

Deuteronomy 1-4 Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

As Deuteronomy opens, it's been *over* 40 years since Israel left Egypt. Israel is now on the Eastern side of the Jordan River which marks the eastern border of Canaan, the Promised Land.

They are about to go over to take possession of that which had been promised to their fathers.

This is a *new* generation, one very different from those who had left Egypt.

All those 20 & older in the Exodus have now died off.

This was their judgment for having refused to enter the Promised Land 38 years before.

Moses knows how important it is this new generation learn from the mistakes of their ancestors, so he gives them a history lesson.

Really, that's what the book of Deuteronomy is – a rehearsing of their history from the Exodus until that day.

The word Deuteronomy means 2nd Law.

The book is given that title because not only does Moses retell their history, he repeats the statutes and ordinances God had given the nation 40 years before.

This new generation needed to be reminded of the terms of their covenant with God.

So, yes, we are going to be reading the commands we've already studied in Exodus and Leviticus again – albeit in a far more summary fashion, because that's the way Moses reviews them.

Now, I realize this seems tedious – but don't miss the point:

If the HS made sure the law was recorded twice, we ought to take it as evidence there's contained in the law something important about God and our relationship with Him.

Being under the new covenant, many Christians consider the law nothing more than an ancient relic and not worthy of much attention.

They know they're saved by grace through faith, *not by works*.

So they relegate the Law to the *pre*-Christian era and think that it has passed away.

Nothing could be further from the truth! The law is still in force!

The law of God is still the standard by which people are judged.

It's the law that reveals our sin and drives us to Christ to find forgiveness, as Paul says in Galatians 3.

If there were no law – there would be no need for a Savior.

So there is great profit in studying the law of Moses because it helps us better understand the holiness of God and reveals where we are falling short of His perfection.

The law drives us to Christ – and that's a good thing!

As we work through Deut. we'll be looking for the *principles* of truth & justice the law reveals, then talk about *how* we can implement these principles in our daily lives.

This was the way God *intended* the Law to be understood – not as a slavish observance of the letter of the commands, but to understand the *spirit of holiness behind* the commands, and embrace that spirit with a passion for purity.

Outline of Deuteronomy

I. MOSES' FIRST DISCOURSE (Chs. 1–4)

II. MOSES' SECOND DISCOURSE (Chs. 5–28)

III. MOSES' THIRD DISCOURSE (Chs. 29, 30)

IV. MOSES' LAST DAYS (Chs. 31–34)

I. MOSES' FIRST DISCOURSE (Chs. 1–4)

A. Introduction (1:1–5)

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.

[Show Map]

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

Horeb is another name for Mt. Sinai.

When Israel left Egypt, they made their way across the Sinai peninsula to the land of Midian where Moses had spent the previous 40 years tending his father in law's flocks.

The nation spent an entire year camped at the foot of Mt. Sinai & it was there God gave them the law & plans for the tabernacle.

This was the place where they entered into *national covenant with God*.

It's a mere 11 day journey from Sinai to Kadesh Barnea, the southern border of the Promised Land. **11 Days!!!**

Israel had been wandering in the wilderness for **38 years!!!** Why?

When they first came to Kadesh Barnea from Sinai, they'd made it there in just 11 days.

But the people had refused to enter when they heard the report of the spies saying the land was too tough to take.

Their unbelief closed the door to Canaan & resulted in their wandering around the wilderness for the next 38 years, until the entire generation of adults 20 & older died off.

Then, once the last of them were gone, they arrived **back** at Kadesh Barnea.

God had intended them to enter in & take possession of the promise 4 decades before, but their unbelief led to nearly 40 years of aimless wandering & wasted time.

The same happens in our lives.

God has given us great and mighty promises & wants us to take possession of them.

He has a new identity for us in Christ.

The only thing that keeps us from entering into the fullness of God's plan for

our lives is our unbelief, our doubts and fears.
How long ought solid, consistent spiritual maturity take for the believer in Christ?
2, 3, 4 years?
Yet some have been Christians for 20, 30, 40 years and they still act like babes.
It was 11 days from Sinai to the Promised Land!
11 days was all they **NEEDED** to spend in the wilderness; but they spent
nearly 40 **YEARS** there.
Don't balk at the promises of God.
Don't let fear & doubt keep you trapped in a spiritual wilderness.
Press in and lay hold of all of that for which Jesus has laid hold of you!

