

Deuteronomy 1:1-18

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[0 : 00] Deuteronomy chapter 1, we introduced this book Wednesday night, so by way of introduction we got into the book of Deuteronomy. We're not going to kind of go over all that again, but one thing we always want to be mindful of when we enter into the book of Deuteronomy, we are looking at really a sermon, okay, it is Moses' final sermon to the nation of Israel as they prepare to go into the promised land.

It's his final address, literally, because at the end of the book of Deuteronomy he ascends the mountain, he goes up and he looks upon the promised land, and then he dies.

The Lord buries him, nobody knows where it says, next time we see Moses he's in the promised land, he's on the Mount of Transfiguration in person with Christ. So we see him on the mountaintops, right, we see him on Mount Pisgah, then we see him on the Mount of Transformation, and we see all these things.

But this is his final address, this is his proclamation to the nation, which has direct application at that time, but also has application for us as well.

This really is a great treasure trove for us, because as we saw in the introduction, and we'll see as we read it tonight, this is Moses' exposition of the law.

[1 : 27] He expounds the law. He is seeking to make clear, that's what expounding or exposition means, is seeking to make clear what it is God has commanded them, and what it is God is showing them.

Now, the law, the Decalogue, the ten great sayings, but also all those other laws which separate God's people, make them look different from everybody else around them. And he's kind of making it clear for them to understand.

So we're going to start this out in Deuteronomy chapter 1, verses 1 through 18 is where we will be at tonight, and then we'll pray and we'll get right into it. So let's read the Word of God together. Deuteronomy chapter 1, starting in verse 1 and going down to verse 18. These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel across the Jordan and the wilderness, in the Araba opposite Suth, between Paran and Tophel, and Laban and Hazeroth.

And Dezahab, it is 11 days' journey from Horeb by the way of Mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea. In the 40th year, on the first day of the 11th month, Moses spoke to the children of Israel according to all that the Lord had commanded him to give to them.

[2 : 36] After he had defeated Sihon, the king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, and Og, the king of Bashan, who lived in Asheroth and Edri, across the Jordan and the land of Moab, and Moses undertook to expound this law, saying, The Lord our God spoke to us at Horeb, saying, You have stayed long enough at this mountain.

Turn and set your journey, and go to the hill country of the Amorites, and to their neighbors in the Araba, in the hill country, and in the lowland, and in the Negev, and by the seacoast, and the land of the Canaanites, and Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.

See, I have placed the land before you. Go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to them and their descendants after them. I spoke to you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear the burden of you alone.

The Lord your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are this day like the stars of heaven in number. May the Lord, the God of your fathers, increase you a thousandfold more than you are, and bless you, just as he has promised you.

How can I alone bear the load and burden of you and your strife? Choose wise and discerning and experienced men from your tribes, and I will appoint them as your heads. You answered me and said, The thing which you have said to do is good.

[3 : 51] So I took the heads of your tribes, wise and experienced men, and appointed them heads over you, leaders of thousands and of hundreds, of fifties, of tens, and officers for your tribes. Then

I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the cases between your fellow countrymen, and judge righteously between a man and his fellow countrymen, or the alien who is with him.

You shall not show partiality and judgment. You shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not fear man, for the judgment is God's. The case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.

I commanded you at that time all the things that you should do. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this evening, and God, we rejoice in every opportunity we have to open up the word of God, and Lord, to read it with one another.

So Lord, we pray as we have read it, now that there would be clarity and understanding. And Lord, help us to understand the word. Help us to understand the scripture, and not just what it meant for the nation of Israel then, but for what it means for your people now.

So God, I pray as we have read this Old Testament text, that you would speak to us in a new way. Lord, that you would reveal more of your character and your concern to us, and Lord, that by that revelation, we would draw closer to you in all things and in all ways, and we want to give you the glory, and we ask it all in Jesus Christ's name.

[5 : 08] Amen. I want you to see here, a look back at the journey's beginnings. A look back at the journey's beginnings. What we need to understand is, in the first five chapters of the book of Deuteronomy, Moses takes the time to pause and consider where they have come from.

He begins this section not with Egyptian slavery, because the fact that they were free was something that was kind of self-revealing to them. I mean, they weren't slaves anymore. They were free. They had been free for 40 years now. They had been free to wander around the wilderness, and God had led them, and they were there. And it's also a part of the book of Deuteronomy.

The freedom found through the Exodus event is something that recurs over and over and over again throughout Scripture. And it is always referring to God's choosing them, and God's pulling them out. And he will point back to that as he goes through the book of Deuteronomy.

But what he does for the first five chapters is really go back and retell and recount how they got to where they're at. Chapter 5 would be the second giving of the Ten Commandments.

[6 : 16] That is the second telling of it that we have in Scripture, the first of it being in the book of Exodus, and then here in Deuteronomy chapter 5, we see them again. And then he starts in the middle section, starting in chapter 6, and for a big bulk of it, he begins to expound these commandments.

He begins to expound these laws, and really he ends the book with a look forward as to when you go into that land. And just as has been said in a number of other texts throughout Scripture, it is always becoming for God's people to look back and see the faithfulness of God in the past so that you could look present and see that the God who was faithful then is faithful now so that you could look forward and say the God who is faithful then, who is faithful now, will be faithful as we move forward.

So it is a retelling of God's faithfulness in the past since they have entered into the wilderness. And he starts here at the journey's beginning.

