

Deuteronomy 2:1-23

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[0:00] Deuteronomy chapter 2, Deuteronomy chapter 2, starting in verse 1. We finished up the first chapter this past Sunday night as we are just making our way.

I love the book of Deuteronomy. I know for some of you it may be probably the first time that you've been through it in a study per se. But the book of Deuteronomy for a long time has been one of my favorite Old Testament texts.

Over the years that's kind of changed. I don't know why I gravitated towards it. Maybe it was just because it was put forward in straightforward, at least it seems, application. We understand that what Moses is doing is he's preaching his final message.

Maybe that's why I was drawn to it. I don't know. It's a sermon that he's preaching his final message to the people shortly before they cross over the Jordan River to go take possession or to begin taking possession of the promised land.

This is the last thing that Moses tells them. We are told in the first opening verses of the book of Deuteronomy that he is expounding the law or trying to make clear the law of God.

[1:04] And he starts that by taking a look back. It amazes me how many years Scripture can cover in just a number of verses. Tonight we'll cover 38 years like that.

We'll read through it and 38 years will pass. So we have to always remind ourselves of that when we're studying Scripture that really we're looking at it in a moment of time.

But these things happened over a length of time, sometimes hundreds of years, but multiple times at least tens and twenties and thirties of years. But what we'll see this evening are things that happen very quickly because I like this in Scripture.

God doesn't always linger on the past. The past is worth looking back to. The past is worth looking back at. And we are looking for, as we find in the book of Samuel, much like we sing, we are looking for those Ebenezers, those stones of help.

Thus far the Lord has helped me. Here I raise mine Ebenezer. We sing that, right? In one of the hymns that we sing. And we know that that comes from Old Testament language where when the people of God were moving forward, they would raise an Ebenezer.

[2:14] And that Ebenezer stood for a stone of help. And it would show them that at least up to this point the Lord has helped us. In our own life, I think we ought to make it a practice of raising up Ebenezers.

Of looking back and saying, that's where the faithfulness of God was displayed. This is where it's displayed. And if he could do it then, then he can do it now. Now, this is exactly what Moses is doing in the text we have before us this evening in Deuteronomy 2, starting in verse 1.

He is looking back and highlighting some of the Ebenezers as encouragement for the people of God as they move forward. So we read the Word of God together, starting in the first verse of the second chapter of the book of Deuteronomy.

And it says, Then we turned and set out for the wilderness. Now, if you remember, at the close of chapter 1, they had come to Kadesh Barnea. They refused to go in. God chastised them, told them to go into the wilderness.

They said, oh, no, we're sorry. Let's go up and take possession of land. They tried. It didn't work out so well for them. They were defeated. Actually, we know from the book of Numbers that they were driven 100 miles in the opposite direction when they fled from before the Amorites.

[3:21] And here they are. They're hanging out there at the end of chapter 1, Deuteronomy. And it says, you're crying and you're praying. And God wasn't listening to you because he'd already told you what to do. Right? God's not going to listen when he's already commanded you what to do and you're refusing to do it.

God said, go to the wilderness. They wanted to cry in Kadesh. God says, I can't hear you in Kadesh because you're supposed to be in the wilderness. Right? So they hung out there for a few days. We

don't know how long. But we do know, starting chapter 2.

Then, they finally came to their senses. We turned and set out for the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea as the Lord spoke to me. And circled Mount Seir for many days. By the way, that's 38 years.

Okay? Here's your span of 38 years. There you go. We circled it for many days. And the Lord spoke to me saying, you have circled this mountain long enough. Now turn north. And command the people saying, you will pass through the territory of your brothers, the sons of Esau who live in Seir. And they will be afraid of you. So be very careful. Do not provoke them. For I will not give you any of their land, even as little as a footstep. Because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession. [4 : 26] You shall buy food from them with money so that you may eat. And you shall also purchase water from them with money so that you may drink. For the Lord your God has blessed you in all that you have done.

He has known your wanderings through this great wilderness. These 40 years the Lord your God has been with you. You have not lacked a thing. So we pass beyond our brothers, the sons of Esau who live in Seir, away from the robber road, away from Elath and from Ezan-Gebra. And we turn and pass through the way of the wilderness of Moab. Then the Lord said to me, do not harass Moab nor provoke them to war. For I will not give you any of their land as a possession. Because I have given it to the sons of Lot as a possession. The Imim lived there formerly, a people as great, numerous, and tall as Anakim. Like the Anakim, they are also regarded as Rephaim.