3 Now it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month,

This is the 11th month of the 40th year – so it's been nearly *41 years* since the Exodus.

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,
Israel had already conquered 2 Amorite nations on the eastern side of the Jordan River.

This territory had been divided up between the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh.

B. From Horeb to Kadesh (1:6–46)

Now Moses begins his first Speech . . .

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 *p*laces 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.’

The territory of the ***Promised Land*** is extensive & has never been secured at any time in Israel's history.

In fact, it won't be fully occupied by Israel until Jesus comes again and takes the throne as her King.

But that doesn't mean Israel ***couldn't*** have taken possession of the entire territory if she'd been obedient.

We see here that God ***told*** them to take possession of the whole thing!

9 “And I spoke to you at that time, saying: ‘I alone am not able to bear you. ¹⁰ The LORD your God has multiplied you, and here you are today, as the stars of heaven in multitude.

According to the counts made of the populace in Numbers, there could have been as many as 3 million or more in the Exodus.

This was way too many people for Moses to lead effectively all by himself.

11 May the LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times more numerous than you are, and bless you as He has promised you!

12 How can I alone bear your problems and your burdens and your complaints? 13 Choose wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men from among your tribes, and I will make them heads over you.'

Moses was counseled by his father in law to delegate the administration of the nation to other men who could help lead.

14 And you answered me and said, 'The thing which you have told us to do is good.' 15 So I took the heads of your tribes, wise and knowledgeable men, and made them heads over you, leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, leaders of tens, and officers for your tribes.

There was a *hierarchal structure* to the government, with those who were more skilled given greater responsibility & oversight.

This provided a kind of checks & balance system to make sure power was not abused.

16 "Then I commanded your judges at that time, saying, 'Hear *the cases between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the stranger who is with him.* 17 You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man's presence, for the judgment *is God's.* The case that is too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it.'

A judicial or court system was put in place.

These judges were given strict orders to ensure they showed not a shred of favoritism.

They were to understand that as they sat in judgment, they were administering God's justice, not their own ideas.

Look at v. 17 again -

You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man's presence, for the judgment is God's.

There are only 2 possible grounds for law – Absolute Truth or Human Society.

If human society is the basis of law, then the whole concept of *justice* is a fiction because whoever is in power gets to make the rules. Might makes right.

If Absolute Truth is the basis of law, then justice becomes the guiding principle for the development and enforcement of the law & such laws won't change because *justice doesn't change*.

Our whole system of Law was originally grounded in the very thing Moses says here – that the purpose of the Law is *to build society* on the unchanging truth & justice of Our Maker.

In the last 50 years that foundation has been systematically undermined by

secular humanists who want to *build the law* on their vision of society. Judges used to understand that they were administrating and applying God's justice to specific cases.

Today many judges think they are a god and possess the power to **MAKE** law. One of the cleverest strategies secular humanists have employed was to co-opt society by seating judges indoctrinated in a *rabid* secular humanism.

We ought to pray for & encourage Christian young people to seek out professions in Law & to pursue judgeships.

18 And I commanded you at that time all the things which you should do. 19 "So we departed from Horeb, and went through all that great and terrible wilderness which you saw on the way to the mountains of the Amorites, as the LORD our God had commanded us. Then we came to Kadesh Barnea. 20 And I said to you, 'You have come to the mountains of the Amorites, which the LORD our God is giving us. 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.'

The promise of God had become a *command*.

The possession of Canaan was a *sure thing* – all they needed to do was take it. So Moses encouraged them to go for it!

22 "And every one 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;

Mo thought this was a sign of the people's faith & readiness to enter in; that they were taking this step as *preparation*.

Little did he know it was just a stall tactic because the people were filled with unbelief.

God knew, & it's why in Numbers 13:1-2 He told Moses to consent to their request.

Their real motive needed to be exposed.

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 [giants] there."'

There was no denying the land was incredibly rich & prosperous.

But it was inhabited by people who were powerful & well defended.

This report by those sent in to scout the land exposed the cowardice of the people.

29 “Then I said to you, ‘Do not be terrified, or afraid of them. 30 The LORD your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, 31 and in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.’

