

FEATS Facilitators Guide
Module 6 – Deuteronomy and the Prophets
Homework for Learning Session 1

I am making this covenant, with its oath, not only with you, who are standing here with us today in the presence of the LORD our God but also with those who are not here today.
Deuteronomy 29:14-15

That's the Lord speaking in the two verses cited above, and he's talking about you.

And in talking about you in this way, he's highlighting the central challenge of reading and understanding Deuteronomy and the Prophets. Both Deuteronomy and the Prophets (meaning here the three major prophets and the twelve minor prophets) were written, in both their style and content, for a people very different from ourselves. And yet, Deuteronomy and the Prophets insist, and Christian teaching confirms, that these books are meant for *us*.

Our study will follow the simple methods developed in previous FEATS modules of reading closely and carefully and letting the books speak for themselves. Following Fee and Stewart's two part reading task, you'll find that it's really not all that hard to discover what these books *say*. Unfortunately, Christians have had a difficult time deciding what these books *mean*.

With Deuteronomy, Christians have usually ignored the book, erroneously equating it with the Law that Paul in his epistles suggests should be left behind. We should not that Christ himself had no trouble with the book. Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy more than any OT book, and it's clear from even a cursory reading of the gospels that Jesus teaching was strongly based on this central OT book.

Our goal in the first month is to allow Deuteronomy to speak for itself, on it's terms, in the way it wishes to speak. We'll do this by focusing on the book's style and on it's central theme: the covenant between God and his people. We'll also try to understand the world Deuteronomy wished to create by focusing on how it understands wealth and power.

As we move forward into the prophets in the coming months, we will continue to focus on how these themes are developed, and we'll discover how dependent these later books are on Deuteronomy.

Homework for the First Learning Session:

Read the book of Deuteronomy at least twice, and read through chs. 1-11 at least twice more.

As you read, develop notes to enable you to answer and discuss the following questions:

- How would you describe Deuteronomy's literary style? (Examples: How does it use repetition, sentence structure, catch phrases? Is it economical or expansive in its use of space?)
- What are the nature and the details of the covenant between Israel and the Lord? (Try to be somewhat detailed here – who does what, why, how much, in what ways, etc.?)
- How does Deuteronomy understand wealth and poverty? (Pay special attention to the passages on debt, slaves, and the way Deut links wealth to obedience in the Land)
- How does Deuteronomy understand human authority? (Pay special attention to the texts in chs. 17&18 that describe the key roles in Israelite society, but not just these).

Also read and be able to discuss the following essays

- Chapter 9 – “The Law(s): Covenant Stipulations for Israel” in Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth*
- Chapter 3 - “*Exilic Preaching: Testimony for Christian Exiles in an Increasingly Hostile Culture,*” by Walter Brueggemann, *The Covenanted Self*, located on Google Books.

