1:2 *It is eleven days’ journey*- It took Israel 38 years to complete this journey, but it was only 11 days if they walked directly. Their exit from Egypt through the Red Sea represents our baptism into Christ (1 Cor. 10:1,2), and the wilderness journey is the prototype of our walk to God’s Kingdom. We tend to walk around in circles as Israel did, rather than perceiving our end destination clearly and keeping our focus upon it.

1:3 *In the fortieth year*- Moses was now at the end of his life; Israel stood on the borders of the promised land, which he was disallowed from entering. He now gives his swansong, perhaps in the last month or even day of his life he gave Israel the address transcripted for us as ‘Deuteronomy’, literally ‘the second [giving of] the law’. He repeats some of the laws he had previously given them, with some additional comments and clarifications, and shares with them his reflections upon their journey. In this book, therefore, we perceive a man at the point of spiritual maturity.

1:7 *The river Euphrates*- This was the boundary of the land promised to Abraham. But sadly Israel lacked the spiritual ambition to even go there, let alone settle and inherit the land. It may well be that we inherit the Kingdom, but not to the extent that we could do. We in this brief life are deciding the nature of how we will spend eternity.

1:22 The sending out of the spies was a concession to human weakness; Num. 13:17-20 says that they were sent in order to find out whether the land of Canaan was a good land, and the feasibility of overcoming the people who lived there. But God had categorically given assurances on these points already; yet Israel preferred to believe the word of men than that of God. However, God made a concession to their weakness, and gave the command to send out the spies (Num. 13:2). But when Israel heard their faithless tales of woe, they decided they didn’t want to inherit the Kingdom prepared for them. When we make use of concessions to human weakness, we often end up in situations of temptation which we find too strong for us. The best way is to simply go straight forward in faith in God’s word of promise rather than relying on human strength.

1:25 This is a very positive perspective on what the spies said; they said that Canaan was a good land, but the inhabitants of the land were far too strong for Israel, effectively calling God a liar. Moses is very positive about Israel in Deuteronomy. It’s a sign of spiritual maturity that we impute righteousness to others and seek to focus on the positive rather than for ever dwelling on the terrible failures of God’s people.

1:43 These Israelites who had crossed the Red Sea (cp. our baptism) and were now rejected from God’s Kingdom, because they themselves had said they didn’t want to inherit it, now wanted more than anything else to be there. This is a major Biblical theme- that the rejected will desperately ask to be allowed in to God’s kingdom; the foolish virgins will knock on the closed door begging for it to be opened (Mt. 25:11; Lk. 13:25). Our ultimate destiny is to stand before the Lord wanting to enter His Kingdom with every fibre in our being. But this must be our attitude now, for then it will be too late to change anything.

2:7 *He has known your walking*- Because God ‘knew’ Israel’s journey through the wilderness, therefore they “lacked nothing”. The Hebrew language reflects certain realities about the nature of God's ways. The common Hebrew word for 'to see', especially when used about God's 'seeing', means also 'to provide' (Gen. 16:13; 22:8,14; 1 Sam. 16:17; ). What this means in practice is that the fact God sees and knows all things means that He can and will therefore and thereby provide for us in the circumstances of life; for He sees and knows all things.

2:12 *The children of Esau succeeded them, and they destroyed them from before them and lived in their place*- This history had been arranged by God to encourage His people; if those in the unbelieving world could do this, then how much more could they with God behind them. God arranges our lives so that we sometimes encounter others who without faith in God have achieved great things in their lives- in order to inspire us that if they can do it, how much more can we. See on 2:21.

2:19 *Don’t bother them or contend with them*- As also commanded about other areas in :5 and :9. The idea was that Israel weren’t to take anything less than the real promised land; they weren’t to seek to develop their own kingdom where seemed easier and more convenient to them. Likewise we are surrounded by temptation to have our own pseudo-Kingdom of God in this life; but we are to keep focused on the one and only true Kingdom of God which is yet to come.

2:21 If giants weren’t a barrier to the children of Lot taking land for a possession, neither should they be for Israel; but they greatly feared them (Num. 13:28,33). If worldly people can achieve as they do, how much more can we with God on our side. See on 2:12.

2:24 *Contend with him*- The implication could be that Moses was disobedient to this and tried to avoid confrontation with him (:27). But we can’t ultimately avoid the confrontations which God at times puts in our path (:32).

2:29 *The land which Yahweh our God gives us*- This phrase or idea occurs many times in Deuteronomy. Moses was urging the people to believe the most basic reality- that God would really give them the promised Kingdom. And we too are likewise continually encouraged by God’s word. In this particular example, Moses quite openly tells a Gentile people about their destination, in the same way as we should be unashamed to speak of our hope of the Kingdom to unbelievers.

2:31 *Begin to possess*- Even on our wilderness journey, before we have possessed the Kingdom, we do have some foretastes of that Kingdom; in the same way as Israel began to possess the promised land in some limited sense whilst still in the desert.

3:2 *Into your hand*- God gives us potential victories, but we still have to fight the human battle.

3:18 *God has given you this land to possess it*- Moses has just said that *he* gave Israel their land possessions (:12,13,15,16). So often we encounter this kind of thing; Moses loves to emphasize that God is working through him, that he is identified with God and merely His agent doing His work. Likewise the language of God can be applied to all His servants and supremely to His Son. This doesn’t mean that are God in person, neither was Jesus; but it also doesn’t mean that we as individuals are meaningless because God is manifest through us.

3:21 We are given some foretastes of the Kingdom of God even in this life; just as their victories in the wilderness were foretastes of the greater victories they would have against the inhabitants of Canaan.

3:25 Moses knew God well enough to know that He is capable of changing His stated intentions; for Moses had persuaded God not to destroy Israel as He once planned in His wrath. God is open to dialogue, He isn’t the impervious ‘Allah’ of Islam who must be merely submitted to; and this gives our prayer life real energy and zest, knowing that we’re not simply firing requests at God in the hope we might get at least some response; we can dialogue with God, wrestling in prayer over specific, concrete situations and requests.

3:26 *For your sakes*- Moses says this several times. Although he spoke Deuteronomy in his spiritual maturity at the end of his life, it could be argued that like all of us, he died with some spiritual point of weakness; and in his case it would have been his failure to own up fully to his sin of striking the rock, still blaming it on others even at the end of his life. But Moses will be saved; without any complacency, we all the same shouldn’t think that we won’t be saved because we have weaknesses we failed to overcome, and likewise we shouldn’t assume others won’t be saved because they can’t recognize what to us is an obvious failure in their behaviour or personality.

4:2 *So that you may keep the commandments*- The last message of Jesus, like that of Moses, emphasizes we are not to add to nor subtract from God’s word (Rev. 22:19). The commandments we have been given are designed by God to be a system of living which brings us to Him as He wishes. Jesus was perfect before God not just because He kept the commandments fully, but because the life elicited by that obedience produced a totally God-like person. If we omit some commandments and add others, then this will not be the end result. They are intended to synthesize together to produce a truly spiritual character and way of life. If we ignore some of them and add others then we will actually find obedience to the commandments *in toto* far more difficult. See on 11:22.

4:9,29,39 *Your heart-* Time and again in Deuteronomy, Moses speaks of the state of the heart. He warns them against allowing a bad state of heart to develop, he speaks often of how apostasy starts in the heart. Moses makes a total of 49 references to the heart / mind of Israel in Deuteronomy, compared to only 13 in the whole of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. This was perhaps his greatest wish as he faced death; that God’s people should develop a spiritual mind and thereby manifest the Father and come to salvation. He saw the state of our mind as the key to spiritual success. But do we share this perspective? There is so much in our modern would which is mind-corrupting. Perceiving the importance of spiritual mindedness is a sign of our spiritual maturity.

