**Survey of Old Testament**

**Deuteronomy 16 Festivals**

1. The festivals mentioned here were the three great annual feasts which all male Israelites were supposed to attend. If possible their families were to go along also. Attending these feasts gave the Israelites opportunity to acknowledge the Lord as their Deliverer and Provider.
2. **The Passover**: This feast commemorated the night the Lord “passed over” the blood-sprinkled houses of the Israelites, sparing the lives of their firstborn people, and putting to death the firstborn Egyptians and their livestock. The Israelites were to use the Passover to teach their children about God’s miraculous deliverance from Egypt (Ex. 12:26–27).
3. **The Feast of Weeks**: The name “Feast of Weeks” was given this festival in light of Moses’ command to count off seven weeks from the time they began to harvest the grain in March–April. This would mean the Feast of Weeks was in late May or early June. It was also known as the “Feast of Harvest” (Ex. 23:16) and the “day of firstfruits” (Num. 28:26). Later it was given the title “Pentecost” based on the “50 days” (Lev. 23:16). The Feast of Weeks was a celebration of God’s rich provision for His people. Therefore each freewill (voluntary) offering was to be in proportion to one’s blessings from the Lord.
4. **The Feast of Tabernacles**: This feast was so called because the Israelites, after the fall harvest (Lev. 23:39), were to live for one week in tabernacles or “booths” (Lev. 23:42) constructed of tree branches and foliage (Lev. 23:40). It was also called the “Feast of Ingathering” (Ex. 23:16; 34:22). The people were to be joyful in God’s provision, but also  they were to rejoice in their deliverance from Egypt. The week of living in booths was to recall the journey through the desert after the nation had come out of Egypt.

**Deuteronomy 16:18–18:22 Commands Concerning Leaders.**

1. Moses has just finished reminding Israel of their religious obligations; he now gives them rules for civil order. First, he commands the appointment of judges and other officials in every town. Second, he establishes a higher judicial court for more difficult cases. Third, he establishes the foundation for the future selection of a king.
2. The priests and Levites were assigned to teach the Law regarding difficult decisions. These Levites were to interpret the Law; and the judges were to inquire of them.
3. The next part deals with the false prophets. Since God did not command the false prophet to speak that word, the people were to test his prophecy; and if his prediction did not come to pass, the people were to: (1) know that he had not spoken in the name of the Lord; (2) know that he had spoken presumptuously; (3) not be afraid of him; and (4) know that that prophet shall die.

**Deuteronomy 19:1–26 Commands Concerning Human Relationships.**

1. The laws concerning the cities of refuge were intended to save the life of the manslayer (Num 35:9–34), described by the phrase, “Whoso killeth his neighbor ignorantly,” which meant that he was not guilty of premeditated murder.
2. Moses gives instructions regarding military service. The army was to put their trust in the Lord, even if they saw that the enemy had horses, chariots, and more troops. Moses reminds Israel that the Lord would give them victory. Victory by Israel was dependent upon their obedience to God.
3. Deuteronomy 22:1–12 This chapter deals with the duties of a man toward his neighbor. Israel was to recognize the sanctity of private property. Therefore, every man had to help preserve that which belonged to his neighbor.
4. Deuteronomy‬
5. Deuteronomy 24:19–22 Moses told the people how to harvest their crops. Once the laborers had gone through a field, they could not return to pick up the gleanings (Lev 19:10). God provided for the poor by allowing them to follow the reapers and pick up what was left of the scattered grain. They also could go through the vineyards to pick up the leftover grapes. God respected their dignity and gave them work to make a living. Later, Ruth went through the fields picking up the gleanings of the grain (Ruth 1:22).
6. Deuteronomy 25:1–4 Moses recognizes the authority of corporal punishment. The judges of the different towns could pronounce a man “guilty” (Ex 22:8). For those not counted worthy of death, the punishment was beating. He was to be beaten forty times with the whip, the number forty symbolizing judgment. However, the Law indicated that the guilty could not receive more than forty stripes; so the Jews gave a man forty lashes less one. Paul was beaten by the Jews five times after this manner (2 Cor 11:24).
7. Deuteronomy 25:5–6 Moses commands that a surviving brother was to marry his brother’s widow. This is called the law of the kinsman-redeemer. This law was an ancient tradition (Gen 38:8–11). A brother-in-law was requested to marry his brother’s widow to carry on the inheritance in Israel. The spiritual and physical heritage was given to Abraham and his seed (Gen 12:1–3). Therefore, it was necessary to produce children to carry on the promise of God. Hence, the family would preserve its name and spiritual heritage by having a son who would perpetuate the family line. This law has its greatest human application in the story of Ruth, the Moabitess. After the death of her Israelite husband, Ruth married another Israelite named Boaz, her deceased husband’s closest kinsman. When he applied this law and raised up a son by Ruth, he perpetuated the line of the Messiah (Ruth 4:17–22).