But the Moabites called them Imim. The Horites formerly lived in Seir, but the sons of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them and settled in their place. Just as Israel did to the land of their possessions, the land of their possession which the Lord gave to them. [5 : 32] Now arise and cross over the brook Zerab yourself. So we crossed over the brook Zerab. Now the time that it took for us to come from Kadesh Barnea until we crossed over the brook Zerab was 38 years.

Until all the generation of the men of war perished from within the camp as the Lord had sworn to them. Moreover, the hand of the Lord was against them to destroy them from within the camp until they all perished.

So it came about when all the men of war had finally perished from among the people. That the Lord spoke to me saying, Today you shall cross over all the border of Moab. When you come opposite the sons of Ammon, do not harass them nor provoke them. For I will not give you any of the land of the sons of Ammon as a possession. Because I have given it to the sons of Lot as a possession. It is also regarded as the land of Rephaim. For Rephaim formerly lived in it, but the Ammonites called them Zanzuman. A people as great, numerous, and tall as Anakim. But the Lord destroyed them before them. When they dispossessed them and settled in their place.

[6 : 35] Just as he did for the sons of Esau who live in Seir. When he destroyed the Horites from before them. They dispossessed them and settled in their place even to this day. And the Avom who live in villages as far as Gaza and Kaphtoram.

Who came from Kaphtor destroyed them and lived in their place. I'll just stop right there.

Deuteronomy chapter 2 verses 1 through 23. We're going to make sense of this, right? Because there's some great application here.

And I'm sure you've already seen it. We probably could just sit down and say that's pretty good information. We're glad we read it. Don't get lost in all the details and don't get lost in all the names. Well I just want to pull back a little bit and say why is God including this here?

What does he want us to see in this text? Surely there is a reason God included this portion. As Moses looks back and in a fleeting moment he bypasses 38 years of wilderness wandering.

And he does it in a very rapid moment because he doesn't want to get stuck in the chastisement. If the Lord carries and allows us to remain there in the book of Hebrews this week. We'll be in Hebrews chapter 12 starting in verse 4.

[7 : 36] And if the Lord so allows us to continue on our track. The very first thing we will open up with is you know the discipline or the chastisement of the Lord. How God disciplines his people.

But again we don't stop and hang out in the area of discipline, right? God does it for a moment. It had a purpose. There was something there. And I want us to see that included in these passages.

One thing that we find throughout the rest of the Old Testament scripture and even history, historically. Some of the prophets and the writers of the Old Testament look back at the wilderness wandering years with a longing.

As years, sure they were being disciplined. But also it was years they were closer to the Lord their God than any other time. It was years they were living in utter dependence upon him more than any other time.

It was when they were completely relying upon him to lead them, to provide for them, to sustain them. And it is seen kind of as one of the highlights of the nation of Israel.

[8 : 39] And what Moses is doing here is highlighting just a few things. I want us to see tonight the attributes of God learned in the wilderness. At least four attributes of God that they learned in the wilderness.

Now I know over a span of 38 years, 40 total, they learned a lot about God. But just four of them we get from this passage. Four attributes of God that they learned in the wilderness. These are the Ebenezers.

These are things they need to know about God before they cross the Jordan River. Because God doesn't waste our discipline. God doesn't waste his time or our time.

Our rebellion and rejection, which at times leads to God's pause so that he may discipline, is not wasted time. The 40 years of wilderness wandering were not wasted time, right?

They were redeemed time. That's a big difference. And in that redeemed time, God reveals more and more of himself so that they will be prepared for exactly where they are at in the book of Deuteronomy.

[9 : 40] Again, on the edge of going into the promised land. The first attribute we see here is the rule of God over every nation. We see the rule of God over every nation.

We need to understand this. And scripture makes this emphatically clear. God does not just rule his people.

God rules all people. God chose Abram out of the land of the earth, the Chaldeans, to make a people for his own special possession for a purpose.

So that, that nation would be a billboard to the rest of the world of what the God who rules over them is like. God rules all people.

We see the rule of God over every nation in the details here as they are traveling. And I don't know if you caught it or not, where God says, don't look to their land because it's not your land.

[10 : 40] I have given it to the descendants of Esau. I have given it to the descendants of Lot. I have given it to the descendants of Lot. Three times we are told that God gave another portion of land to someone else.

The nation of Israel is not the only people that God gave a portion of land to. As a matter of fact, Paul says in Acts chapter 20, in Acts chapter 17, verse 26, that he formed man, being he, being God.

This is his Mars Hill message, right? And Paul says that God determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation. Think about that just for a moment.

Let that sink in. Not only is God the giver of life, God is the giver of life who determines when they will live and where they will live. The boundaries of their habitation, which means where you live today is not your choice.