*Therefore make them known to your children*- The very process of teaching or explaining something to others makes us fully conscious of the material we are teaching; and so preaching or teaching our children God’s principles enables us to be the more conscious of them and to ourselves remember them. The whole concept of evangelization is partly for our benefit.

4:10 The LXX uses the word ekklesia eight times in Deuteronomy, but not once in Moses' other words (4:10; 9:10; 18:16; 23:1,2,3,8; 32:1). Responsibility for the whole family God had redeemed was a mark of Moses’ maturity. Both as the community of believers and as individuals, this will be a sign of our maturity too.

4:16 *Engraved image*- God’s people are to accept Him as He is in His word, rather than try to create God in a form which seems attractive to us. As we read His word, it is not for us to say ‘I don’t think God would be like *that*, He will be like *this*, which is how I imagine He ought to be’. And it is not for us to work around those words of His which are inconvenient to us by forced, out of context interpretation, dismissing their inspiration or other tricks of the human intellect. By doing so we are effectively making a graven image, fashioning God as we want Him to be rather than accepting Him as He is.

4:24 *Yahweh your God is a consuming fire*- This is quoted about us in Heb. 12:29 with a slight change of pronoun; “*Your* (Israel’s) God” becomes “*our* God”. The God of the Christian believers is the Old Testament Yahweh God of Israel; in this we see the significance of studying the accounts of how our God revealed Himself in the Old Testament.

4:27 *Left few in number among the nations*- Israel were indeed disobedient and were scattered throughout the provinces of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires. “There you will serve gods...” (:28) - but the prophets (especially Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel) condemned them for this. There is a downward spiral in spirituality, whereby if people choose to go to false gods, the true God confirms them in their delusions. This is why followers of false religions are so totally convinced they are right, everything makes sense to them within the theological system they adopt- because God confirms them in the delusion they have chosen (2 Thess. 2:11).

4:30 *In the latter days you shall return*- This is one of many indications that just before Christ returns, at least some Jews will repent and turn to the Father and His Son in truth. We should therefore always given special attention to witnessing the Gospel to Jewish people, because their repentance will be one factor which brings about Christ’s return.

4:37,38 *Brought you out... to bring you in*- Our separation from this world isn’t merely negative. We are separated *from* the world so that we might be separated *unto* the things of God. These two ideas are found together in the Hebrew word for ‘holiness’.

5:1 *Learn them and observe... them*- Learning / understanding God’s principles is the way towards being obedient to them. None of His laws are mere senseless tests of our obedience or submission to Him; they have specific intention.

5:3 *Didn’t make this covenant with our fathers*- We must read in an ellipsis here; clearly the idea is that what God had done at Sinai wasn’t *only* between Him and the people there at that time, but also with all His subsequent people. In our Bible study we must be aware that we are reading translations of languages which often rely on understanding the idiom for their real meaning to be delivered to us the readers. In Hebrew especially, we often have to read in an ellipsis; and this verse is a parade example.

5:5 The way Moses in his spiritual maturity in Deuteronomy sees Israel as far more righteous than they were reflects the way the Lord imputes righteousness to us. He says here that Israel didn't go near the mountain because they were afraid of the fire, whereas Ex. 19:21-24 teaches that Israel at that time were not so afraid of the fire, and were quite inclined to break through the dividing fence and gaze in unspiritual fascination at a theophany which was beyond them. Counting others as righteous rather than endlessly holding them to their failings is the way of grace and is the mark of maturity.

5:9 *Visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children*- Throughout Ez. 18 God clarifies that He doesn’t punish children for the sin of their parents; He deals with people on an individual level. However, the effect of sin is often felt in the society of subsequent generations, and in the process of how that works out, God is there enabling and permitting it to happen; in the same way as we all suffer the consequence of Adam’s sin and yet can still be God’s acceptable children.

5:11 We take on the Name of the Lord in baptism into that Name, just as Israel carried God’s Name as a people in Old Testament times. Our relationship with Him is not be a vain thing to us, a mere social club we joined, a casual association- it is to be our life, at the very core of our being.

5:21 The Law of Moses was the only legal code to as it were criminalize internal attitudes; nobody knows who covets what in their hearts, and there was no legal apparatus to punish this particular transgression of law. But the Law of Moses was a direct covenant between God and every individual amongst His people, and to Him they were personally responsible and answerable.

5:22 When Moses commented about the commandments that God “added no more”, he foresaw his people’s tendency to add the Halachas of their extra commandments… In this his time of spiritual maturity he could foresee the spiritual problems they would have in their hour by hour life, he appreciated how both their nature and their disobedience would be such a problem for them, and Moses foresaw that they would not cope well with it. Sensitivity to others’ likely failures and concern for them is another indicator of spiritual maturity.

5:27 We too have a tendency to shy away from a direct relationship with God through His word, and prefer a system of human mediators to bring God to us- as we see in the established churches. But God wants to have direct contact with us through the medium of His word.

6:3 *The God of your fathers-* It's been observed that the phrase "The God of [somebody]", or similar, occurs 614 times in the Old Testament, of which 306 are in Deuteronomy. Our very personal relationship with God was therefore something else which Moses came to grasp in his spiritual maturity.

*That it may be well with you*- Moses really wanted Israel's well-being, he saw so clearly how obedience would result in blessing (see also 12:28). This is a major theme of Moses in Deuteronomy. There was therefore a real sense of pleading behind his frequent appeal for Israel to "hear" God's words. "Hear, Israel" must have had a real passion behind it in his voice, uncorrupted as it was by old age. He didn't rattle it off as some kind of Sunday School text. At least four times Moses interrupts the flow of his speech with this appeal: "Hear, Israel" (5:1;  6:3,4; 9:1; 20:3). At the end of his life, Moses saw the supreme significance of our attitude to God’s word, and so he pleads with God’s people: Hear the word, love the word, make it your life. For in this is your salvation. And the Lord Jesus (e.g. in passages like Jn. 6) makes just the same urgent appeal to us.

6:4 The fact there is only one God means that He is to have our total loyalty and love (:5). If there were two gods, each would have 50%. But the one God demands our total devotion.

6:5 Some time, read through the book of Deuteronomy in one or two goes. You'll see many themes of Moses in Deuteronomy.  It shows how Moses felt towards Israel, and how the Lord Jesus feels towards us, and especially how he felt towards us just before his death. For Jesus was the prophet like unto Moses. "Love" and the idea of love occurs far more in Deuteronomy than in the other books of the Law. "*Fear* the Lord your God" of Exodus becomes "*l*ove the Lord your God" in Deuteronomy. Moses perceived that love is indeed the bond or proof of spiritual maturity (Col. 3:14).

7:1 God and Moses had stated that the Canaanite tribes would only be cast out if Israel were obedient, but here Moses enthuses that those tribes would indeed be cast out- so positive was he about Israel’s obedience (see too 6:18,19). And yet on the other hand he realistically was aware of their future failures. He said those positive words genuinely, because he simply loved Israel, and had the hope for them which love carries with it. Throughout his speech in Deuteronomy, Moses is constantly thinking of Israel in the land; he keeps on telling them how to behave when they are there, encouraging them to be strong so that they will go into the land. Roughly 25% of the verses in Moses' speech speak about this. Israel's future inheritance of the Kingdom absolutely filled Moses' mind as he faced up to his own death. And remember that his speech was the outpouring of 40 years meditation. Their salvation, them in the Kingdom, totally filled his heart; just as like Paul we should enthuse about others’ salvation, not simply our own. And likewise with the Lord Jesus. Psalms 22 and 69 show how His thoughts on the cross, especially as he approached the point of death, were centred around our salvation.

7:7,9,13 Analyzing usage of the word "love" in the Pentateuch reveals that "love" was a great theme of Moses at the end of his life (Moses uses it 16 times in Deuteronomy, and only four times in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers). Love is indeed the bond or proof of spiritual maturity (Col. 3:14).

