

# Deuteronomy

## 1. Remember, remember, remember

July 15, 2010

I've never considered myself as an outdoor person. Some people love hiking, rock climbing and camping. But I don't mind rappelling down a cliff or jumping out of a perfectly good airplane with a parachute. My idea of wilderness camping is a hotel room with a black and white TV and no high-speed internet.

I don't know about you, whenever I am away from home I long to go back home, even though I was anxious to take a trip in the beginning. Instead of being on the road, I'd like to settle down at home. Maybe that would be one of the reasons why we'd like to have our own church building to settle down. We will get there when the Lord says.

It is not unusual to think this way about the OT, "Oh well, here we go again with one of the OT Books. I just have to bear it, since it is in the Bible." If you think that way, you won't get much out of it. But if you are thinking, "OK, Lord, your servant is listening and willing to obey what I learn from You through this Book," then the Lord will unload a truck load of treasures into your heart. It is your choice.

Since we covered much of the contents in the Book of Deuteronomy from Leviticus and Exodus, we are going to go in fast speed with highlighting here and there. I need you guys to read ahead, please.

### A. THE AUTHOR AND THE TIMELINE

All five Books of the first portion of the OT were written by Moses. It is known as 'Pentateuch' which means 'Five Books' in Greek. It came from the root word of 'Pentateuchus' which is a combined word of two – 'penta' which means 'Five' and 'teuchus' book. Of course, we get 'Pentagon' from this Greek word 'penta'.

This Deuteronomy was written around 1406 B.C. around at the end of his life. Moses was born 1526 B.C. His life can be divided into three sections. The first forty years, he was a prince of Egypt. He was trying to be somebody with his own strength when he was nobody. For the second forty years, he was a shepherd. God made him from somebody to nobody. He was out nowhere and taking care of his father-in-law's sheep. For the final forty years, he was the leader of the two million people and they were making their way out of Egypt to the Promised Land. God made him somebody out of nobody by His power.

The name Deuteronomy means "second law." It was the second giving of the Mosaic Law, the first being at Mount Sinai originally.

### B. THE THEME OF THE BOOK

For forty long years, the people of Israel had been wandering around in the wilderness between Egypt and the Promised Land. The actual journey could have been done in two weeks plus or minus, but because of the first generation's disobedience and unbelief they could not enter into the Promised Land. The graves that were littered all around fresh wind-swept hills of the wilderness are the proofs of their consequence of the disobedience to the Lord.

Now, all the first generation people who came out of Egypt were dead with the exception of Moses, Joshua and Caleb. A new generation was on the scene. Canaan – the Promised Land – was just across the border. The Israelites were anxious to invade and claim the territory. They longed to settle down and deepen their roots once again.

Because this is the new generation, they needed to be instructed and warned again. Once they moved into Canaan, it would be easy to forget many of those hard-learned lessons from the desert. With the possibility of becoming fat, dumb, lazy and happy in the Promised Land, God pulled them aside and directed Moses to speak, to challenge, to warn and to remind them.

The Book of Deuteronomy may well be the longest farewell speech in recorded history as well as in the Bible. One of the most important responsibilities of the older generation is teaching the younger ones the Word of God and the principles of godly living.

The church today needs to return to the principles of godly living explained in Deuteronomy. Only then can we move forward in victory, by faith in Christ, and claim the inheritance He has appointed for us. To love God supremely and our neighbors as ourselves, and to seek to glorify God in all that we do, is the essence of the message of Deuteronomy. And it's a message we need to return to as we face the challenges of the future.

The theme of the Book is "Love and Obedience."

*Deuteronomy 6:4-7 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.*

### **C. IS DEUTERONOMY FOR TODAY?**

The answer is a resounding "YES." Let me give you three reasons:

- 1) **All Scripture is inspired and profitable, and that includes Deuteronomy.**
- 2) **Deuteronomy is quoted in the New Testament nearly one hundred times.**
- 3) **Jesus quoted more from Deuteronomy than from any other Old Testament book.**

It was the Book He used when He was tempted by satan and when questioned by His enemies, the Jewish religious leaders.

### **D. TIME TO LEAVE HOREB**

*Deuteronomy 1:6 "The Lord our God spoke to us in Horeb, saying: 'You have dwelt long enough at this mountain.*

A year at Mount Sinai was enough. The Lord did not bring them out of Egypt for them to live forever at Sinai. It was time to move on in faith and take the land of promise.

Why did the Lord have the Jews tarry so long at Sinai? He wanted to give them His Law and teach them how to worship Him. The Lord didn't give Israel His Law to save them from their sins, because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Under the Old Covenant, people were saved by faith just as sinners are today. The Law reveals the sinfulness of man and the holy character of God.