Sure the Canaanites were a powerful people!

So what? God had broken the back of the world’s mightiest empire to deliver Israel.

And throughout their time in the wilderness He protected and delivered them from desert raiders like the Amalekites.

What He’d done before, He would do again & again until the Promised Land was theirs.

32 Yet, for all that, you did not believe the LORD your God, 33 who went in the way before you to search out a place for you to pitch your tents, to show you the way you should go, in the fire by night and in the cloud by day. 34 “And the LORD heard the sound of your words, and was angry,

Before we read on, notice where they were when God overheard their words; v. 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.

The people were mumbling & grumbling *in their tents*.

It wasn’t out in public where others heard them; it was in the privacy of their own *homes*, just complaining to one another about the raw deal they’d been given.

And this bitter, complaining attitude spread like wild-fire through the camp.

It’s so sad when people come to church, putting on a smile & acting as if everything is okay, but then go home & moan & complain about this & that.

We regularly hear stories about people who grew up in a church-going family where the parents acted as if everything was peachy when they were at church, but at home they ripped into the other people in the church.

They would even accuse others in the church of being *hypocrites*, not seeing how hypocritical *they* were being for acting so friendly to their face, but then ripping them to shreds at home before their kids.

In some homes the usual meal after coming home from church is “roast pastor.”

One thing about a negative attitude – it’s contagious.

If others in your family grumble a lot, ask where they learned to complain.

You just might find the answer staring back at you from the mirror.

God heard the grouching going on in the tents of Israel & He was angry because

they were blaming their circumstances on Him!

They even accused Him of conspiring to kill them, & this while it was **THEY** who refused to enter into the Promise He was extending to them.

When we grumble, *ultimately* we're blaming God because He controls all things.

When we complain, we're saying God is not fair and is treating us cruelly.

To have a negative attitude is to look at life without faith, and whatever is not of faith is sin!

34 “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.’

Only 2 men of that generation were allowed to enter – Caleb, one of the 12 spies who'd tried in vain to persuade the people to not balk at going up to Canaan, and Joshua, Moses' assistant and the other spy who came back with a good report.

What a great epithet is given for Caleb here in v. 36; He wholly followed the Lord!

37 The LORD was also angry with me for your sakes, saying, ‘Even you shall not go in there. ³⁸ Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there. Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.

Moses had sadly misrepresented God before the people at the waters of Meribah in Numbers 20.

For this, he was barred from entering Canaan. Joshua would be his successor.

39 ‘Moreover your little ones and your children, who you say will be victims, who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there; to them I will give it, and they shall possess it. 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;

That's where they ought to have ended their prayer – right there, with an admission of their guilt and a request for forgiveness.

But though their words are right, their hearts aren't – as their actions reveal . . .

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.” ’ ⁴³ So I spoke to you; yet you would not listen, but rebelled against the command of the LORD, and presumptuously went up into the mountain. ⁴⁴ And the Amorites who dwelt in that mountain came out against you and chased you as bees do, and drove you back from Seir to Hormah. ⁴⁵ Then you returned

and wept before the LORD, but the LORD would not listen to your voice nor give ear to you.

This seems harsh – why wouldn't God listen to them?

Because their hearts were still not right.

They were weeping, not tears of repentance, but of sorrow for their loss, a loss they suffered needlessly because they had rebelled against God.

As v. 43 says, Israel's military foray into Amorite territory was *presumption*, not faith.

Faith is based on the clear leading of the Spirit of God, confirmed by His Word.

It's presumption when there is no Word to back the action.

46 “So you remained in Kadesh many days, according to the days that you spent *there*.

C. From Kadesh to Heshbon (Ch. 2)

1 “Then we turned and journeyed into the wilderness of the Way of the Red Sea, as the LORD spoke to me, and we skirted Mount Seir for many days. ² “And the LORD spoke to me, saying: ³ ‘You have skirted this mountain long enough; turn northward.

The 38 years of wandering the wilderness are passed over in just 1 verse. It was 38 years of wasted time, just waiting for the older generation to die off.

Once they no longer troubled the nation, the real journey resumed with God telling Moses to lead the nation north from Kadesh.