7:16 Despite such great love for Israel, Moses knew them so well that he fully appreciated that they were extremely prone to weakness. This is one of the major themes of Moses in Deuteronomy. He did not turn a blind eye to their sins; Deuteronomy is punctuated with reminders of how grievously they had sinned during their journey, and yet at the same time Moses is so positive about them- setting a wonderful pattern for us in how to deal with others. Time and again he comments on how easily they will be tempted to disobey commandments. "Take heed" runs like a refrain throughout Moses' speech. He warns them here not to "take pity" on false teachers, but to purge them from the community (7:16; 13:8; 19:13,21; 25:12). Not once in the earlier giving of the Law does this warning occur. Moses had come to know Israel so well that he could see how they were tempted to fail, and so he warned them forcibly against it. The way the Lord Jesus knows our thought processes, the mechanism of our temptations, is wondrously prefigured here.

8:3 *Man does not live by bread only*- The passages quoted by Jesus in the desert to strengthen Himself against His desires (“the devil”) are all from the same part of Deuteronomy, regarding Israel’s experience in the wilderness. Jesus clearly saw a parallel between His experiences and theirs. The description of the Lord Jesus as being in the wilderness with beasts and Angels (Mk. 1:13) is another connection with Israel’s experience in the wilderness- they were plagued there by “wild beasts” (Dt. 32:19-24). Jesus was led up of the spirit for forty days in the wilderness, as Israel were led forty years by a Spirit-Angel. The mind of Jesus was likewise proved by the temptations. Jesus overcame by quoting the Scriptures that were in His heart (Ps. 119:11). Jesus also was allowed to hunger, to reinforce His understanding of the fact that we are to live not by physical food but by the word of God. The reference to Israel being ‘chastened’ (:5) in the desert recall how God chastened His Son, Jesus (2 Sam. 7:12; Ps. 89: 32). Thus Jesus showed us how to read and study the Word - He thought Himself into the position of Israel in the wilderness, and therefore took the lessons that can be learnt from their experiences to Himself in His wilderness trials.

8:4 God has likewise promised to provide us on our wilderness journey with basic clothing and food (Ps. 37:25). We should be content with this, and instead of giving our strength to earn money to tickle our taste buds and buy fine clothing, instead give our lives to serving God.

8:9 *You may dig copper*- But in Judges and 1 Samuel we read several times of how Israel hardly had any iron weapons and were dominated by the Philistines who did. So this was a potential for them- they *could* have had this blessing, but like us so often, they chose to be satisfied with the minimum and didn’t realize it for themselves.

9:3 Moses uses the name "Yahweh" over 530 times in Deuteronomy, often with some possessive adjective, e.g. "Yahweh your God" or "Yahweh our God". Now at the end of his life, he saw the wonder of personal relationship between a man and his God. Jacob reached a like realization at his peak.

9:14 Despite knowing their weakness and his own righteousness, Moses showed a marvellous softness and humility in this speech which is recorded in Deuteronomy. Here he does not mention how fervently he prayed for them, so fervently that God changed His expressed intention; and note deeply how Moses does not mention how he offered his physical and eternal life for their salvation. That fine, fine act and desire by Moses went unknown to Israel until the book of Exodus came into circulation. And likewise, the depth of Christ's love for us was unrecognised by us at the time. Moses had such humility in not telling in Israel in so many words how fervently he had loved them; for this really is love. The spiritual culture and love of the Lord Jesus is even greater.

*Let Me alone*- This reflects the amazingly close relationship between God and Moses. It’s as if God is saying: ‘I know you might persuade me to change My mind on this one, but please, don’t try, I might give in, when really they do need to be destroyed’. We too can have this level of intimacy with God.

*Blot out their name*- Moses prayed that *his* name would be ‘blotted out’ instead (Ex. 32:32). To be blotted out of the book God had written may have been understood by Moses as asking for him to be excluded from an inheritance in the promised land; for later, a ‘book’ was written describing the various portions (Josh. 18:9). The connection is made explicit in Ez. 13:9. If Israel were to be blotted out there and then in the wilderness, then Moses wanted to share this experience, such was his identity with his ungrateful people; and yet this peak of devotion is but a dim shadow of the extent of Christ’s love for us. In 9:18 he says that his prayer of Ex. 32:32 was heard- in that he was not going to enter the land, but they would. Hence his urging of them throughout Deuteronomy to go ahead and enter the land- to experience what his self-sacrifice had enabled. In this we see the economy of God, and how He works even through sin. On account of Moses’ temporary rashness of speech, he was excluded; Moses didn't enter the land. And yet by this, his prayer was heard. He was temporarily blotted out of the book, so that they might enter the land. This is why Moses stresses now at the end of his life that he wouldn’t enter the land for Israel’s sake (1:37; 3:26; 4:21). He saw that his sin had been worked through, and the essential reason for him not entering was because of the offer he had made. It “went badly with him for their sakes” (Ps. 106:32).

10:11 Moses led God’s people to the land, the Kingdom, but couldn’t himself take them in there- rather like the Law with which he was associated revealed the Kingdom, but it needed Joshua / Jesus to actually bring them into it.

10:12 Alluded to in Mic. 6:8, where walking in God’s ways is understood as walking in humility; and ‘loving God’ is expanded into loving to show justice and mercy. We can be tempted to think that we can ‘love God’ without our own hearts by accepting His existence and reading the Bible. But it has to be more than that; to love God is to love others, to be merciful to the irritating and ungracious (:18). We cannot love God without loving our brethren (1 Jn. 3:17; 4:21). To love God in this way is in the end ‘for our own good’ (:13).

10:22 This was an initial, primary fulfilment of the promises to Abraham; we too have some foretastes of the Kingdom life even now.

11:4 *Destroyed them to this day*- We are to understand each victory and achievement of God as somehow ongoing right down to our own day and our own lives and experience. This is what makes the Bible a living word for us. This explains why David repeatedly refers to the miracle at the Red Sea as if this had affected him personally, to the extent that he could ecstatically rejoice because of it.

11:10 *Go in... came out*- See on 4:37,38.

11:11 The people were often reminded that they were about to “go over [Jordan] to possess” the land, as if they were on the banks of Jordan almost.

11:16 There are so many other examples of Moses showing his recognition of exactly how Israel were likely to be tempted (Dt. 6:11-13; 8:11-20; 9:4; 11:16; 12:13,19,23,30; 13:1-4; 14:27; 15:9,18; 17:11,12 ("will"),14,16,17; 21:18; 22:1-4,18; 23:21; 25:8). See on 7:16. We can take comfort in God’s sensitivity to us in an age unlike any other and apparently with its own unprecedented temptations.

11:21 *As the days of the heavens upon the earth*- This is the essence of the New Testament idea of the “Kingdom of Heaven” [not, the Kingdom *in* Heaven] coming upon earth at Christ’s return.

11:22 The idea of 'cleaving' to God is a big theme of Moses in Deuteronomy (4:4; 10:20; 11:22; 13:4,17; 28:21,60; 30:20); the only other time Moses uses the word in his writings is in Gen. 2:24, concerning a man cleaving to his wife. Moses seems to have been suggesting to Israel that their covenant relationship with God meant they were marrying God. This was a real paradigm breaker. We may be used to such things. But against the theological background of the time, not to say the generally low level of spirituality among Israel, this was a shocking idea- that a nation’s God was not distant from them and just occasionally involved, but married to them placing them as equal partners with Him in the relationship. It reflected the heights to which Moses had risen.

*All this commandment-* Note the singular. Israel weren’t to add to or reduce the commandments because they were as a body of commandment intended to enable a complete life before God. See on 4:2.

11:24 *The river, the Euphrates*- The entire territory promised to Abraham could’ve been given to them if they had bothered to go there; but they settled just for the fertile land along the Mediterranean coast. They, like us so often, lacked any sense of spiritual ambition.

