays are reviewed (ch. 16), as are forbidden forms of worship, and the legal decisions of priests and Levites (ch. 17), as well as the privileges of priest and Levites (ch. 18).
 - i. At. 18.15 we encounter the specific prophecy of a new prophet to speak authoritatively for God. This prophecy has always been understood by the Church to be a reference to Jesus.

The psalms: *The psalm numbering and versification system used throughout these study summaries is that found in The Book of Common Prayer (1979).*

- 1. The psalms encountered this week include:
 - a. 53: This psalm is an exact parallel to Ps. 14. Ps. 14 is the J source version and this is the E source (Elohist) version. The J source characteristically refers to God by Name, the LORD; the E source as "God" (*Elohim*).
 - b. 54: An individual lament. Alternate readings in v. 3 can be to "arrogant (or insolent) men" or to "foreigners". The latter reading gives credence to the view that this is a psalm spoken by the king.
 - c. 55: An individual lament of unclear structure. Tranquility in the "wilderness" (v. 8) is contrasted with strife "in the city" (v. 10), which may reflect the tradition in Scripture that the wilderness is where God reveals Himself (*e.g.*, to Elijah in 1 Kgs.)
 - d. 56: An individual lament. The reference to the psalmist's foes as "peoples" (v. 7) may indicate a royal speaker.
 - e. 57: An individual lament. A refrain (vv. 6, 12) focuses on the loftiness of the LORD. This reflects the ancient Near East tradition (*see, e.g.*, Isa. 6.1) that a divine figure is of gigantic stature. "Loftiness" may be intended as a reflection of stature, not location.
 - f. 58: A psalm of indeterminate form. It reflects elements both of lament and of a polemic against pagan gods.
 - i. The "rulers" of v. 1 (Hebrew = *'lm*) is more literally translated as "gods".

The Gospel readings:

1. The readings this week are all from Luke's description of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem.
 - a. Jesus instructs His disciples in prayer, and disputes arise which reveal the meaning of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem.
 - i. Jesus teaches His disciples how to pray (the "Lord's Prayer"), and then instructs in the necessity of prayer and of perseverance in prayer.
 1. Where Luke has the Father granting the Holy Spirit in response to prayer (11.13), Matthew has the Father grant "good things" (Mtt. 7.9). This is consistent with Luke's theology that "good things" can get the disciple in trouble (*see, e.g.,* 12.18-19; 16.25).
 - b. Almsgiving is an essential part of the Christian life for Luke (11.41).
2. Luke's account of the disciples meeting with external and internal opposition (ch. 12) is followed by instruction on the need for all to repent (13.1-9), on the nature of God's kingdom (13.11-17), and on the fact that despite opposition God's kingdom grows (13.18-21).
 - a. This third instruction is "lived" in Luke's second volume, Acts, in which it is clear that nothing can defeat the spread of the Gospel.
3. Mid-way through ch. 13, Luke's narrative switches to the second part of Jesus' instruction on the meaning of the Christian way.
 - a. Immediately following His instruction which stresses the need for repentance, Jesus obediently continues His journey to Jerusalem (13. 31-35).
 - b. The inclusive nature of Jesus' call, and of the kingdom of heaven, is emphasized (14.1-24), followed by a repetition of the demand of discipleship.
 - c. God's mercy for sinners is illustrated three times (15.1-32).
 - i. God's mercy toward sinners breaks through all human restrictions of how God should act toward sinners.
 - d. The necessity of sharing blessings with the needy is emphasized (16.1-31).
4. Notable Lucan illustrations and parables in these readings include:
 - a. The Narrow Door: 13.22-30.
 - b. The Parable of the Great Feast (14.15-24), followed by instruction in the cost of discipleship.
 - c. Five parables in succession:
 - i. The Lost Sheep: 15.1-7.
 - ii. The Lost Coin: 15.8-10.
 - iii. The Prodigal Son: 15.11-32.
 - iv. The Dishonest Manager: 16.1-13, followed by instruction on the relationship between the Law and the kingdom of God, and the teaching (not in the form of a parable) about The Rich Man and Lazarus (16.19-30), which illustrates the teaching role of the Law.