**Deuteronomy 27–30 This section is prophetic and gives us four pictures of Israel in relationship to the land.**

1. Deuteronomy 27 **Israel Entering the Land.** We find the fulfillment of this prophecy in Josh. 8:30–35. Deuteronomy 27:3 teaches that the nation’s conquest of the land depended on their obeying this set of instructions.
2. Deuteronomy 28:1–14 **Israel Possessing and Enjoying the Land.** “Obedience brings blessing” this is the theme of the Word of God. Of course, this principle of obedience is found in every period of salvation history, for God cannot bless those who rebel against Him.
3. Deuteronomy 28:15–29:29 **Israel Being Plucked off the Land**. Here is the prophecy of Israel’s chastening, captivity, and scattering, as well as her future return in blessing.
4. Deuteronomy 30 **Israel Being Restored to the Land**. Israel enjoyed the blessings for less than 1,000 years. They entered Canaan about 1400 B.C., and Babylon conquered Israel about 587 B.C. In addition, many times during this period Israel disobeyed God and was chastened.  
   This chapter promises that God will “turn the captivity” of Israel and restore the nation to the land, if they will but return to the Lord and obey His voice.
5. Paul quotes 30:11–14 in Rom. 10:6–8 and applies it to Christ. Christ is not far away from His people, even though they have turned away from Him. If they will call, He will save!
6. The grand conclusion of Moses’ address is in 30:15–20. The nation had to choose between life and death, blessing and cursing. As always, such a choice is a matter of the heart (v. 17). Mere outward obedience will not do; it must come from within.

**Deuteronomy 31–34 The old generation had died.**

1. The old generation had died off, except for Caleb, Joshua, and Moses; and now Moses was to move off the scene. These are “transition chapters” as Moses gives his final words to the people he has loved and led for forty years. It is amazing that Moses remained so loyal to his people, for they were guilty of criticizing him, rebelling against him, and lying about him. Moses knew that he himself would not enter Canaan, yet he did everything possible to enable Israel to enter! Of course, Moses was faithful to the Lord (Heb. 3:1–6), and this is why he was so faithful to Israel.
2. Deuteronomy 31 **The New Leader**. First, Moses announced the new leader for the people, explaining that he would not be able to lead them any longer because of God’s judgment. Then Moses called Joshua and commissioned him, laying his hands on him and thereby granting the spiritual power he would need for his great task (34:9).
3. Deuteronomy 32 **The New Song.** Israel had sung the “Song of Moses” at the Red Sea (Ex. 15), celebrating their victory and God’s power; but this new song laments Israel’s apostasy and God’s chastening of His own people. In 31:19–30, God made it clear that the song was to be a witness to remind them of their sins.
4. Deuteronomy 33 **The New Blessing.**  Moses’ heart was filled with love for his people, and in this chapter he gives his parting benediction as he asks God’s blessing on the various tribes.
5. Deuteronomy 34 **The New Home.** Moses had prayed that God would allow him to enter the Promised Land, but God had refused (Deut. 3:23–29). Moses did visit the Promised Land on the Mount of Transfiguration, with Elijah; and he discussed with Christ the “exodus” (decease) He would accomplish at Jerusalem (Luke 9:27–31). God did permit Moses to view the land. God alone was present when Moses died, and God buried him.
6. The book closes by reminding us of the unique character of Moses’ ministry—he was a man to whom God talked face to face.