12:3 *Burn with fire... cut down-* The Lord's description of the rejected being cut down and thrown into the fire (Mt. 7:19) is surely referring to these words (cp. 7:5), where the idols of the world were to be hewn down and thrown into the fire. The Lord understood that those who worship idols are like unto them (Ps. 115:8; 135:18). Because all idols [of whatever kind] will be destroyed in the last day, all who worship them will have to share their destruction. And yet we can be hewn down by God's word now (Hos. 6:5) rather than wait for God to do it to us by the condemnation process. We must cut off (s.w. hew down) our flesh *now* (Mt. 5:30; 18:8 cp. 7:19).

12:5 Worldly religion is made as convenient as possible for the worshipper to come and participate in; the shrines of the Canaanite gods were everywhere in the land, whereas Yahweh insisted that there was one specific place to where His people should come to worship Him. This was perhaps partly to inspire national unity within the family of God. The pagan shrines were each different; they had no uniformity between them, as archaeologists have demonstrated. But the one true God has principles of worship and service which don’t vary geographically and are consistently the same because truth is truth and in that sense doesn’t vary from place to place nor context to context.

12:10 *He gives you rest*- Several times Moses describes Israel’s inheritance of the land as entering “rest”, mindful of how God had sworn that they would not enter into that rest, and yet he had pleaded with God to change His mind about that (Ps. 95:11; Heb. 3:11), even though Israel at the time didn’t realize the intensity of pleading and self-sacrifice for them which was going on up in the mountain. Just as we don’t appreciate the extent of the Lord’s mediation for us, that we might enter the final “rest” (Heb. 4:9).

12:13 We can’t worship God any way we like, thinking that the fact we accept His existence and even worship Him means that we are somehow free to do it as we think.

12:16 The blood was understood as representing life (:23; Lev. 17:11). We are not to take life to ourselves; not merely in that we aren’t to murder, but we also aren’t to assume that our lives, or any life, is in fact ours to use or dominate for ourselves. Our lives and those of others are God’s, and we cannot take any life to ourselves.

12:18 *In all that you put your hand on*- Whatever they put their hand on to give to God they were to give with joy; for God *loves* cheerful giving, and hates reluctant or manipulated ‘giving’ (2 Cor. 9:7).

12:20 Vegetarianism is a matter of personal choice, but it certainly isn’t commanded by God- indeed, quite the opposite (1 Tim. 4:3).

13:3 The reasoning here is helpful with respect to the claims made by some to perform supernatural feats. Even if it seems they might have done so, that isn’t a good enough reason to believe them; our loyalty to the one true God must not be swayed by apparently impressive deeds or predictions by those who don’t believe in Him.

13:5 Moses' frequent references to the way in which the Exodus had separated Israel from Egypt show the colossal difference there is between us and this world as a result of our Red Sea baptism into Christ (13:5; 15:15; 16:12; 1 Cor. 10:1,2); as our Lord in his time of dying was so strongly aware of the way in which He was redeeming us from this present evil world (Gal. 1:4).

13:6 So often family loyalties deflect a person from their loyalty to the one true God. The same has always been the case. Our spiritual family should ultimately be more meaningful to us than our natural family; that at least is the ideal, although all families have their dysfunctions, including our spiritual family.

13:14 *You shall inquire and make search and ask diligently*- Allegations of misbehaviour or wrong teaching within the family of God must be taken seriously and not pushed under the carpet. But they aren’t to be acted upon without a very careful investigation, during which the love which believes and hopes all things is paramount. This passage cannot be used as a reason to divide from those who have a slightly different Biblical interpretation of something than we do, whilst believing in and worshipping the same Lord. The situation envisaged is if someone were seeking to draw Yahweh’s people away to a totally different god (:13).

14:1 Whilst there is nothing morally wrong with cutting the skin, the idea was that Israel weren’t to even appear associated with pagan rituals for the dead. We likewise should naturally not want to even appear like worshippers of any other god (of whatever kind) when Yahweh is our only God.

14:4 See notes on Lev. 11 for commentary on the clean and unclean food regulations.

14:21 *You must not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk*- This was likely a pagan ritual which Israel weren’t to follow. It may also be that God’s sensitivity to the feelings of animals is coming out here; and He wishes us to live lives regulated by sensitivity to all of creation. See on 20:19.

14:26 *Rejoice, you and your household*- There was to be joy in giving to God rather than any sense of resentment; and the families (“your household”) were to have this explained to them so that even the children learnt to rejoice in giving rather than being selfish. Again we see God’s emphasis on the need for giving to be done cheerfully; He simply *loves* cheerful giving (2 Cor. 9:7).

14:27 There were three separate tithes commanded under the Law of Moses. Yet the tithing churches have simply said: ‘There’s something about tithing in the Old Testament. So, hey, give us 10% of your money!’. The first was the Levitical tithe of 10% on 100% of the produce for the first six years and was destined for the Levites and priests (Dt. 14:27; 12:19). The second tithe was the Festival tithe of 10% on 90% remaining produce after the Levitical tithe. This tithe had to be eaten in the presence of the Lord and was collected on the 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th years only. The third tithe was the tithe of the poor to be collected on the 3rd and 6th years only (Dt. 14:22-29; 26:12-15; Am. 4:4-5). No tithe was collected on the 7th year or Sabbatical year. The farmers were to let the land rest in that year. The tithe consisted of fruit, grain, wine and later animals that are typically harvested as produce from the land. It never consisted of money. Tithes were conducted annually and were based upon one’s produce increase for the year. This just isn’t talking about putting paper money or cheques on an offering plate each week as demanded by the tithing churches.

15:2 *He must not demand it of his neighbour and his brother because Yahweh’s release has been proclaimed*- The final release was in the death of Christ releasing us from all our sins, which are likened to debts in the New Testament. We are therefore not to “demand” recompense for sin from others because of the great release proclaimed. Jesus foresaw the difficulty of doing this, and urges us to pray constantly that we forgive or release our debtors (Mt. 6:12). The year of release was proclaimed on the day of atonement, in the same way as the cross has initiated a time of release from sin. The idea of ‘proclaiming’ this release or forgiveness is behind the language Luke uses to record the great commission, to proclaim this wonderful news to absolutely everybody- that their debt is cancelled.

15:4 Moses knew that there would always be poor people in the land, even though if the Law was properly kept this would not be the case (:4, 11). Having reminded them that if they were obedient, “there shall be no poor among you; for Yahweh will surely bless you”, Moses goes on to comment that “the poor will never cease out of the land”- and he gives the legislation cognisant of this (Dt. 15:4,11). Moses realized by the time of Deuteronomy that they wouldn’t make it to the blessings which were potentially possible. And yet he speaks so positively of how they would inherit the Kingdom. God recognizes that His people won’t totally make it spiritually nor receive all the blessings they could, and yet this doesn’t mean they won’t be saved. This is a comfort for us in our spiritual incompleteness; and it also means that we shouldn’t expect the community of God’s people to be perfect. Even God doesn’t expect that, and the very structure of His own law foresaw that.

15:15 One of the most repeated themes of Moses in Deuteronomy is the way he keeps on telling them to "remember" all the great things which God had done for them on their wilderness journey, and especially the wonder of how he had redeemed them as children (his audience had been under twenty years old when they went through the Red Sea). He really wanted them to overcome the human tendency to forget the greatness of God as manifested earlier in our lives and spiritual experience. Our tendency as the new Israel is just the same- to forget the wonder of baptism, of how God reached out His arm to save us.

16:2 This seems to imply that now, in the ‘second law’ Moses was giving in Deuteronomy, the Passover sacrifice didn’t necessarily have to be a lamb, and it could be boiled not just roasted (:7).  See on 20:14. So eager is God for our fellowship that He is prepared to make concessions to our human situations; and we should have that spirit in dealing with others.

