

## Message #5

## Deuteronomy 2:1-37

We begin this study today by reading words spoken by Paul in Athens:

“and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitations that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, for we are also His children” (Acts 17:26-28).

Now what Paul says here is that God determines when people live and He determines where they live. He is the sovereign God who determines the boundaries of nations, even those who do not know Him.

Three times in this second chapter of Deuteronomy, God stresses this very point - **2:5, 9, 19**. God gives land to the people He wants to have the land and He blesses them in the land.

God watches all nations and all nations have received good things from His sovereign hand. He sets national boundaries. He has protected nations, He has directed people to move to where He wants them to move and people would be wise to submit to this truth.

But of course we live in a time when an arrogant group of imbeciles wants to cancel out this truth, specifically concerning the United States. They do not want you to believe God founded this nation. They do not want you to believe that God determined that the Pilgrims settled here and desired to be one nation under God. They don't care that this nation has sent out more missionaries and more Bible translations than any other nation in the world. They are arrogant and defiant morons who think this nation was founded by a bunch of thugs. If I read Deuteronomy right, in time God will crush every one of them because they are opposing Him.

Wise people of God realize God is sovereign over everyone. God gives people skills, gifts, jobs, incomes and talents. He puts nations in various locations and He honors those who honor Him. It is important that we recognize what is ours and it is important that we recognize what is not ours. It is important that we respect other people. It is important that we know their boundaries and our boundaries.

God wants His people getting along with other people in this world as we navigate through this life. It is true we have a unique relationship with God because we are His people. But it is also true that God is sovereign over them just as He is sovereign over us. That is exactly what Moses wanted these Israelites to understand as they were about to move.

**AS WE TRAVEL THROUGH LIFE WE NEED TO CAREFULLY OBEY GOD IN REGARD TO OTHER NATIONS AND OTHER PEOPLE, REALIZING WHAT GOD HAS SOVEREIGNLY GIVEN TO THEM AND WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN TO US.**

God's people must be careful as they travel through life to be good neighbors and not infringe on the rights of others. We need to get along with some people and not get along with other people.

Israel was on her way from the wilderness to the Promised Land. As she was making this journey she had to travel through various locations and nations where people lived.

God is sovereign over all people, including where people live. This nation was not founded by chance. God led and directed events in history so that the Pilgrims would land here and there would be a United States of America.

In this chapter God instructs His people as to how they should relate to other people they meet along their wilderness journey through life. **God had watched over Israel all of their lives, just as He has watched over us all of our lives.**

What Moses does here is to recount some of the nations and people the children of God encountered while on their way to the Jordan River and Promised Land. God wanted His people to realize “I am the one who determines where people live.” As the song says, “He has the whole world in His hands” and He portions out this world according to His good pleasure. Israel needed to know this and so do we.

In this chapter there are four main instructions that God gives to Israel. The instructions are given in a chronological order as you move north east from the tip of the Red Sea:

- 1) You first encounter Edom that runs for about 70 miles.
- 2) You second encounter Moab that runs for about 40 miles.
- 3) You third encounter Ammon that runs for 15-20 miles.

There are three relatives that Israel would encounter as they made their way to the Promised Land:

- 1) They would encounter land of the Edomites, who were descendants of Esau, Isaac’s son and Abraham’s grandson.
- 2) They would encounter land of the Moabites, who were descendants of Lot, Abraham’s nephew (Gen. 19:37-38).
- 3) They would encounter land of the Ammonites, who were descendants of Lot, Abraham’s nephew (Gen. 19:37-38).

#### **INSTRUCTION #1** – Instruction concerning the Edomites. **2:1-8**

After 38 years of wandering around in the wilderness, it was now time for them to go to the Promised Land.

**Verse 1** says they turned around and followed a Red Sea route and circled Mount Seir, which took them many days. After God’s people had suffered defeats for their disobedience, they finally turned around and actually traveled south away from the Promised Land toward the Red Sea. They finally started to obey God.