You say, well, wait a minute. I moved here. I made this choice. In the end, where you live today does not overrule God's determination of the boundaries of your habitation.

[11 : 50] God determines where all people live. Now think about that just for a moment. Now I know we say, well, I don't know if I want to take that step. Because I believe that man has free will and man has the opportunity to choose.

Even this refugee crisis. So are you telling me that the refugees who leave their homeland take God by surprise? Are you telling me that any of the events that lead to the displacement of people take anybody by surprise?

Take God by surprise? Does your decision to move take God by surprise? No. God knows all things. And the Bible very clearly tells us that God rules every nation.

And part of his rulership is to determine where the people live. You say, well, I don't know. See, I believe in a God big enough, powerful enough, and concerned enough that he is even involved in the smallest details.

I believe I told you the quote one time by Charles Spurgeon, but it bears repeating. Spurgeon said he thought God was so involved in creation that not a single droplet of water would ever hit the side of a ship passing through the ocean had God not told it where to hit the ship at.

[13:14] See, the problem a lot of times is our God's too small. Spurgeon went on to say, no speck of dust flies a course through the air unless God sets the course.

No one lives except for where God appoints the boundaries of their habitation. This was Paul's defense on Mars Hill.

And Paul's defense was, you're not living here by happenstance. Now, think about that just for a moment. Not only you, but the people who live next to you and around you and the people near you and the people you interact with.

God has so ordained and appointed time that he has put you there at that time for a purpose. And even as they're passing through the land, God says, this isn't your land.

You don't have the right to go here. I have given it to them. I have given it to them. I have given it to them. And we understand the rulership principle of God. Is God concerned about the nation of Israel? Absolutely. Is the nation of Israel the only people God is concerned about?

[14:15] No. The whole reason God chose the nation of Israel was to show his concern for the rest of the world. Right? It was to display to the rest of the world what the God who rules over them is like.

They were to be the symbol. They were to be a visible representation of the God who was in control of everything. Now, they failed to do that because they began to be more like the people of the world than to be like the God that ruled over them.

But what we understand, what God was showing them, is that he rules every nation. We see the rule of God over every nation. Number two in this, we also see the restriction of God placed upon his people.

The restriction of God placed upon his people. The first restriction we see, we understand, is one of grace and mercy and kindness. And it is when God looks at them and says, you've circled this mountain long enough.

God says, okay, the time of discipline is in. God restricted the number of days. When God commanded them to go back into the wilderness, he didn't tell them how long they were going to be there.

[15:20] You see that? God says, turn around and go back. Now, he says, none of you are going to enter in. But he didn't tell them how long that was going to be. He said, turn around and go back to the wilderness. Now, the men over 20 are going to enter into the promised land.

Your children will. He says, go back. But it is amazing that God himself ends the punishment cycle. God says, okay, that's long enough. Because that's grace. And that's mercy.

Because God made discipline for a moment. But it's grace and it's mercy and it's kindness. Always. Listen, they did not get what they deserved. They didn't get what they deserved.

You know how we know they didn't get what they deserved? It's because what they deserved is eternal separation from God Almighty. The sins of man deserve eternal separation. Every one of us. Our sin. Our rebellion. Our rejection. Of the things of God. Deserve eternal condemnation. No condemnation. The greatest thing is.

[16:21] God restricts that. And holds it back. Even the chastisement of his people. I mean, he is holy, holy, holy.

And they had looked at him and said, nah. We're not going to do this. But in his mercy. He said, that'll do.

That's long enough. First thing he restricts. Is the amount of discipline. The next thing he restricts. Is what they can take possession of.

We've already seen that. He says, don't tread on their ground. You cannot lay hold of that which does not belong to you. They could only lay hold of what God had promised them.

They were not free to move around however they wanted to. I love how Tony Evans says it. Tony Evans likes to talk about how man enjoys freedom. And man thinks that they are free. And man thinks that they are free.

[17:20] And he always gives a picture. I don't know if you know much about Tony Evans. He loves football. He was the team chaplain forever for the Dallas Cowboys. His son actually played fullback for the Tennessee Titans.

And some other NFL organizations. He loves football. So he always gives these references to the game of football. And he says, sure. Football players are free to go wherever they want to go. Within the boundaries of the field.

But a football player is not free to run out of bounds. Through the stadium. Down the tunnel. Come outside the other end of the tunnel. Go stand in the end zone and catch the ball. You're not free to do that. You're free to run around however you want to.

Within the bounds of the field. And it's exactly how we see God acting with his people here. They were free to move within the boundaries God had set for them.

He restricted their access. He had granted them freedom. It was on the promised land, right? This here. This is not your land. You don't get to claim this land.