16:7 *You shall turn in the morning and go to your tents*- At the first Passover, which they were re-living, they left Egypt at night and in the morning went into the promised land. They were to imagine their homes as in a sense the promised land; there the principles of the Kingdom were to be upheld so that the home became a small imitation of the Kingdom. That principle applies to us too.

16:15 Moses was so positive about them, as we should be about others too. “God *will* bless you”, even though these blessings were conditional upon their obedience (28:1,4,12). Moses was this confident of them, as Paul was confident of the obedience of the Corinthians despite it seeming humanly unlikely (2 Cor. 10:6). It’s far easier to have a negative attitude about people than a positive one; but God’s grace and imputing of righteousness to us personally should help us be positive about others.

16:17 *The blessing of Yahweh your God which He has given you-* Notice the past tense. Moses often speaks of the "blessing" which God would give them for obedience; but he here speaks of the future blessing of obedience in the prophetic perfect, so confident was he that they would receive it. The blessings of the Kingdom were already obtained for us on the cross. It’s for us to as it were claim them.

16:21 Moses in Deuteronomy adds a whole series of apparently 'minor' commands which were designed to make obedience easier to the others already given. Thus he tells them not to plant a grove of trees near the altar of God - because he knew this would provoke the possibility of mixing Yahweh worship with that of the surrounding world.

17:6 Insisting on more than one witness before accepting the truth of an allegation meant that gossip and slander were limited; and Jesus applies this principle to dealing with disputes within His church (Mt. 18:16). Those who served other gods had to die on the testimony of two or three witnesses. This idea is twice alluded to in the New Testament in the context of making the decision to cease fellowship with someone (Mt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1). The implication is that death under the Old Covenant pointed forward to church discipline under the New Covenant. But we must note that the reason for this was serving other gods and wilful departing from covenant relationship with the Lord- not minor reasons.

17:14 Moses often reminds them that he knows that they will turn away from the Covenant he had given them (e.g. 30:1; 31:29). Here he shows that he knew that one day they would want a king, even though God was their king. He had such sensitivity to their weakness and likely failures, and in some areas he makes concessions to them.

17:16 Moses commands any future king not to send God's people to Egypt to buy horses because he could see that this would tempt them to go back to Egypt permanently. There are many other example of this kind of thing (Dt. 14:24; 15:18; 17:17-19; 18:9; 20:7,8). The point is that Moses had thought long and hard about the ways in which Israel would be tempted to sin, and his words and innermost desire were devoted to helping them overcome. Glorious ditto for the Lord Jesus whom he typified (18:18). Note that the king was warned not to get horses for himself from Egypt because the very fact of sending Israelites back into Egypt might tempt them to return there; we are to be sensitive to the spiritual effect our actions may have upon others.

17:16-20 This has strong relevance to Solomon. He did multiply silver, gold, horses and wives; his heart was turned away (:16,17= 2 Chron. 9:20).  Yet this passage says that if he studied the Law all his life, this would not happen, and also his heart would not be "lifted up above his brethren" (:20). Solomon's whipping of the people and sense of spiritual and material superiority (Ecc. 1:16;  2:7,9) shows how his heart was  lifted up. Yet Solomon knew the Law, despite his explicit disobedience to the commands concerning wives, horses etc.  But his knowledge of the word didn't bring forth the true humility which it was intended to. Solomon assumed  he wasn't proud;  he *assumed* God’s word was having its intended effect upon him, when it wasn’t. Such spiritual assumption is a major temptation for every child of God. God’s intention that the king of Israel should personally copy out all the commandments of the Law was “to the end that his heart will not *be raised up* above his brothers”- i.e. reflecting upon the many requirements of the Law would’ve convicted the King of his own failure to have been fully obedient, and therefore his heart would be humbled. And soon after this statement, we are hearing Moses reminding Israel that Messiah, the prophet like unto Moses, was to *be raised up* (18:18). Human failure, and recognition of it, prepares us to accept Christ.

18:6 God encourages us to make special devotions to Him. Thus the Levites could choose to leave their areas in the provinces and go and serve at the sanctuary. We must ask what special devotion we could make in response to His grace.

18:18 Christ was the prophet like unto Moses (Acts 3:22). Moses was the shepherd of the flock of Israel, leading them on God's behalf through the wilderness towards the promised land (Is. 63:12), as Christ leads us after baptism to the Kingdom. It was only through Moses' leadership that they reached Canaan (10:11). As Moses very intensely manifested God to the people, so he foreshadowed the supreme manifestation of the Father in the Son. The commands of Moses were those of God (7:11; 11:13,18; and 12:32 concerning Moses' words is quoted in Rev. 22:18,19 concerning God's words); his voice was God's voice (13;18; 15:5; 28:1), as with Christ. Israel were to show their love of God by keeping Moses' commands (11:13); as the new Israel do in their response to the word of Christ.

18:22 This is why the prophecies of Christ and of the last days all had some limited fulfilment in the lifetimes of the prophets who gave the prophecies.

19:2 The person who committed something worthy of death but didn’t as it were wilfully do it represents each of us. The language of the city of refuge therefore becomes applicable to Christ, our refuge from the results of our sin (Heb. 6:18).

19:3 The command to prepare a way along which to flee to the cities of refuge is expressed with the very same Hebrew words used about God through the Angels preparing a way for Israel to flee along, out of Egypt to the promised land (Ex. 23:20). This was obviously done purely at God’s initiative. But now, Israel were asked to do the same- to prepare a way for others’ salvation. When we reflect upon our own way of escape from this world, it’s clear enough that it was by grace. Our response to that grace must be like Israel’s- to prepare a way for others to flee, when they like us find themselves in a situation that is spiritually against them, although not of their conscious choice. In fact, if Israel were indifferent to preparing the way for others’ salvation, then innocent blood would be shed and they would be responsible for it (:10). Indifference to providing others with a way of escape from their sin and death means we are actually guilty of their lack of salvation. And yet we tend to think that committed sin is all we have to worry about / avoid. The lesson here, however, bites far more caustically and insistently into our comfort zone. If we are indifferent to marking out the way of escape for others, their blood will be upon our heads. Our chief excuses for not witnessing enthusiastically basically amount to laziness, indifference, not getting our act together because we don’t see we have to… when actually, there is an intense urgency about our task.

19:6 *The avenger of blood*- But Israel were not to avenge (Lev. 19:18). But they could avenge, and provisions were made for their human desire to do so in some cases (see too Num. 35:12). These provisions must also be seen as a modification of the command not to murder. The highest level was not to avenge; but for the harshness of men's hearts, a concession was made in some cases, and on God's prerogative. We have no right to assume that prerogative. Rather than continually make use of God’s many concessions to human weakness, we should seek to live on a higher level.

19:9 Israel would be provided with more cities of refuge if they were obedient; the way of escape from sin would become easier, as it does for us the more we are obedient to God’s principles.

20:1-4 He foresaw how they would see horses and chariots and get frightened (Dt. 20:1-4).

20:14 The softness of Moses, the earnestness of his desire for their obedience, his eagerness to work with them in their humanity, is shown by the concessions to human weakness which he makes in Deuteronomy (with God's confirmation, of course). When they attacked a foreign city, OK, Moses says, you can take the women for yourselves- even though this is contrary to the spirit of earlier commands (see too 21:11). Likewise with the provisions for having a human king (17:17) and divorce (24:1-4). He knew the hardness of Israel's hearts, their likelihood to give way to temptation, and so he made concessions contrary to the principles behind other parts of the Law (Mt. 19:8). See on 16:2. The fact God makes concessions to us doesn’t mean we can eagerly use them in some spirit of minimalistic service; we should seek to serve God on the highest level we can. The fact there are these different levels- rather than a demand for unthinking submission to a meaningless law- encourages us to express our *love* for God.

20:19 Here again we see God’s desire that we should be sensitive to the natural creation. See on 14:21.