Mt. Seir is a mountain range that stretches from the Dead Sea (between Jordan and Israel), all the way to the tip of the Red Sea at the Gulf of Aqaba. God had them circle the mountain for several years until they finally got serious about obeying the word of God. **Because of their disobedience they had been slowed down many days.**

According to **verse 2**, God spoke to Moses and said you have been circling this mountain long enough so head north to the Promised Land (**verse 3**). **Their discipline time was over.** When God chastises His people, it is time regulated.

According to **verse 4**, God says you will pass through the territory of your relatives who live in Seir. This of course refers to Esau and the Arabs. God says as you travel through their land, they will be afraid of you. They would have heard of all that God had done for Israel and they will be afraid.

**So God says you need to obey me as you travel through this area and be “very careful.”**

The Hebrew word “careful” is *shamar*, which occurs 65 times in Deuteronomy and 440 times in the O.T.. **This word emphasizes giving great attention and careful guard and watch concerning something** (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 37-38). God says when you travel through their land, pay close attention and careful guard to how you behave and relate to these people.

When people are afraid of something, they are emotionally on edge and you don’t want to do something to set them off. In **verse 5**, God says don’t provoke them in any way because this is where I am letting them live. This is the land I have given to them, so leave it alone.

In other words, God’s command to His people is to be on guard and give great attention to not fight with these people or offend these people over land that I have given to them.

Then in **verse 6**, God says you buy food and water from them, and do good business with them. There were not many streams or springs of water in this country. There were cisterns and some wells, but water was not plentiful. So God says pay for things and be kind and equitable.

Don’t for one second give them the impression you are there to just take things from their land. You pay them. You pay for food and you pay for water. **Now the clear implication of this verse is that God will sovereignly provide enough money and resources for His people to be able to buy what they need. GOD PROVIDES FOR THE NEEDS OF ALL PEOPLE AND HE USES THE MONEY OF HIS OWN PEOPLE TO HELP PROVIDE FOR OTHERS.**

In **verse 7**, Moses said God has been with you and has blessed you throughout all your wanderings and you have not lacked one thing. For forty years, even when God was disciplining His people, He watched over them and took care of them. He blessed them. **It is true that sin does hinder progress but it does not prevent God’s provisions or prosperity.**

**Disobedience does slow you down, but it doesn’t bring a halt to the sovereign provisions and blessings of God.**

So **verse 8** says they passed beyond their brothers and traveled a route that bypassed the area. The places named “Elath” and “Ezion-geber” were two places that apparently were known to have water, north of the Gulf of Aqabah. Notice they did call them their brothers.

By the way, years earlier we know from Numbers 20:17-21 that the Edomites refused to permit Israel travel through the land. That was now water under the bridge. The truth is God is sovereign over those who say yes and those who say no. If He causes one to say no to us, He has something better in view. This is the wise way to view this.

What do we learn from this?

As God's people we need to realize God has always taken care of us.

As God's people we need to realize that God gives things to other people He doesn't give to us.

As God's people we need to do good business with others.

As God's people we need to realize relationships change over time.

### **INSTRUCTION #2** – Instruction concerning the Moabites. **2:9-17**

**Verse 9** begins by saying God is the One who gave the Moabites their Land. The same type of instruction given concerning the Edomites, also pertained to the Moabites. The next two on the list are two descendants of Lot. These certainly were not nations who feared God or worshipped God.

When it came to the Moabites, God has some very clear instruction for His people in **verse 9**:

- 1) Do not harass them.
- 2) Do not provoke them to war.
- 3) Their land is not your Promised Land.

In **verses 10-12**, we get information concerning some people who originally lived in this area and how they were driven out.

Apparently the Emim (Gen. 14:5) lived there. They were giant type people who were great and numerous. They resembled the Anakites who were known to be strong giants and they were known in their ethnicity as Rephaim. The Moabites gave them the name of Emim.

Well the sons of Esau came in and dispossessed them and drove them out of the land, just as Israel was about to do to those in the Promised Land.

So after God gave them this history lesson, He told them to get up and cross over the brook Zered in the southern boundary area of the Moabites (**v. 13**). Notice “so we crossed.” They obeyed!

According to **verse 14-15**, it took 38 years to bring Israel to the brink of having the Promised Land. He wanted God's people to realize that if you don't obey God's word, you do slow down progress. In fact, their disobedience got so bad that God was “against them.”