4 And command the people, saying, “You *are about to* pass through the territory of your brethren, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. Therefore watch yourselves carefully. ⁵ Do not meddle with them, for I will not give you *any* of their land, no, not so much as one footstep, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession. ⁶ You shall buy food from them with money, that you may eat; and you shall also buy water from them with money, that you may drink. ⁷ “For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand. He knows your trudging through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God *has been* with you; you have lacked nothing.” ’

Esau was the twin-brother of Jacob, the father of the 12 tribes of Israel.

God had given the region of Seir to Esau's descendants, the Edomites.

Israel was to honor them and make sure not to abuse their property in any way.

8 “And when we passed beyond our brethren, the descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir, away from the road of the plain, away from Elath and Ezion Geber, we turned and passed by way of the Wilderness of Moab. ⁹ Then the LORD said to me, ‘Do not harass Moab, nor contend with them in battle, for I will not give you *any* of their land as a possession, because I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot as a possession.’ ”

The Moabites were *also* distant relatives of Israel.

Moab was the son of Lot, Abraham's nephew.

Their territory was to be considered off limits just like Seir.

Now we learn an interesting little piece of information about some of the people who occupied these regions before the Edomites and Moabites possessed their lands.

10 (The Emim had dwelt there [in Moab] in times past, a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim. ¹¹ They were also regarded as giants, like the Anakim, but the Moabites call them Emim. ¹² The Horites formerly dwelt in Seir, but the descendants of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their place, just as Israel did to the land of their possession which the LORD gave them.)

The Anakim were giants who lived in Canaan.

Other groups of similar people lived throughout this area but their presence had not stopped the Edomites & Moabites from driving them off and taking their lands.

Moses mentions this because one of the things that had freaked Israel out years before was the Anakim who lived in Canaan.

If the Edomites & Moabites could drive the giants out of *their* land, how much more would Israel be able to wrest the land God had already given them from the grip of the Anakim?

The last phrase of v. 12 must be an editorial insertion of someone much later than Moses.

13 “ ‘Now rise and cross over the Valley of the Zered.’ So we crossed over the Valley of the Zered. ¹⁴ And the time we took to come from Kadesh Barnea until we crossed over the Valley of the Zered was thirty-eight years, until all the generation of the men of war was consumed from the midst of the camp, just as the LORD had sworn to them. ¹⁵ For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them from the midst of the camp until they were consumed. ¹⁶ “So it was, when all the men of war had finally perished from among the people, ¹⁷ that the LORD spoke to me, saying: ¹⁸ ‘This day you are to cross over at Ar, the boundary of Moab. ¹⁹ And *when* you come near the people of Ammon, do not harass them or meddle with them, for I will not give you *any* of the land of the people of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the descendants of Lot as a possession.’ ”

Ammon was Moab's half brother – the son of Lot and so another distant relative of Israel's.

Their territory was also off-limits to Israel.

20 (That was also regarded as a land of giants; giants formerly dwelt there. But the Ammonites call them Zamzummim, ²¹ a people as great

and numerous and tall as the Anakim. But the LORD destroyed them before them, and they dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, ²² just as He had done for the descendants of Esau, who dwelt in Seir, when He destroyed the Horites from before them. They dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, even to this day. ²³ And the Avim, who dwelt in villages as far as Gaza— the Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor, destroyed them and dwelt in their place.)

Both the Ammonites & the Caphtorim had successfully defeated the giants & driven them from their lands.

This makes 4 groups who'd defeated the giants. Israel must not fear.

V. 21 tells us how these 4 groups dispossessed the giants of their lands – “the Lord destroyed them before them.”

Sure the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites and Caphtorim went out against the giants, but it was God who gave them the strength to subdue them.

These people probably had no idea God was giving them the victory, but He was.

In the same way today, many people are oblivious to the way God is helping them.

You share the Lord with them and they respond by saying they don't feel a need for God.

What they don't realize is that they need Him *desperately* & that without Him, their world would immediately fall apart.

Where does the artist get her creativity?

Where does the musician get his ear?

Whence comes the athlete's strength?

There is simply no such thing as a “self-made man.”

God is not only the Author of life – He continues to be the Sustainer of *Living*.

As James 1:17 says . . .

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights.