21:11 See on 20:14. The legislation in :11-14 is unique amongst the surrounding nations, where women were seen as objects of booty and were treated with far less sensitivity than this and usually raped in this situation. Likewise the law of :18-21 teaches equal reverence for *both* parents and not just the father.

21:17 This means that in a situation where there were two sons, the younger son’s share was one third. In the parable of the prodigal son, the younger son is given *half* – such was the Father’s love for him. This element of unreality in the parable is to signpost the amazing level of love the Father has for us; even when He knows that we will waste what He gives, still He gives, and gives generously.

21:23 *Cursed of God is he who is hanged on a tree*- These words have been misunderstood as meaning that the Lord Jesus as a living being was under one of the Law's curses of condemnation. This cannot be. Crucifixion was a Roman, not Jewish method. The Deuteronomy passage was not written with reference to crucifixion, but rather to the custom of displaying the already dead body of a sinner on a pole as a witness and warning. Sin brought the curse; and so every sinful person who died for their sin was bearing the curse of God. They were to be buried quickly, as a sign of God taking no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Jesus died the death of a sinner; He bore our sins, and therefore our curse (Gal. 3:13,14). Every condemned sinner whose body had been displayed had been a type of the sinless Son of God. He was exhibited there for a few hours, totally united with sinful man. And then, because God had no pleasure in this condemnation of sin, the body was taken and buried.

22:1 One theme of Deuteronomy is the way in which Moses visualizes commonplace daily incidents which he could foresee occurring in Israel's daily life: here, coming across a stray animal on the way home from work; the man cutting down the tree and the axe head flying off and hitting someone; finding a dead body in a lonely field; a man with two wives treating one as his favourite; seeing your neighbour struggling to lift up his sick animal; coming across a bird's nest and being tempted to take the mature bird as well as the chicks home for supper; being tempted not to bother building a battlement around the flat roof of your  new house; the temptation to take a bag with you and fill it up with your neighbour's grapes; the need to have weapons which could be used for covering excrement (Dt. 19:5; 21:1,15; 22:1,2,4,6,8; 23:13,24,25; 24:5,6,10,15,19; 25:11,13). The sensitivity of Moses was just fantastic! His eager imagination of His people in daily life, his understanding of their everyday temptations so superbly typifies that of our Lord.

23:1 Males who could not procreate were barred from the congregation, possibly in prototype of how spiritual procreation was to be a vital characteristic of the future Israel. To bring forth spiritual children in the course of our life before God is expected of us. Israel were seen by the Lord as the tree by the roadside (Mt. 21:19), whose fruit should have been for all that passed by (23:24). But because there was not even the glimmer of this kind of giving of fruit, they were condemned by the Lord.

23:15 This was to remind them how they were escaped slaves. God wanted them to continually remember the way He had saved them (see too :7), and His law was designed to repeatedly prod their conscience about this in daily life. He wants us to live today in constant awareness of our salvation.

23:18 Prostitution was forbidden under the Law (:17), but this is another tacit recognition made by Moses that such failure would still occur. We see here how Moses forbad something and then went on to give legislation recognizing that it would still occur.

23:20 Christ in His parable told the rejected man that he should at least have given His money to others on usury (Mt. 25:27). He may have meant that the man should at least have done *something* even if he broke the letter of the law; or He may have meant that if the man had at least shared the Gospel with the Gentiles and got some fruit for Christ, all his other lack of achievement would’ve been overlooked.

24:1 In the case of adultery a man could have his wife killed; apply the trial of jealousy of Num. 5; forgive her; or divorce her, as allowed for here. We have choices as to how we respond to human failure against us, and the very existence of the choices is in order to exercise our spirituality.

24:4 The prophets describe God divorcing Israel for her infidelity and yet still asking her to return to Him. He chose this metaphor to reflect the level of His desperate love for His people- that He would do what His own law declared to be abomination to Him. That same kind of love is what He has for us today.

24:10 Moses does not repeat every single commandment in the Law. Rather are there several themes of Moses in Deuteronomy presented. His choice of which ones he does repeat indicates his feelings towards Israel. His sensitivity towards the weakest and poorest of Israel comes out in this. He was reaching the spirit of the Lord Jesus, who said that the weakest of His brethren represented Him (Mt. 25:40). Moses for all his wealthy background and high status amongst Israel could enter into the sense of shame and embarrassment of the poor man when a richer man enters his home. The Law in Ex. 22:26 did not stipulate that the house of the poor man should not be entered; by making this point in his farewell speech, Moses was showing his sensitivity, his ability now to enter into the feelings of the poorest of God's people. He typified in this the sensitivity of God’s son to our spiritual poverty. In some things we all have some advantage over others; some ‘wealth’ which they don’t have; for even the wealthiest person has some area of spiritual poverty in their lives. We are not to shame them, but to be sensitive to how they might feel if that poverty is exposed before us.

25:3 There’s a tendency in us to be harsh in punishing others for their sin. This is psychologically explainable by our conscience for our own sins, and subconsciously realizing we deserve punishment; we then eagerly transfer this guilt and need for punishment onto others. Instead we are to confess our sins and believe that the final judgment for our sin was in Christ upon the cross; and if we believe this to the point of really feeling it, we will never punish anyone more than required, indeed we will be gracious to them as God has been to us.

25:4 Moses' sensitivity is shown by the kind of laws he added in Deuteronomy; e.g. "You shall not muzzle the ox when he treads out the grain". This is quoted by Paul as being actually part of the Law (1 Cor. 9:9; 1 Tim. 5:18), showing that Moses was so attune with the mind of God that these practical extensions which his sensitivity led him to command Israel were indeed the inspired commandments of God. In the same way as we should not appear unreasonable to men (:3), so we should not to animals. There are other examples of sensitivity to the natural creation in Deuteronomy in 14:21; 20:19 [see notes there].

25:5 This tacitly allowed polygamy. Here we have an example where one principle [the one man: one woman ideal of Eden] is in conflict with another [to build up the family name of your childless brother]. God could have arranged ethics in a more simple manner; but He has allowed and in this case encouraged the development of such conflicts in order that we think and reason things through, and make whatever decision we do consciously and from our own desire rather than merely in mindless submission to a commandment.

25:11 The principle from this is that each person has a weakness, an exposed point in their lives or character, which we are aware of. We are not to use that to unfair advantage- because if we were touched in that way, we likewise could not endure. And God saves His weak people and has historically been angry with those who do such things (:18).

25:14 *In your house*- To avoid temptation it’s best to not even possess things which we may be tempted to misuse.

26:5 *A Syrian ready to perish*- Israel were to recognize that their Arab brethren were in fact their cousins, and Jacob their ancestor was at one time no more than a starving, desperate, homeless, wandering Arab. That they had been given a fruitful land was therefore a great grace to them.

26:18 God declared Israel “a people for His own possession... *in order that* you should keep all His commandments”. But God had put it the other way around when He told Israel that if they kept His commandments, then they would be “a people for His own possession” (Ex. 19:5). This conditional promise is now referred to by Moses as having been fulfilled- Israel became His “own possession” by status even though they did not keep His commandments (7:6; 14:2 s.w.; Ps. 135:4). God said that if they were obedient, then they would be His special people. Yet He counted them as His special people even though they were not obedient. And He did this so that they would be so touched by this grace that they would be obedient. We are to live out in practice what we have been made in status by our gracious Father. The very fact He counts us as in Christ, as the spotless bride of His Son, must be both felt and lived up to by us. The way He counts righteousness to us is a wonderful motivation to live it out as far as we can.

27:4 The word "commandments" occurs 43 times in Deuteronomy, and only 19 times in the other three records of the Law; "remember" occurs 16 times compared to 8 times in the other three. And yet Moses commanded Israel specifically to engrave the law on tables of plaster, not stone, knowing that they would soon be washed away; thus he wished to teach Israel [or try to] the temporary nature of the Law (Dt. 27:4-8). Like Paul in his time of dying, Moses saw the importance of obedience, the harder side of God; yet he also saw in real depth the surpassing love of God, and the grace that was to come, beyond Law. See on 7:7.