God would not let that generation of people see the Promised Land. So when all of the disobedient men perished, then God spoke to Moses and told him it is time to cross over into the land of the Ammonites.

What exactly do we learn from this?

- 1) When we disobey God, we shortchange what could have been.
- 2) We need to realize what God's plan is for our lives and not infringe on plans for others.
- 3) We need to realize that we need to respect other people, who are different than we are.

**INSTRUCTION #3** – Instruction concerning the Ammonites. **2:18-23**

Now the Ammonites are godless idolaters. These were not people who worshipped the true God, in any way, shape or form. But God wanted them respected. God wanted His people to realize that He had given them the place where they lived.

God says in **verse 19** that they were not to harass or provoke these people because this was not their land. God had given this land to the sons of Lot.

This land was also land for the Rephaim, but the Ammonites called them Zamzummites. According to **verse 21**, these were a strong, numerous, tall people, but the LORD destroyed them and let the Ammonites, the descendants of Esau, live there.

In fact, there was another Anakite type group named the Avvim, who lived as far away as Gaza and God destroyed them. Caphtor may be identified as the island of Crete.

Now what the people of Israel are learning by this is that when God wants His people in a certain place, He takes them there and blesses them there.

Do you see what is stated in **verses 21-22**, God determines who dispossesses people who live in an area based on His sovereign will of whomever He wants living there.

The United States of America is no fluke. This nation is a sovereign nation put here by Almighty God. He is the One who directed the Pilgrims here. He is the One who directed the Louisiana Purchase. He is the One who directed Lewis and Clark to safely explore land west of the Missouri and this nation is one nation under God from sea to shining sea - from the Atlantic to the Pacific. This is the work of God and don't let some fool tell you otherwise.

**INSTRUCTION #4** – Instruction concerning Sihon the Amorite king. **2:24-37**

Now to this point, God has basically been telling His people travel through life and get along with people. Let them live where they live and do good business with people.

But this instruction is different. God says you are going to take this Land.

As near as we may determine, there are two types of people who need to be eliminated and destroyed because they will do great damage to a nation.

- 1) Those who oppose God's people and the place God has put them.
  - 2) Those who oppose God's truth and the true worship of God.
- These people have to go.

There was an Amorite king, whose name was Sihon, and God wanted His people to take a stand and do battle with him and get rid of him.

God says in **verse 24**, you need to know that even before you do battle with him, you have already won. God is sovereign over who wins and who loses.

So according to **verse 25**, God says I will start putting a dread and fear of you among people everywhere. When they hear that you are coming they will tremble.

Keep in mind to this point, Israel is just getting along with everyone, but now things would change by the work of God. God can use imaginary dangers to accomplish His will.

Moses said (**verses 26-28**) we did send messengers to Sihon to offer peace. We told him that we needed to pass through your land; we will stay on the highway and not turn to the right or left. We will buy food from you and water from you as we are passing through.

In fact, in **verse 29** Moses said that is the same kind of deal he worked out with the Moabites. We paid for food and water and passed right through their land.

But according to **verse 30**, Sihon would not let them pass through the land because “the LORD your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate.”

In other words, **God sovereignly caused Sihon to arrogantly refuse so He could show His power by defeating him and destroying him.** God is sovereign over idiotic decisions of political leaders (Prov. 21:1).

In **verses 31-33**, Sihon came out against Israel and God saw they were completely routed.

In fact, Moses said we captured all his cities and completely destroyed men, women and children and left no survivors (**v. 34**).

They took only the animals and spoil of the cities (**v. 35**).

**Verses 36-37** inform us that God gave them victory over every place He wanted them to have victory and He gave orders not to attack certain areas and blessed them for their obedience.

#### **LESSONS:**

- 1. The word of God must be obeyed by God’s people in regard to everything and everyone.**
- 2. God watches out for the whole world.**
- 3. God determines where nations exist and when they exist.**
- 4. With some people we need to be at peace, with some others we need to be at war.**
- 5. In our journey through life, God has blessed us abundantly.**
- 6. God is sovereign over all political leaders and their decisions.**
- 7. God will ALWAYS show Himself strong for His obedient people; they will have victory.**