## E. WE ARE SCARED

*Deuteronomy 1:21-28* 21 Look, the Lord your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the Lord God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged.' 22 And everyone of you came near to me and said, 'Let us send men before us, and let them search out the land for us, and bring back word to us of the way by which we should go up, and of the cities into which we shall come.' 23 The plan pleased me well; so I took twelve of your men, one man from each tribe. 24 And they departed and went up into the mountains, and came to the Valley of Eshcol, and spied it out. 25 They also took some of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down to us; and they brought back word to us, saying, 'It is a good land which the Lord our God is giving us.' 26 "Nevertheless you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the Lord your God; 27 and you complained in your tents, and said, 'Because the Lord hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. 28 Where can we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our hearts, saying, "The people are greater and taller than we; the cities are great and fortified up to heaven; moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there.'"

It has well been said that faith is not believing in spite of evidence but obeying in spite of circumstances and consequences. God's commandment is always God's enablement, and to win the victory, His people need only trust and obey.

Please note v23 *"The plan pleased me well; so I took twelve of your men, one man from each tribe."* It might pleased Moses, but I don't think it did to the Lord. It was Moses' mistake for listening to the fickle people's words.

You might say, "What is wrong with having a reconnaissance before they go into the battle? Our military does." Yes, that is true. But Israel wasn't just any army. They were God's army. The Lord Himself did for them. They should have known that the will of God would not lead them where the grace and power of God could not keep them.

I believe that it was God's perfect will for the Israelites to simply go to battle against the nations that the Lord mentioned. Whenever we don't follow the Lord's perfect will, He allows His permissive will to be activated by our own dumb choice. However, doing God's permissive will isn't quite the same as obeying His "good, acceptable and perfect will".

When God lets us have our own way, we'd better start to walk in fear and humility. Why? Because there is always the danger that we'll become proud and self-confident. Doing God's perfect will is the safest course because He never makes a mistake.

How often do we try to give our opinions to the Lord even though He doesn't care to have them? He is not looking for our elaborate opinions, but simple obedience.

These ten spies' duty should have stopped at their simple fact-finding report. But they chose to go on with their editorial opinionated report that Israel wasn't able to conquer the land because the cities were fortified and there were giants in the land.

Whoop-de-do!!! Because those midget giants in the land they altogether forgot about the giant God in heaven who destroyed the entire Egyptian army with one sweep of ocean water.

Unfortunately, the nation sided with the majority in their mob mentality. They rebelled against the Lord and failed to claim the land He had promised them.

## **F. THE PENALTY FOR ISRAEL'S REBELLION**

*Deuteronomy 1:34-36 "And the Lord heard the sound of your words, and was angry, and took an oath, saying, 35 'Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see that good land of which I swore to give to your fathers, 36 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and his children I am giving the land on which he walked, because he wholly followed the Lord.'*

Since they didn't want to go in, God made it sure that they could not go in. The first adult generation didn't get to go into the Promised Land because of their unbelief and disobedience.

How often have we robbed ourselves out of the blessings of God because of our own stubbornness? How often have we chickened out from the Lord's perfect will because of our own unbelief and fear? Anything, in fact, will serve as an excuse, when the heart is bent on compromise.

If God's blessings don't humble our hearts and make us trust Him more, then they will harden our hearts and weaken our faith. Unless we receive His Word in our hearts and give thanks to God for His blessings, we become proud and selfish and begin to take the Lord's blessings for granted.

There's a huge difference between unbelief and doubt. Unbelief is a matter of the will. It causes people to rebel against God and say, "No matter what the Lord says or does, I will not believe and obey!"

*James 1:5-8 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. 9 Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation*

Doubt, however, is a matter of the heart and the emotions. It's what people experience when they waver between fear and faith. The doubter says, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" When we have doubt in our heart, Lord often meets us at our level.

*Matthew 14:30-32 But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" 31 And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.*

God seeks to encourage doubters and help them believe, but all He can do with unbelievers is bring judgment.

## **G. THEY STILL DIDN'T GET IT**

*Deuteronomy 1:40 But as for you, turn and take your journey into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea.' 41 "Then you answered and said to me, 'We have sinned against the Lord; we will go up and fight, just as the Lord our God commanded us.' And when everyone of you had girded on his weapons of war, you were ready to go up into the mountain. 42 And the Lord said to me, 'Tell them, "Do not go up nor fight, for I am not among you; lest you be defeated before your enemies.'"*

When the Jews heard God's judgment declared, they tried to undo their sin in their own way, but they only made matters worse. "We have sinned!" they said, but it was a shallow confession that really meant, "We're sorry for the consequences of our sin." It wasn't true repentance; it was only regret. Then they tried to attack some of the people in the land, but their efforts failed and God brought about a humiliating defeat. After all, the Lord wasn't with them and hadn't ordered them to fight.

## **H. APPLICATIONS**

- 1) One of the most important responsibilities of the older generation is teaching the younger ones the Word of God and the principles of godly living.
- 2) God's commandment is always God's enablement, and to win the victory, His people need only trust and obey.
- 3) Anything will serve as an excuse, when the heart is bent on compromise.