24 “ ‘Rise, take your journey, and cross over the River Arnon. Look, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land. Begin to possess *it*, and engage him in battle. ²⁵ This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the nations under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you, and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.’ ²⁶ “And I sent messengers from the Wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon king of Heshbon, with words of peace, saying, ²⁷ ‘Let me pass through your land; I will keep strictly to the road, and I will turn neither to the right nor to the left. ²⁸ You shall sell me food for money, that I may eat, and give me water for money, that I may drink; only let me pass through on foot, ²⁹ just as the descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir and the Moabites who dwell in Ar did for me, until I cross the Jordan to the land which the LORD our God is giving us.’ ³⁰ “But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass through, for the LORD your God hardened his spirit and made

his heart obstinate, that He might deliver him into your hand, as *it is* this day. ³¹ “And the LORD said to me, ‘See, I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you. Begin to possess *it*, that you may inherit his land.’ ³² Then Sihon and all his people came out against us to fight at Jahaz. ³³ And the LORD our God delivered him over to us; so we defeated him, his sons, and all his people. ³⁴ We took all his cities at that time, and we utterly destroyed the men, women, and little ones of every city; we left none remaining. ³⁵ We took only the livestock as plunder for ourselves, with the spoil of the cities which we took. ³⁶ From Aroer, which *is* on the bank of the River Arnon, and *from* the city that *is* in the ravine, as far as Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us; the LORD our God delivered all to us. ³⁷ Only you did not go near the land of the people of Ammon—anywhere along the River Jabbok, or to the cities of the mountains, or wherever the LORD our God had forbidden us.

Moses’ offer of peace in v. 26 with Sihon was not an act of disobedience against God’s command to conquer his land.

Because Moses knew Sihon would *reject* the offer, it was a way to make clear the two nations were at war.

V. 30 says that God “hardened Sihon’s spirit and made his heart obstinate.”

Was it right for God to harden the heart of Sihon?

First of all, because God IS RIGHT, whatever He does is right.

So, if we don’t “like” something God does, it’s because OUR idea of what’s right, *isn’t* right.

But we don’t have to worry about the appropriateness of God’s action here with Sihon.

God did not persuade a *reluctant* Sihon to act against Israel.

The Hebrew makes it clear that God simply let Sihon have what his heart *already wanted* & that was to go to war against Israel.

God did not *change* Sihon’s heart from good to bad. He simply *hardened* it in its malice towards Israel.

“To harden” doesn’t mean to change but to make firm – you see, Sihon had already decided to oppose Israel.

D. Trans-Jordan Secured (Ch. 3)

¹ “Then we turned and went up the road to Bashan; and Og king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. ² And the LORD said to me, ‘Do not fear him, for I have delivered him and all his people and his land into your hand; you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon.’ ³ “So the LORD our God also delivered into our hands Og king of Bashan, with all his people, and we attacked him until he had no survivors remaining. ⁴ And we took all his cities at that time; there was not a city which we did not take from them: sixty cities, all the region of

Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. ⁵ All these cities were fortified with high walls, gates, and bars, besides a great many rural towns. ⁶ And we utterly destroyed them, as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children of every city. ⁷ But all the livestock and the spoil of the cities we took as booty for ourselves. ⁸ “And at that time we took the land from the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who were on this side of the Jordan, from the River Arnon to Mount Hermon ⁹ (the Sidonians call Hermon Sirion, and the Amorites call it Senir), ¹⁰ all the cities of the plain, all Gilead, and all Bashan, as far as Salcah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. ¹¹ “For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of the giants. Indeed his bedstead was an iron bedstead. (*Is it not in Rabbah of the people of Ammon?*) Nine cubits *is* its length and four cubits its width, according to the standard cubit.

Which at 18 inches would make his bed about 13 by 6 ft.

In vs. 12-17, Moses describes the land allotted on the eastern side of the Jordan to the tribe of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh.

18 “Then I commanded you at that time, saying: ‘The LORD your God has given you this land to possess. All you men of valor shall cross over armed before your brethren, the children of Israel. ¹⁹ But your wives, your little ones, and your livestock (I know that you have much livestock) shall stay in your cities which I have given you, ²⁰ until the LORD has given rest to your brethren as to you, and they also possess the land which the LORD your God is giving them beyond the Jordan. Then each of you may return to his possession which I have given you.’

Even though the eastern tribes had settled in their lands, their fighting men still had to cross over & help the other tribes conquer Canaan before they could return & settle down.