27:5,6 God wants us to serve Him in simplicity without trying to make our altars externally beautiful as if to impress a human eye.

27:6,7 Eating upon a heap of unhewn stones was understood as a sign of having made a covenant on mutually agreed terms and being at peace with each other (Gen. 31:46,47). Our eating before God at the breaking of bread meeting is something similar.

27:15 *Secretly sets it up*- The list of sins which follow in :15-25 are all matters of the heart or things which are not seen by others. The people were confirming their acceptance of the fact that God sees and knows all things, and there really would be a judgment for them.

28:10 *You are called by the name of Yahweh* - Whatever carried the name of a person was seen as his property. If a city was conquered, it bore the name of the conqueror (2 Sam. 12:28); the names of owners were on their property (Ps. 49:12). So to bear God's Name is to recognize His complete ownership and even conquest of us. And yet there's a significant twist to all this in Is. 43:1: "I have called you by your name, because you are mine". It seems like a slip- we expect God to say that He has called us by His Name, because we are His. But no- He wishes us to bear both His Name and our own name, He doesn't wish to subsume us beneath His ownership and manifestation to the point that we are not significant as persons.

28:12 *You shall lend to many nations*- Money lending worldwide has been a feature of Jewish existence over the centuries, and yet this is here predicted as happening only if they were obedient. They have been disobedient, and yet it’s as if God loves to advertise His grace to the world by still blessing the disobedient.

28:24 *The rain of your land powder and dust*- This has not yet been fulfilled; maybe because God in His grace has not punished His people according to all their sins. Or it could be that it has yet to be fulfilled in the final tribulation to come upon Israel. Nuclear fallout would fulfil these words- and likewise those of Is. 29:6, describing the invasion of latter day Babylon / Assyria, which have yet to be accurately fulfilled.

28:36 *There you shall serve other gods*- Israel and Judah are strongly rebuked by the prophets for their choice to do this, and are begged to cease doing so. But their freewill choice to sin was in fact a result of being cursed by God; they were led into sin, as it were, by God confirming them in the downward spiral they had chosen to be part of. In this case, if they didn’t want to be cursed, then they simply had to stop living out the curse in their lives.

28:47 Israel would be rejected and cursed if they didn’t serve God “with gladness”. Service to God must be done with joy; if we lose the rejoicing of our hope, we lose the hope itself (Heb. 3:6). Joy is therefore a vital characteristic of God’s true people.

28:47,48 Moses offered Israel the choice of bondservice to either Yahweh or their enemies. The whole of Romans 6 plays on this idea. We are slaves to sin, and through entering Christ by baptism, we become slaves of righteousness. Total freedom to do what we personally want is not possible. We are slaves, we can't serve two masters. So why not serve Christ rather than the Biblical devil? The Lord Jesus spoke of His servants having a light yoke (Mt. 11:30). The Bible minded among His hearers would have thought back to the threatened punishment of an iron yoke for the disobedient (:48). 'It's a yoke either way', they would have concluded. But the Lord's yoke even in this life is light, and has promise of the life which is to come! The logic of taking it, with the restrictions it inevitably implies (for it is a yoke), is simply overpowering.

28:50-57 Moses not only repeats all the curses of Lev. 26 to them, but he adds even more, under inspiration. Presumably the Angel had explained in one of their conversations how Israel would suffer even greater punishment than that outlined in Lev. 26.  Notice that Lev. 26 and Dt. 28 are not strictly parallel. Moses in his spiritual maturity urged Israel to be the more fully aware of the nature and reality of Divine punishment for human sin; his increased focus upon grace and salvation didn’t mean that he increasingly ignored the harder side of God- but rather the opposite was the case.

28:58 For all Moses’ desire for Israel’s obedience, there are some subtle differences in his attitude to law and obedience between Deuteronomy, and the law earlier given. Thus in Leviticus 26 it was stressed that obedience would bring blessing; whilst here, :58 says that obedience results in fearing the awesome Name of Yahweh and His glory. Fear shouldn’t lead to obedience; but obedience leads a man to know and fear his God and His Name. This is blessing enough. Like Jacob and Job, Moses came to a fine appreciation of Yahweh’s Name at his latter end, perceiving that the wonder of relationship with God far eclipses any material blessing we may receive from Him in this life. To respect or fear the Name doesn't mean to remember that God’s Name is 'Yahweh'. It refers to his character (Ex. 34:4-6). The Lord Jesus fed off the majesty of the Name of Yahweh (Mic. 5:4)- this was how inspirational He found the things of the Name. To fear the Name of Yahweh involved practical obedience to “all the words of this law”. Meditation and sustained reflection upon the characteristics of God as epitomized and memorialized in His Name will of itself lead to a conforming of personality to that same Name. If we declare that Name to others, they too have the chance to be transformed by it- thus Moses comments that “I will proclaim the name of Yahweh; you, ascribe greatness to our God” (32:3).

28:68 God’s promise that Israel would never again see Egypt was therefore conditional, and thus capable of being broken; although those conditions aren’t mentioned when He makes the promise in 17:16; Ex. 14:13.

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| 29:10 Moses on that last day of his life addressed the whole assembly of Israel; and yet he so often speaks in the singular ("thee" rather than "ye" in the KJV), as if to emphasize that the laws and covenant he was giving them was to them *personally*. This is made clear in:10,12: "You (plural) stand this day, all of you, before Yahweh... that you (singular) may enter into covenant with Yahweh". That covenant was made anew by God to each generation and individual. We cannot hide within a family or a church. We are individually responsible to God and will personally be saved. In the same spirit, Moses points out that Yahweh is the only God that can be personally *known*; all the idols could not be known personally (:26). No fewer than 137 times in Scripture we read the phrase "my God". This was used in a public, unashamed way by many of God's children (it was a particular favourite of Nehemiah, David and Paul). 29:10-13 This is a very long sentence; from now until the end of his speech in Deuteronomy, Moses uses (in the Hebrew text) very long sentences, at times with unclear syntax- as if he was getting increasingly intense and excited as he speaks of the utter realities to which we stand personally related by our covenant with God. |

29:12 For Israel in covenant with God, absolutely nothing- not sex, menstruation, the content of clothing fabric, diet- could fall outside the scope of their covenant relationship. And so in principle it is with us under the new covenant. Such a relationship also precludes the worship of any other God. The covenant we have entered has constant and binding claims upon our loyalty; and it also speaks of God’s constant and passionate commitment to us.

29:18 Applied in Heb. 12:15 to those within the church who discourage others from total commitment to God. Those who don’t totally commit to Him will poison others by their attitude and cause them to fall away from God’s grace; and we must be keenly aware of this, because there are such people around- so says Heb. 12:15.

30:3 God’s attempt to regather Judah from captivity *before* they had repented therefore indicates His grace, operating at times beyond the conditions which He has stated in His own word.

30:11-14 Moses assures them that full obedience to his Law is possible (even if finally nobody achieved it). It wasn’t as if they had to climb up to Heaven or go down beneath the sea, they had to simply from the heart obey it as a way of life and thinking. In Rom. 10:6-9 Paul quotes this passage, having observed that in practice nobody has actually succeeded in fully keeping the Law. He says that the going up to Heaven was done by Christ at His ascension, and going beneath the sea by and returning by Christ at His resurrection; and so what remains is not to keep the Mosaic law but to believe in the word of Christ; and the “life” promised here (:15) will be *eternal* life for those in Christ.

