



Deuteronomy 1:1-8
“Moses’ Farewell Sermon”

NKJ Deuteronomy 1:1 These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel on this side of the Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain opposite Suph, between Paran, Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab.

2 It is eleven days' journey from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea.

3 Now it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spoke to the children of Israel according to all that the LORD had given him as commandments to them,

4 after he had killed Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who dwelt at Ashtaroth in Edrei.

5 On this side of the Jordan in the land of Moab, Moses began to explain this law, saying,

6 "The LORD our God spoke to us in Horeb, saying: 'You have dwelt long enough at this mountain.

7 'Turn and take your journey, and go to the mountains of the Amorites, to all the neighboring places in the plain, in the mountains and in the lowland, in the South and on the seacoast, to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the River Euphrates.

8 'See, I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers -- to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob -- to give to them and their descendants after them.'

I have a confession to make, I have long wanted to do an in-depth study on the book of Deuteronomy, which many commentators have described as the “beating heart of the Old Testament” and now God-willing I’m going to do it, and all of you are coming with me as we march through Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy is of course the last book in the Pentatuch which is a Greek word meaning “book of five volumes” or the Torah a Hebrew word meaning Law or Teaching. These five books Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are the books written directly by Moses, God’s greater leader and law giver to His people. The man who lead them out of Egypt to the very edge of the promised land, and yet who tragically was not allowed to enter that land because of his own act of disobedience and pride.

The content of the book is made up of a series of sermons preached by Moses in the desert east of the Jordan on the edge of the promised land in Moab. Its ironic that this morning we were reading about a man who brought his family out of the Promised land and into Moab, and this morning we are reading about those people many years before about to leave Moab and enter into the Promised Land.

Land is going to be one of the critical themes in this book, because of course God had covenanted with the patriarch of his people Abraham to give them three things. First he said he would make them from one man into a mighty nation, and he has done that, then Second he promised to give them a land that was not their own, and he is about to do that, and so the focus of Deuteronomy is upon what they must do when the enter into the land he was giving to them. The third promise which we will see glimpses of is that God had also promised that they would be a blessing to the nations, and that promise was to be fulfilled over a millennia later with the birth of Jesus Christ.

Now the name of the book in the English bible is “Deuteronomy,” which comes from a Latin word meaning literally “second law” but that title is misleading, because we don’t read a second law here, there is nothing brand new in this book, rather what we read in Deuteronomy is renewal of the covenant made with God on Mt. Sinai and a preached exposition by Moses of what that covenant implied. The Hebrew name of the book, incidentally is *Elleh Hadbarim* – Literally “these are the words” referring to the first three words in the first verse, but more importantly reminding every Israelite who read them this is what God said to us through his servant Moses before we entered the land.

Also, another reason second law isn’t a very good title, is because when we hear the words law we think of some sort of law code, and so we expect a boring rehearsal of statutes and requirements, but I hope you’ll see that isn’t what Deuteronomy is really about. The focus of this great book is as Paul Gilchrist puts it: *“is the heart relationship between God and his people, just as between shepherd and sheep, father and son. ... This final conference is intended by Moses to give Israel instruction in the faith and to press home the requirements of the covenant relationship. Moses’ address is the authoritative instruction of a father to his son, of a shepherd to his flock, of a wise man to his disciple, rather than a judicial rehearsal of legal requirements.”*

Now there are a lot of laws in this book, but they are all based on the covenant relationship between God and His people, and I hope you will see that they are for the most part based on that relationship, so the commandments don’t have a “do these works in order to be saved.” It’s exactly reversed, its because you have been saved by grace, do these works. Or as Jesus put it much later: ***John 14:15 " If you love Me, keep My commandments.*** The person who does not love God will never have the inclination or the ability to keep his commandments.

Now as I said before this is a farewell sermon by Moses, he is nearing the end of his own pilgrimage on earth. He has been in the wilderness for forty years now. The journey to the promised land should not have taken that long, it should only have taken a few days, the people had been in this place before, forty years ago. The generation that went out from Egypt has died because they rebelled on the edge of the promised land. Kids I hope you remember the story of the spies, how 12 were sent out but only Joshua and Caleb had said we are well able to take this land because God is with us.

The Lord had said that that generation would not enter into the land because of their rebellion

Moses too had heartbreakingly been told he would not enter in either, Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" struck the rock twice with his rod

Numbers 20:12 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."

It is Moses’ assistant Joshua who will bring them into the promised land.

Moses has lost many of the members of his family this fortieth year, Miriam his sister died in the first month, Aaron died on the first day of the fifth month and in just a month Moses himself will be dead.

But like every good servant of the Lord, he is still zealous for God and it is his desire that his people would still be hearing the word of the Lord that they might continue to grow in grace and knowledge.

Now they are about to enter into the land, what does he give them? We are told these days that everything we God's people has to be practical. There has to be a cash value. They are about to enter into a long period of fighting. So we would expect him to spend hours talking military matters, opening up to them a practical self-help book called "*Your Best War Now*" But he doesn't do that. He talks to them about 1st what God has done for them, his promises, and what they must do. It's a book about religion.

You see we forget that solid instruction in law and gospel and God's promises is what God's people most need, they need religion, not self-help.

Moses repeats the law to them – he explains it Thus, after God's controversy with them on account of the golden calf, the first and surest sign of God's being reconciled to them was the renewing of the tables, reconciliation.

He tells them you have dwelt long enough at Mt. Sinai -

God brought them there to humble them,
to prepare them for the land of promise.
There he kept them about a year,
He breaks them down and prepares them
That is the course he will often take on our journey, affliction prepares us for grace and molds us.
But he is the one who will take us in
Not we ourselves.

I have set the land before you--literally, "before your faces"--it is accessible; there is no impediment to your occupation. The order of the journey as indicated by the places mentioned would have led to a course of invasion, the opposite of what was eventually followed; namely, from the seacoast eastward--instead of from the Jordan westward

God's promises.

AMAZING PARALLEL to this scene. GO AND DO, FOR I WILL BE WITH YOU -

Matt. 28:16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them.

17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.