21 “And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, ‘Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so will the LORD do to all the kingdoms through which you pass. ²² You must not fear them, for the LORD your God Himself fights for you.’

What was true for them is true for us!

23 “Then I pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying: ²⁴ ‘O Lord GOD, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand, for what god *is there* in heaven or on earth who can do *anything* like Your works and Your mighty *deeds*? ²⁵ I pray, let me cross over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, those pleasant mountains, and Lebanon.’ ²⁶ “But the LORD was angry with me on your account, and would not listen to me. So the LORD said to me: ‘Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter. ²⁷ Go up to the top of Pisgah, and lift your eyes toward the west, the north, the south,

and the east; behold *it* with your eyes, for you shall not cross over this Jordan. ²⁸ But command Joshua, and encourage him and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see.' ²⁹ "So we stayed in the valley opposite Beth Peor.

As we said before, Moses was banned from entering Canaan because He had misrepresented God at the waters of Meribah.

We'll take a closer look at this in a later study because Moses returns to it again & again.

E. Exhortation to Obedience (Ch. 4)

¹ "Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you. ² You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. ³ Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal Peor; for the LORD your God has destroyed from among you all the men who followed Baal of Peor. ⁴ But you who held fast to the LORD your God *are* alive today, every one of you.

Moses is referring here to the run-in Israel had with Moab at a place called Peor when the women of Moab & Midian seduced the men of Israel to commit idolatry with Baal.

A plague swept the camp and killed some 24,000 before it was stayed.

This event served to remind the people that they were in covenant with God and it was their part to make sure they obeyed the commands of God.

⁵ "Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according *to them* in the land which you go to possess. ⁶ Therefore be careful to observe *them*; for this *is* your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.'

God intended Israel to be an example to the rest of the world.

That example would come about through their obedience to the Law God gave them.

Not only was His law light years ahead of the social order of the rest of the world, it was a reflection of the moral and spiritual laws that govern the universe.

If they lived by God's law, then quite simply, life would work for everyone and they would be blessed beyond measure.

⁷ "For what great nation *is there* that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God *is* to us, for whatever *reason* we may call upon Him? ⁸ And what great nation *is there* that has *such* statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day? ⁹ Only

take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life.

One of the great dangers we face is forgetfulness.

When faced with some new challenge, it's easy to lose sight of all the times God has helped us in the past.

So Moses calls the people to be careful to NOT forget.

One of the ways they can do this is by being diligent to *tell out loud* the goodness of God and to give testimony to His helping hand. Look at the rest of v. 9 . . .

And teach them to your children and your grandchildren, ¹⁰ especially concerning the day you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and *that they may teach their children.*'

It's important that we memorialize our testimony & the record of God's goodness to us personally by telling others, and often!

Parents must tell their children.

Share in your home and small groups.

Talk to one another here at church about what the Lord has done.

Keep a journal & record the good things God does in your life.

¹¹ "Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the midst of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness.

When the glory of the Lord appeared on Mt. Sinai, it appeared as a cloud of fire so intense, so brilliant, it caused the surrounding world to dim and grow dark.

¹² And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; *you only heard a voice.* ¹³ So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone. ¹⁴ And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that you might observe them in the land which you cross over to possess. ¹⁵ "Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, ¹⁶ lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure: the likeness of male or female, ¹⁷ the likeness of any animal that *is* on the earth or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, ¹⁸ the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground or the likeness of any fish that *is* in the water beneath the earth. ¹⁹ And *take heed*, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and *when* you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the LORD your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage. ²⁰ But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the

iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be His people, an inheritance, as you are this day. ²¹ Furthermore the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, and swore that I would not cross over the Jordan, and that I would not enter the good land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance. ²² But I must die in this land, I must not cross over the Jordan; but you shall cross over and possess that good land. ²³ Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything which the LORD your God has forbidden you. ²⁴ For the LORD your God *is* a consuming fire, a jealous God.

We covered these vs. last Sunday.

Moses is cautioning them against the trap of idolatry.

25 “When you beget children and grandchildren and have grown old in the land, and act corruptly and make a carved image in the form of anything, and do evil in the sight of the LORD your God to provoke Him to anger, ²⁶ I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you will soon utterly perish from the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess; you will not prolong *your* days in it, but will be utterly destroyed. ²⁷ And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you. ²⁸ And there you will serve gods, the work of men’s hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell.