30:15 Moses pleaded with them to see that "this day... this day... this day" he set before them life and death, forgiveness or salvation (:15-19). He saw the urgent importance of deciding now, in this moment, for the Lord. The Lord Jesus had His mind on this when He told the thief with the same emphasis that "this day" He could pronounce that he would be saved, not condemned (Lk. 23:46). He felt like Moses, but greater than Moses, in that He not only set before men the choice, but could grant them the salvation they sought.

30:17 The heart that *turns away* from God by free choice then becomes *drawn away* by other forces.

30:19 Finely aware of the seriousness of our relationship with God, Moses intensely pleads with Israel to "choose life", not with the passivity which may appear from our armchair reading of this passage. For he knew that the majority of Israel would not choose life.

31:2 That Moses lived to 120 with full faculties was as unusual then as it would be today; because lifespans at that time were around 70 years, and those older than seventy usually had weakened faculties as happens today too (Ps. 90:10). Moses says there in Ps. 90:10 that “*our* years” are 70- even though he himself had much longer life, and would’ve been writing Psalm 90 well he was well over 80 years old. We see here the empathy which comes from love, and his sense of identity with God’s people. All this is a pattern for us in our relationships and feelings toward others, but it also typifies Christ’s ultimate sensitivity, empathy and identity with the limitations of our humanity.

31:6 *He will not fail you nor forsake you*- Specifically applied to each of us in Heb. 13:5, in the context of appealing for us not to be covetous, worrying, as it were, how we are to cope on our journey into the Kingdom.

31:9 It takes about four hours to read through the book of Deuteronomy out loud. The many references in Deuteronomy to “this day” (see on 30:15) suggest Moses spoke it all on the last day of his life. It was a very busy day- he spoke Deuteronomy, wrote a copy of it (or of the entire Law; notice how Dt. 24 was written by Moses, Mk. 10:5), sings a Song to that silent multitude (surely with a lump in his throat, especially at points like 32:15), and then he turns and climbs the mountain to see the land and meet his death. The fact it all happened on his birthday just adds to the pathos of it all (Dt. 31:2). The huge amount of work which he did on that last day of his life looks forward to the Lord's huge achievement in the day of his death. No wonder Yahweh describes that day of Moses' death with an intensive plural: "Your days (an intensive plural, i.e. the one great time / day) are made ready that you must die" (:14). May our last day be as intensely productive as his.

31:14 The day of our death is made ready ahead of time by God.

31:19,21 God recognized the power of music by arranging things in this way; He knew they would sing this to themselves and the words would influence them. We must ensure that the music we listen to and hum to ourselves is leading us to repentance and to God, rather than the other way; because music and lyrics are powerful.

32:3 As Christ declared God's Name just before his death (Jn. 17:26), so did Moses (Dt. 32:3 LXX).  Moses saw at the end of his life that there was no third way: it was either complete dedication and salvation, or rebellion and condemnation. See on 28:58.

32:5 *A perverse and crooked generation*- This description of Israel is quoted about the world in Phil. 2:15. If God’s people worship this world’s idols, then they are counted by God as the world.

32:10 *As the apple of His eye*- One of the most sensitive spots on the body. Anyone who even comes near God’s people stimulates a natural response from God, so sensitive is He to our pain in this life.

32:11 *Carried them on His feathers*- The allusion is to how the eagle teaches its young to fly. The eagle appears from earth to be carrying the young on her wings, but actually she is throwing them into the air and teaching them to fly within the draft from her own wings. This is a beautiful picture of how God works through His Spirit to teach us independent flight, rather than simply carrying us. As the truly good parent, He seeks to give us independence and teach this to us in the course of our wilderness journey.

32:12 Although there was no pagan god with Yahweh at the time of the exodus, there was with Israel- for they took the idols of Egypt with them through the Red Sea, just as we are tempted to take the world with us through the waters of baptism rather than seeing it as cut off from us (Ez. 20:7,8).

32:13 Tragically, Israel went back to those very “high places” to worship the local idols, as the prophets so often lament.

32:15 *Jeshurun grew fat and kicked*- Moses in Deuteronomy so many times warns that Israel would become unfaithful to God once they became prosperous. This is a major theme with him. Any request for material prosperity must be made knowing that really this is not for the best spiritually. And God must struggle with those requests as a parent does with a request for something which they want to give, because they love their child, but know that it will almost certainly be misused. It’s no surprise therefore that the majority of God’s people have been poor- it is the poor who respond to the Gospel (Mt. 11:5), and the wealthy are a minority amongst us (1 Cor. 1:26).

32:17 *Demons, not God, to gods that they didn’t know*- Demons are associated with idols, and they are not the gods which they are believed to be (:21; 1 Cor. 10:20). The language of demon possession we meet in the Gospel records is therefore the language of the day to describe healing of illnesses attributed to demons; but demons have no real existence because there is only one God.

32:36 Israel assembled before Moses really do represent us, for this is quoted in Heb. 10:20 as relevant to all of us coming before judgment. But our verse goes on to say that at this very time of judgment, He will have compassion upon His people. Which is a comforting thought to take with us to the judgment seat of Christ.

32:47 Because Moses knew all this, he was pleading with Israel to "choose life". I wonder if he wasn’t screaming this to them, almost breaking down in the climax of logic and passion which resulted in that appeal. Moses spoke Deuteronomy without notes. It was no reading of a carefully prepared paper. All these things were in his heart; their proneness to failure, the coming of judgement for sin, his knowledge of their future apostasy. Enter into the passion of it all. The man who was willing to give his eternal life for them, about to die for the sake of their provocation- singing a final song to them, giving a final speech, which showed that he knew perfectly well that they would turn away from what he was trying to do for them, and therefore the majority of them would not be saved. As he came to the end of his speech, he seems to have sensed they didn’t grasp the reality of it all: “It is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life”; and thus his speech rises to a crescendo of intensity of pleading with them, typifying the pattern of the Lord Jesus in His time of dying.

33:9 These words are alluded to by Jesus in explaining why He felt closer to those who listened to His word than to His natural family (Mk. 3:21,31-35; Mt. 12:46-50). He read these same words that we do. To feel this closely to those who are, like us, God’s spiritual children, can seem an impossible challenge at times; especially in family-based societies where life is one endless social club.

33:20 *He who enlarges Gad*- If Israel had been obedient, their borders could have been enlarged (12:2). It seems God would have done this especially for Gad, even for the sake of one faithful man. Yet there’s no evidence it ever happened; another potential set up which was left unfulfilled because of the chronic lack of vision and satisfied-with-what-I-have attitude of God’s people.

33:29 *You shall tread on their high places*- Moses’ very last words are a reference to the idolatrous “high places”, which the prophets lament were a spiritual snare to Israel. Moses’ final wish and knowledge was that ultimately, Israel would quit with idolatry and be Yahweh’s alone. Seeing that he had predicted their spiritual failures, Moses perhaps had his eye on the day when finally God’s people shall conquer all their temptations, even if only a minority of those with whom God works actually get there in the end, all the same, a minority will, and they will be God’s true Israel.

34:6 *He buried him in the valley*- Is. 63:14 says that the Spirit [the Angel] caused Moses to rest as a man leads his animal to water in a valley. The way the Angel buried Moses is very touching. “According to the word of Yahweh” (:5) can bear the translation “By the kiss of Yahweh”, as if the Angel with whom Moses was used to speaking face to face, as a man speaks with his friend, kissed him and as it were reversed the kiss of life, took his breath / spirit away, and laid him down to rest there on the mountain, then carried the body down to the valley and buried him there, to rest until the resurrection. The softness, respect and gentleness of God with His beloved in their time of dying comes over very strongly here.

34:7 Moses was one of those old people who still had a ‘young’ attitude to life; not for him the cynicism which comes with old age; hence Deuteronomy is at times optimistic about people with what could be seen as an almost naive youthful optimism. One wonders whether he was therefore right to accept Jethro’s advice that he needed to arrange helpers lest he wear out (Ex. 18:18), seeing that God had kept him so physically strong, and continued to do so.