[18:19] As a matter of fact, you're going to pay for the food you eat. You're going to pay for the water you drink. You're going to meet your own needs. You're going to pass through. You're going to walk on the road. You're going to go this way. God restricted the desires of his people because he had somewhere else better for them.

Sometimes in grace and mercy, God keeps things away from his people today because he's got something better in store. Those are not the things that we like. We would rather have the name and claim it theology where we can get whatever we want.

But sometimes God gives us a great divine no. Not your land. Not your possession. I've given that to someone else. And we understand here the restrictions that God placed upon his people.

Third, we see the responsibility that God assumed for them. Again, we look at the grace and mercy of God. Look at the responsibility that God assumed for them.

Because while he had restricted their movement, he also had met their every need. I love what verse 7 says. Verse 7 says this. For the Lord your God has blessed you in all that you have done. For the Lord your God has blessed you in all that you have done.

[19:25] Now, he told them that on the heels of telling them when you pass through the land of Esau, you're going to buy your food. You're going to buy your water. It just kind of struck me. I got to say, I don't know how many times I've read the book of Deuteronomy.

I don't know how many times I've said this. But it kind of struck me. There was a point there where God didn't send manna because he had given them money to buy food. He said, you're going to buy your food. At least while passing through that land.

I don't know. Maybe I'll stretch it a little bit. But why else would he tell them to buy food, right?

You're not going to wake up in the morning and be mad on the ground. If you're walking through this land, you buy food. So sometimes the way God provides is through the financial means he'd given to his people here.

But where did he bless them? He had blessed them while they were in the wilderness. Evidently, they had been enriched. In this time or during this time of discipline. They were wandering in that great and terrible wilderness.

And God had blessed them even there. Listen, the blessings of God are not confined just to the obedience of his people. Now, they are connected to that. If we obey, we rejoice in those blessings.

[20:28] But God's blessings, the Bible tells us, rain down upon the righteous and the unrighteous alike. The redeemed and the wicked both wake up and enjoy the same day. The sun shines on the righteous and the unrighteous.

The rain falls on the field of the righteous and the unrighteous. We're told that over and over and over again. But what we see is that God has blessed his people. For the Lord your God has blessed you in all that you have done, even in that.

Because he had assumed responsibility. Their disobedience did not belittle or even remove his responsibility for them. He had led them out of captivity.

He had called them out of Egypt. And he had bore the responsibility for them throughout that time. However long it took him to get there. Listen, this is the same thing we refer to as the eternal security of the saints.

Right? Once we are saved and redeemed, we are blood bought literally. That ransom price has been paid. That means somebody else is responsible for me.

[21:30] My Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is also my master. And he therefore, I've told people, it is a gracious place to be. Because he bears the responsibility for me.

Now when I disobey him and he disciplines me, that does not mean he is no longer responsible for me. Because as we will see in the book of Hebrews, his discipline is a sign of his responsibility for me.

And he says here, the Lord your God has blessed you in all that you have done. He has known your wanderings through this great wilderness. Look at this. These 40 years the Lord your God has been with you. You have not lacked a thing.

Look how well God provided for his people. Even in their disobedience, he was with them.

And they didn't lack a thing. Why? Because they were his people. God would say later on, not because of who you are, but because of my name, I have kept you.

[22 : 38] See, God's character was at stake. The very nature of God was at stake here. Moses would always cry out, Lord, if you reject them, the nations will hear and say, you are not able to keep them.

God shows his faithfulness in his responsibility for them. And he provides even through this time. This is good news because if he can do it in the great and terrible wilderness, surely he can do it when we enter the promised land.

Listen, if God can care for us in our disobedience, think what he can do for us in our obedience.

What an amazing thing.

Fourth and finally, we see, and I think it's probably the greatest Ebenezer raised up in this passage. We see the reassurance that God is able, not just able, but listen, that God is able to dispossess the giants that scare us.

What was one of the leading things that led the spies, at least 10 of them were the 10 spies, to discourage the nation.

[23 : 47] We saw the Anakim there, and they're huge. They're massive. We're like grasshoppers in their sights. These people are big. Now, I don't really know.

We know that we'll read on just a little bit here of some of them in their bedposts and everything is like on Museum of the Giants. There are some big people in the land. I don't know why. I don't know if the Hebrew people were just abnormally short or if these people were just abnormally large.

I mean, we do know they're large. I mean, a nine-foot-long bed and all these things, and we can do all the measurements, and we can see how big they were. But there were some big people in that land at that time, the Rephiam, the Nephilim, the, you know, we call them whatever they want to call them.

