



THE BOOK OF
DEUTERONOMY

Sermon Series Notes



“A Clear Message, Lots of Questions” (Deuteronomy 29-34)

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Intro: We complete our highlights of Deuteronomy tonight, next we go to Joshua.

Read Deut.29:2-8 Despite all that God had done for them, they still did not have minds that understand or ears that hear or eyes that see. See Isa.6:9-10.

The generation that wandered for forty years in the wilderness never got it. God wanted them to come to maturity, and maturity would be marked by an understanding that God would take care of them supernaturally. There is no explanation as to why their clothes and shoes did not wear out over a forty year period, how the bread they ate literally fell down from heaven, how water was supplied in miraculous ways (like out of a rock!), and how they were able to defeat powerful armies trained for war, even though they were just a pack of former slaves with no military experience at all. In short, God wanted them to mature in faith. He wanted them to become spiritual, not living life by natural instincts, or focused on fleshly appetites. He wanted their hearts changed as they realized the goodness of God against the backdrop of their sinfulness. See Deut. 8:2-5.

Note: Two guys in that wilderness wandering did get. They got it before the wilderness wandering. Their names are Caleb and Joshua. Imagine having to wander for forty years in the wilderness with a bunch of faithless people, and you could have been in the Land of Promise 40 years earlier?

The forty year wilderness wandering generation did not get. But this is now a new generation, and God is about to about new leadership to lead this next generation. Hopefully they will get it.

God will go on in this chapter to warn this new generation not to worship the gods of the peoples who live in the land He is about to give them. He also warns not to think that can go their own way and yet maintain the blessing of God upon their lives (see Deut.29:19a). The in the first part of chapter 30 the Lord says that even if future generations turn away from the Lord, he will restore blessings upon them if they will return to him in repentance and obedience.

The path to blessing would simply be faith. Read Deut.30:11-14. A portion of this verse is repeated in the NT in Rom.10:8. See also Habakkuk 2:4.

Read Deut.31:1-8 So Moses will not be leading Israel into the Land of Promise. That had to be extremely hard for Moses. Text where the Lord tells Moses not to speak to him about this again?

Moses now gives the priest some very practical instructions. Read Deut. 31:9-13.

After this God tells Moses that the people will fall into idolatry after he's gone, and God gives Moses a song to teach the Israelites that will be a witness against them in their rebellion. God no doubt wanted this song to hopefully bring conviction to their hearts for their sin, and then he would once again grant them repentance & restoration. It's a long song! Pick out portions of the song and read.

Read Deut.32:44-47, then 32:48-52.

Deuteronomy 33 is a fascinating chapter that has Moses prophesying about the future of the tribes of Israel. They all have different futures, yet they had the same foundation for their faith. Notice how the chapter opens. Read Deut.33:1-4.

Sinai was where God came down upon the mountain, and it was an experience that put the fear of God into all of them, including Moses (see Heb.12:21). Read Ex.19:16-19; 20:18-21.

Seir was in the land of Edom, where the Lord protected Israel from being cursed by Balaam the sorcerer (see Num.22:2-9, 15-19). But despite God's protecting them from a curse through Balaam the sorcerer, they allowed themselves to be seduced by the Moabite women (Num.25)

Paran; see Num.14

All the same foundation for faith, but all with uniquely different futures. Why? Some responded to God in faith, and some did not. Some matured, and some did not. But there's more to it than that.

33:6 See Judges 5:15-16; Gen.49:3-4; 35:22; Num.16:1

I read that some older manuscripts have Simeon here. In the first census this tribe had 59,300, but in the second only 22,200. Over time the few remaining in this tribe were absorbed into the tribe of Judah. It was Simeon and Levi who slaughtered the men of Shechem for the rape of their sister Dinah.

33:7 Judah always marched first among the tribes of Israel, and so this tribe was always the first to face the enemy in battle.

33:8-11 Thummim & Urim were precious stones used to discern God's will. All the people grumbled and rebelled at Massah (testing) & Meribah (quarreling); See Ex.17:1-7; Levi rebounded big time when Aaron made the golden calf (see Ex.32:25-29).

