

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
4-20-22

Deuteronomy 1

The Command to Leave Horeb – Verses 1-2

¹ These are the words Moses spoke to all Israel in the wilderness east of the Jordan—that is, in the Arabah—opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth and Dizahab. ² (It takes eleven days to go from Horeb to Kadesh Barnea by the Mount Seir road.)

1:1-2 The Israelites spent 40 years on a journey that should have lasted 11 days. It wasn't distance that stood between them and the Promised Land. It was the condition of their hearts. God's purpose went deeper than simply transporting a huge group of people to a new land. He was preparing them to live in obedience to him once they arrived. What good was the Promised Land if the Israelites were just as wicked as the nations already living there? The journey was a painful but necessary part of their preparation. Through it God taught the Israelites who he was: the living God, the Leader of their nation. He also taught them who they were: people who were fallen, sinful, prone to rebellion and doubt. He gave his rebellious people the law to help them understand how to relate to God and to other people. Your spiritual pilgrimage may be lengthy, and you may face pain, discouragement, and difficulties. But remember that God isn't just trying to keep you alive. He wants to prepare you to live for service and devotion to him.

The Journey From Mount Horeb To Kadesh Barnea – Verses 3-5

³ In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses proclaimed to the Israelites all that the LORD had commanded him concerning them. ⁴ This was after he had defeated Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, and at Edrei had defeated Og king of Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth. ⁵ East of the Jordan in the territory of Moab, Moses began to expound this law, saying:

1:3-5 The 40 years of wilderness wandering come to an end in this book. The events of Deuteronomy cover only a week or two of the 11th month of the 40th year (1:3). The 12th and last month was spent in mourning for Moses (34:8). Then the Israelites entered the Promised Land the first month of the 41st year after the Exodus (Joshua 4:19).

The Command To Move On From Mount Horeb – Verses 6-8

⁶ The LORD our God said to us at Horeb, “You have stayed long enough at this mountain. ⁷ Break camp and advance into the hill country of the Amorites; go to all the neighboring peoples in the Arabah, in the mountains, in the western foothills, in the Negev and along the coast, to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the Euphrates. ⁸ See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land the LORD swore he would give to your fathers—to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and to their descendants after them.”

1:6-7 Notice that Moses' summary of Israel's 40-year journey begins at “Mount Horeb” (Sinai), not in Egypt. Why did Moses leave out the first part of the Exodus? Moses was not giving an itinerary—he

was summarizing the nation's development. In Moses' mind the nation of Israel began at the base of Mount Sinai, not in Egypt, for it was at Mount Sinai that God gave his covenant to the people (Exodus 19–20). Along with this covenant came knowledge and responsibility. After the people chose to follow God, they had to know how to follow him. Therefore, God gave them a comprehensive set of laws and guidelines that stated how he wanted them to live (these are found in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers). The people could no longer say they didn't know the difference between right and wrong. Now that the people had promised to follow God and knew how to follow him, they had a responsibility to do it. When God tells you to break camp and move out to face a challenge he gives you, will you be ready to obey?

Moses Appointed Judges Among Israel – Verses 9-18

⁹ At that time I said to you, “You are too heavy a burden for me to carry alone. ¹⁰ The LORD your God has increased your numbers so that today you are as numerous as the stars in the sky. ¹¹ May the LORD, the God of your ancestors, increase you a thousand times and bless you as he has promised! ¹² But how can I bear your problems and your burdens and your disputes all by myself? ¹³ Choose some wise, understanding and respected men from each of your tribes, and I will set them over you.” ¹⁴ You answered me, “What you propose to do is good.” ¹⁵ So I took the leading men of your tribes, wise and respected men, and appointed them to have authority over you—as commanders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens and as tribal officials. ¹⁶ And I charged your judges at that time, “Hear the disputes between your people and judge fairly, whether the case is between two Israelites or between an Israelite and a foreigner residing among you. ¹⁷ Do not show partiality in judging; hear both small and great alike. Do not be afraid of anyone, for judgment belongs to God. Bring me any case too hard for you, and I will hear it.” ¹⁸ And at that time I told you everything you were to do.

1:9-13 It was a tremendous burden for Moses to lead the nation by himself. He could not accomplish the task single-handedly. As nations, organizations, and churches grow, they become increasingly complex. Conflicting needs and quarrels arise. No longer can one leader make all the decisions. Like Moses, you may have a natural tendency to try to do all the work alone. You may be afraid or embarrassed to ask for help. Moses made a wise decision to share the leadership with others. Rather than trying to handle larger responsibilities alone, look for ways of sharing the load so that others may exercise their God-given gifts and abilities.

1:13-18 Moses identified some of the inner qualities of good leaders: (1) wisdom, (2) experience, (3) understanding, and (4) respect. These characteristics differ markedly from the ones that often help elect leaders today: good looks, wealth, popularity, willingness to do anything to get to the top. The qualities Moses identified should be evident in us as we lead, and we should look for them in those we elect to positions of leadership.

Moses Remembers When Israel Refused To Enter The Promised Land – Verses 19-21

¹⁹ Then, as the LORD our God commanded us, we set out from Horeb and went toward the hill country of the Amorites through all that vast and dreadful wilderness that you have seen, and so we reached Kadesh Barnea. ²⁰ Then I said to you, “You have reached the hill country of the Amorites, which the LORD our God is giving us. ²¹ See, the LORD your God has given you the land. Go up and take possession of it as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, told you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”

1:19-21 Look, the LORD your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it: After seeing God's faithfulness in enabling them to cross the land of the Amorites, Moses was ready to lead the nation into Canaan.