They were called something different every time. But two times in this passage, did you see it? Two times in this passage, Moses reminds them, here is the land that these people used to live in, but God pushed them out, and now the descendants of Lot live there.

What were they doing? As God, if you remember, they went off the beaten path to get to the edge of the Promised Land. They didn't go back to Kadesh Barnea. Remember? They could have went from Mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea, and it would have been a straight course because you've looked at that map in the back of your Bibles.

[25 : 02] I understand. I mean, if you're looking at it, okay, so you've got Egypt over here, and you've got, you know, this wilderness of sun over here, and you've got the Mediterranean Sea, and you've got, I know, this is a beautiful thing for you two, by the way.

And you have, you know, Israel over here, so it's a great map. You're seeing it. You could have just went straight across to Kadesh Barnea, and they went up. But God didn't do that. God took them that way the first time. They didn't go in because they're like, there's giants there.

So the second time, God brought them down and across and up and over here on the other side of the Jordan River. They passed through some land that used to contain giants that were no longer there because God drove them out and gave the land to someone else.

Do you think that's coincidental? God gave them two living examples that he is able. That he is able.

As they went through that land, they could say, you know, giants used to live here. God drove them out. Now the descendants of Esau live here. But Esau I have hated, and Jacob I have loved.

[26 : 02] I know that makes us scratch our head and makes us go, why in the world is, God didn't choose Esau, but yet God drove the giants out from before Esau and gave Esau that land.

Think what he could do with the descendants of Jacob. And then they go over here, and this is where the descendants of Lot live. And there used to be giants who live in this land, and God drove

them out, and he gave the land to the descendants of Lot.

But Lot was just the nephew of Abraham. Lot was not Abraham. If God could do it for the nephew of Abraham, think what he could do for the descendants of Abraham.

See, this wilderness area was not just some haphazardly planned course. God led them through an area to show them, I can do the very thing you're afraid of.

Quite often in our life, God leads us through areas. That are simply there to reassure us, he can move the mountains, and he can move the giants when he wants to.

[27 : 07] And he causes us to interact with people, nations, and circumstances where he's already done it. Where he's already done it.

I remember when I was very young in the faith. Very young. I was going through an experience in God class, and that was the first time.

I'm not going to go into all the details. That was the very first time. It wasn't for me in particular, but it was for someone very close to me. That I saw a pastor lay hands on someone.

And that completely beat you. Be gone. The pastor was Brother Billy Howell. He was during one of those classmates. There was this group of us men there. He just laid hands on this individual and prayed for it.

From that moment on, he was gone. I was like, it's amazing. It's amazing. It blew me away. Fast forward a few years later, and I'm preaching. And there was a lady in our congregation who had some health concerns going on.

[28 : 14] And I just got done preaching. And I stepped down. And God told me. Now, I'm not Benny Hinn. Don't line up and come up here and let me slap you on the forehead, okay? I'm not that guy. I mean, I can slap you on the forehead if you want me to.

But I don't think. I mean, you might slap me back. But anyway, I had stepped down. And I remember God telling me, I want you to pray for that lady. I said, nah. I mean, there's a lot happening.

My brother could tell you. There's a lot happening to the pastor standing up here. The Lord had a conversation. He said, I want you to pray for that lady because I'm going to heal her. And I was like, I don't know, Lord. I don't know. And we went through the invitation song.

And he kept reminding me, you've seen me do it before. You've seen me do it before. You've seen me do it before. So the reassurance I had from about six or seven years prior to that was all the confidence I needed.

And if God was telling me to, I did. So I had the lady come up and end the service. I stepped out on faith in front of the whole congregation. I prayed for her. She had a doctor's visit that week. And she went to the doctor.

[29 : 12] She came back. She said, the doctor said, he don't know what happened. But nothing's there anymore. It's gone. Now, there's been other people I'd love to lay hands on. But God didn't tell me to do it. Right? And by laying hands, I mean in a biblical way.

But God didn't tell me to do it. There's been one other occurrence where I really felt like he told me, I want you to lay hands on and pray for this person. And same thing. I did it again. And it's just completely gone. Blew me away.

But why would I ever do that if I had not walked through it once before? See, what God does is he takes us through the wilderness.

And he gives us lessons in who he is in spite of our rebellion and disobedience.

So that when it comes time to obey again, we have a sure ground to stand on. We don't have a God who has hid himself and asked us to take blind leaps of faith.

[30 : 19] We have a God who manifests himself and said, you may not understand it, but if you understand me, then you'll step out of the faith. That's a big difference.

That's a big difference. That's Deuteronomy chapter 2, verses 1 through 23. We see the attributes of God learned in deliverance by his people.

Thank you, my brother. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[32 : 58] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.