33:12 Benjamin enjoyed special status as Jacob's youngest son, especially after the loss of Joseph, who previously had been his favorite. This makes me think of John the apostle, who became known as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Peter of course was jealous of John, and he did not understand why Jesus would allow John to remain alive until His second coming, yet Peter (The Rock) would suffer & die (John 21).

33:13-17 Manasseh was Joseph's firstborn, and Ephraim his younger son. Though Manasseh was the oldest, Jacob gave Ephraim the blessing of the firstborn, just as God had done with Esau & Jacob (Gen.48:17-20). Ephraim is mentioned first here, and "ten thousands" describes this tribe's size, while

Manasseh's size is described by "the thousands." Ephraim would become the largest of the northern tribes.

33:18-19 Zebulun & Issachar are mentioned together, as they are in Gen.49:13-15. The mountain referred to here could be Mt. Tabor, but scholars are not sure. Issachar's inheritance was near the Sea of Galilee, and Zebulun's near the Mediterranean. Both tribes would become prosperous as a result of their being located near these two bodies of water. Trade & salt water fish from the Mediterranean, & fresh water fish & fertile land from the Sea of Galilee.

33:20-21 Gad was allowed to settle east of the Jordan. God allowed him to "choose for himself," something not afforded to other tribes, save Reuben & half the tribe of Manasseh. Gad fought with the other tribes in the conquest of Canaan (west side of the Jordan), and only afterward in the land they had chosen east of the Jordan (Josh.22:1-6).

33:22 Dan would be ferocious and strong, like a lion "springing out of Bashan." Dan's original territory was in the southwest of Canaan, but in time they migrated to the northwest and seized land adjoining Bashan.

33:23 Naphtali's inheritance would be a very fertile area on the north end of the Sea of Galilee. But the blessings God had for this tribe went beyond fertile soil (see Matt.4:13-16).

33:24 Asher means "blessed" or "happy." Asher would have not only the blessing of the Lord, but good relations with the other tribes, and a land that flowed with oil, probably referring to olive oil.

Read Deuteronomy 34. What an interesting ending. Moses died even though his eyes were not dim and his strength was not gone. He wanted so badly to lead Israel into the Land of Promise, but he was not allowed to because he had misrepresented the Lord at the waters of Meribah (read that text). But one mistake, come on. Look at all the mistakes the Israelites made. If I were God I'm not sure I would have not allowed Moses to lead them into the Promised Land.

I understand the biblical lesson in God not allowing Moses to lead them into the Promised Land. John 1, Law, grace and truth by Jesus.

But still, I don't completely understand.

And then there's this interesting verse in the NT about Moses' death. See Jude 9. Why did Satan want the body of Moses? Is Moses one of the two witnesses of Rev.11?

And why was Satan even allowed at the place where God is about to bury Moses? Were other angels besides Michael there? Were other angels with Satan?

Read Deut.29:29.

The Bible has some very perplexing things in it, in my opinion. For example, God delivered Daniel from the den of lions, and he delivered Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego from the fiery furnace. But the prophet Zechariah was killed between the altar and the sanctuary (Luke 11:51); Elijah was taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire, and his successor, Elisha, would complete his ministry and die of an unknown illness (II Kings 13:14); Elisha had twice as many recorded miracles as his mentor, including raising a widow's son from the dead; I still do not completely comprehend the suffering God allowed Job to endure; King Herod

had James brother of John killed with the sword, then he arrested Peter also, but God delivered Peter from prison; Paul the apostle had a thorn in his flesh, and we are told it was to keep him from becoming conceited, and through his weakness God's power would remain on him; I understand that, but what about his number one servant, Timothy. Paul said he had no one like Timothy, that Timothy put the interests of Jesus Christ first. Yet Timothy had "oft illnesses" and terrible stomach problems. These are two men who saw extraordinary miracles performed through their ministries, yet they suffered without being healed. Another servant of Paul's, Epaphroditus, almost died.

CONCLUSION

Read Deut.33:26-29; We all serve the same God. We have different paths to walk in this life, but one God, and one faith. And the Bible says that we are called to walk by faith "from first to last" (See Hab.2:1-4, noting context).

I John 5:4