1:21 Do not fear or be discouraged: This encouragement was important because this was the critical moment for Israel. They were a little more than a year out of Egypt and ready to go into the Promised Land. It was there before them, ready for them to take by faith, if they would not fear or be discouraged.

Moses Remembers Israel's Suggestion To Send Forth Spies – Verses 22-23

22 Then all of you came to me and said, “Let us send men ahead to spy out the land for us and bring back a report about the route we are to take and the towns we will come to.” **23** The idea seemed good to me; so I selected twelve of you, one man from each tribe.

1:22 The scouts had been sent into the land to determine not whether they should enter, but where they should enter. Upon returning, however, most of the scouts had concluded that the land was not worth the obstacles. God would give the Israelites the power to conquer the land, but they were afraid of the risk and decided not to enter. God gives us the power to overcome our obstacles, but just as the Israelites were filled with fear and skepticism, we often let difficulties control our lives. When we follow God regardless of the difficulties, we demonstrate courageous, overcoming faith.

Moses Remembers The Journey And Report Of The Spies – Verses 24-25

24 They left and went up into the hill country, and came to the Valley of Eshkol and explored it. **25** Taking with them some of the fruit of the land, they brought it down to us and reported, “It is a good land that the LORD our God is giving us.”

1:24-25 They brought back word to us: Significantly, Moses didn't mention the evil report of the unbelieving spies (Numbers 13:28-29). It is almost as if the memory was so painful that Moses wouldn't even deal with it.

It is a good land which the LORD our God is giving us: It was enough that the nation of Israel had the report from the godly spies, Joshua and Caleb. In addition to that, all the twelve spies were united in saying, "It is a good land which the LORD our God is giving us" (Numbers 13:27).

Moses Remembers Israel's Unbelieving Rejection Of The Promised Land, Though He Pleaded With Them To Take The Land In Faith – Verses 26-33

26 But you were unwilling to go up; you rebelled against the command of the LORD your God. **27** You grumbled in your tents and said, “The LORD hates us; so he brought us out of Egypt to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us. **28** Where can we go? Our brothers have made our hearts melt in fear. They say, ‘The people are stronger and taller than we are; the cities are large, with walls up to the sky. We even saw the Anakites there.’” **29** Then I said to you, “Do not be terrified; do not be afraid of them. **30** The LORD your God, who is going before you, will fight for you, as he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes, **31** and in the wilderness. There you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place.” **32** In spite of this, you did not trust in the LORD your God, **33** who went ahead of you on your journey, in fire by night and in a cloud by day, to search out places for you to camp and to show you the way you should go.

1:28 Canaan was a land with giants and imposing fortresses. The “Anakites” may have been seven to nine feet tall. Many of the land’s fortified cities had walls as high as 30 feet. The Israelites’ fear was understandable, but not justified, for the all-powerful God had already promised them victory.

Moses' Remembers God's Oath Of Judgment Against Unbelieving Israel – Verses 34-40

34 When the LORD heard what you said, he was angry and solemnly swore: **35** “No one from this evil generation shall see the good land I swore to give your ancestors, **36** except Caleb son of Jephunneh. He will see it, and I will give him and his descendants the land he set his feet on, because he followed the LORD wholeheartedly.” **37** Because of you the LORD became angry with me also and said, “You shall not enter it, either. **38** But your assistant, Joshua son of Nun, will enter it. Encourage him, because he will lead Israel to inherit it. **39** And the little ones that you said would be taken captive, your children who do not yet know good from bad—they will enter the land. I will give it to them and they will take possession of it. **40** But as for you, turn around and set out toward the desert along the route to the Red Sea.”

1:34-40 Moses retold the story of the scouting mission into the Promised Land (Numbers 13–14). When the scouts returned with reports of giants (descendants of Anak) and walled cities, the people were afraid to move ahead and began to complain about their predicament. But the minority report of Joshua and Caleb pointed out that the land was fertile, the enemy was vulnerable, and God was on their side. We become fearful and immobile when we focus on the negative aspects of a situation. How much better it is to focus on the positive—God’s direction and promises. When confronted with an important decision and you know what you should do, move out in faith. Focus on the positives while trusting God to overcome the negatives. Problems don’t have to rob you of the victory.

Moses Remembers Their Half-Hearted Repentance And Futile Invasion Attempt – Verses 41-46

41 Then you replied, “We have sinned against the LORD. We will go up and fight, as the LORD our God commanded us.” So every one of you put on his weapons, thinking it easy to go up into the hill country. **42** But the LORD said to me, “Tell them, ‘Do not go up and fight, because I will not be with you. You will be defeated by your enemies.’” **43** So I told you, but you would not listen. You rebelled against the LORD’s command and in your arrogance you marched up into the hill country. **44** The Amorites who lived in those hills came out against you; they chased you like a swarm of bees and beat you down from Seir all the way to Hormah. **45** You came back and wept before the LORD, but he paid no attention to your weeping and turned a deaf ear to you. **46** And so you stayed in Kadesh many days—all the time you spent there.

1:41 We have sinned against the LORD; we will go up and fight: After hearing the consequences of their rejection of God, Israel had a change of heart. Yet they went forth in the flesh and not in faith, because God did not lead them.

1:43 Rebelled against the command of the LORD: They did this in the midst of their supposed repentance. Their sorrow was not over grieving the heart of God but over forty more years in the wilderness. God therefore saw through their shallow repentance.

1:44 The Amorites who dwelt in that mountain came out against you and chased you as bees do: This shows how their futile invitation attempt ended in disaster. After their total defeat, then they wept and wept - but again, this was over the consequences of getting caught, not over grieving the heart of God, and not over their sin of not believing the great love of God.