Moses tells them what will happen if they *do* turn to idols.

They will lose their land and be driven out to live as refugees among the nations.

29 But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find *Him* if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. ³⁰ When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice ³¹ (for the LORD your God *is* a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.

This is a prophecy.

After Israel is decimated & scattered to the nations, when they turn to the Lord, He will return to them and fulfill the covenant He made to Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob at the beginning.

V. 31 ought to forever put to rest the incredibly errant doctrine known as Replacement theology, which says that the Church has replaced Israel in God’s plan.

Right here in v. 30, Moses says that these things will take place in the latter days – a phrase which refers to the end of the age.

The Church has not replaced Israel in God’s plan.

His promises to Israel are all still intact & will be fulfilled in the Millennium, which commences when they do what Moses says here – when they seek the Lord with all their heart and cry out in their distress.

That word ‘distress’ in v. 30 is the Hebrew word for *tribulation*.

32 “For ask now concerning the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether *any* great *thing* like this has happened, or *anything* like it has been heard. ³³ Did *any* people ever hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live? ³⁴ Or did God ever try to go *and* take for Himself a nation from the midst of *another* nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? ³⁵ To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD Himself *is* God; *there is* none other besides Him. ³⁶ Out of heaven He let you hear His voice, that He might instruct you; on earth He showed you His great fire, and you heard His words out of the midst of the fire. ³⁷ And because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them; and He brought you out of Egypt with His Presence, with His mighty power, ³⁸ driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land as an inheritance, as *it is* this day. ³⁹ Therefore know this day, and consider *it* in your heart, that the LORD Himself *is* God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; *there is* no other.

Moses’ goal in this passage is to convince the people of the utter stupidity of worshipping idols.

He reasons with them thus – all of the other nations worship idols – but when has it ever been when the gods of the nations have manifested themselves in the manner in which *Your God*, the true and only God, has revealed Himself to you???

In all the history of the world, no one had ever seen the sure evidence of their god the way Israel’s God had demonstrated Himself to them.

So to shelve God to worship an idol would be the height of foolishness!!!

40 You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong *your* days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time.”

Please don’t miss this – Moses said that their obedience to the Lord would result not only in *their* blessing but the blessing *of their children*.

When parents faithfully follow the Lord, it lays a solid & healthy foundation for life that has far-reaching consequences.

We see the truth of this as a nation.

It was the faithfulness of previous generations of Americans to live by godly principles that produced the liberty and economic prosperity we enjoy

today.

But if we neglect those principles, then that liberty and prosperity and imperiled to the next generation.

41 Then Moses set apart three cities on this side of the Jordan, toward the rising of the sun, ⁴² that the manslayer might flee there, who kills his neighbor unintentionally, without having hated him in time past, and that by fleeing to one of these cities he might live: ⁴³ Bezer in the wilderness on the plateau for the Reubenites, Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites, and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites.

In Numbers 35, God commanded Moses to set apart a total of 6 cities of refuge throughout the land; 3 on each side of the Jordan.

Now that they've already conquered the eastern side, Moses names the cities they are to set apart.

These cities were places where someone who'd accidentally killed someone could flee to and be saved from the sword of the avenger.

The leaders of the city of refuge would hear the evidence and make a decision about the guilt or innocence of the one who killed someone.

This ends Moses first address as the people prepared to enter Canaan.

Vs. 44-49 are the prologue to Moses' second address to the people as he rehearses the laws God had given them to observe as a nation.

44 Now this *is* the law which Moses set before the children of Israel. ⁴⁵ These *are* the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which Moses spoke to the children of Israel after they came out of Egypt, ⁴⁶ on this side of the Jordan, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel defeated after they came out of Egypt. ⁴⁷ And they took possession of his land and the land of Og king of Bashan, two kings of the Amorites, who were on this side of the Jordan, toward the rising of the sun, ⁴⁸ from Aroer, which *is* on the bank of the River Arnon, even to Mount Sion (that is, Hermon), ⁴⁹ and all the plain on the east side of the Jordan as far as the Sea of the Arabah, below the slopes of Pisgah.