He doesn't really start with the leaving of Egypt. He doesn't start with the parting of the Red Sea. He starts from the time that God made the covenant with them, from where he said, I will be your God and you will be my people if.

And he starts at the place where they begin to hear the command of God to go in and take possession of the Land. And this is really, if we start in verse 19, in verse 19 is when they start moving.

[7 : 41] So chapter 1, verses 1 through 18, is really right before they begin to start taking track, right? Right before they begin to start walking. And we want to look back and see the journey's beginnings and the things that were laid in place or the foundation that was laid even before they started in the wilderness wandering and even through that wilderness wandering that Moses is trying to remind the people of here and helping us be mindful of now.

Number one, we see the length of time that he sustained them. That is that God sustained them. Moses reminds them at the very beginning of the length of time to which God has sustained them. Again, this will be repeated. He will remind them that the sandals on their feet did not wear out, that the clothing on their back did not grow thin, that the food did not fail to be there.

But right from the very beginning, Moses reminds them of just how long God has been faithful in sustaining them. And he reminds them in that phrase, which we saw last Wednesday, that points not only to God's faithfulness, but also demands failures.

This phrase that reminds us that it is 11 days journey from where they were at to where God was wanting them to be. It was only an 11-day journey from this location to that location.

[8 : 58] And it is one thing for God to sustain you for 11 years, but he says, but now in the 40th year, it took them 40 years, which should have taken them 11 days.

And it is one thing to see that God sustained them in the wilderness for 11 days. It's a whole other thing to understand God's sustaining power for 40 years.

He reminds them of the fact that though the journey should have been short, it definitely was a lot longer. And the reasoning for the length of time was the failure of men, not the failure of God.

Because even in spite of man's failures to move forward and do what God commanded them to do, God did not fail to sustain them. The God who was going to preserve them for 11 days ended up preserving them for 40 years.

Because man's failures and man's sin would not stop God's provisions. Because it's really, again, it's not about man.

[10 : 08] Right? This is the plan and the purpose of God moving forward. God was going to bring his people into the land. God had promised that this was their land.

God had entered into a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God had said that their descendants would inherit this land. Just because a generation of those descendants failed to lay hold of what God had promised them did not mean that God was going to stop his purposes and his plans.

The purposes of God moved forward. And God's provisions continued to flow to his people. Because it's really not about them.

It's not about the nation here. It's about the way God sustains and God keeps and God provides and God is always there.

And God is always moving forward with his plans. Now that's comforting. Because we understand in Scripture even some of the things that are going on in our world today God has a very specific plan and purpose for the church.

[11 : 24] Right? The gates of hell will not prevail against the church. Just because it may seem that the church is not fulfilling its purpose does not mean God is not fulfilling his purpose.

Just because it may seem as if the forces of evil are overcoming the church does not mean that because it looked for a moment like God's people were going to fail and cause a stop to the plan of God.

God says if it takes us 40 years to get here we'll get here in 40 years. But I will be the same God throughout the entire process. I will continue to provide. I will continue to sustain.

I will continue to be present. Listen. God just continued to do this. And we stand amazed. If God could sustain them for 40 years then couldn't he keep them for the next 40 years.

If in their failures and in their wilderness wanderings and in their shortcomings and in their sins and in their denials and in all their complaining and all their murmuring and all the plagues and everything that had happened to them in that 38 year death march if God could sustain them then could not God sustain them now?

[12 : 42] If he was the God of mercy and grace and provision then how much more so now? And Moses reminds them of this and it is mindful for us too.

He is not just the God of the mountaintops. He's also the God of the valleys. He's the God in the shadows. He's the God in the difficulties. And we have to even put that together with what we read this morning in Hebrews chapter 11.

There are those who don't seem to be victorious according to the world standard yet they are accepted by their faith. And it is the courts of heaven which are the greatest concern not the edict and the judgments of man.

And we see this just because it looks like things are failing here it does not mean that God's plans and purposes are failing. I don't necessarily understand it.

I can't always comprehend it. I remember reading an account recently of and it happened I mean not too long ago I want to think it was like 2010 maybe 2015 of a missionary family that was in a foreign country and it was a husband a wife and I think it was a three month old daughter maybe a

four month old daughter and they were moving around in different parts of the country and they were flying on a missionary aviation fellowship a missionary airplane was moving them and the government officials of that land mistook their mission plane for drug traffickers so they shot at it and they began to fire upon the plane.

[14 : 27] The pilot was hit in the leg but he wasn't killed but the wife was shot through from the back and she was holding the child and the bullet went through the back and lodged in the baby killing both of them and right in front of them was the pilot the pilot emergency landed the plane into a river and they walked out.

The husband preached the funeral service and during the funeral service he said most of you seem to think that this is a great tragedy and great evil but the fact that God used my baby girl's body to stop the bullet that would have killed the pilot that would have made it impossible to land the plane seems like a miracle to me because even in tragedy God knows what he's doing and he sustains and he provides and he moves and he has the ability to be glorified through this and we see the length of time God sustains them and Moses is looking back at some of their darkest days and say God sustains there and if God sustains there he is the God who sustains now we see the reminder of the length of time that he sustains them secondly we notice the love he has shown them and this love is in connection with the Abrahamic promise and Moses begins to tell it to us very clearly he says the Lord our God spoke to us at Horeb saying you have stayed long enough at this mountain the Lord our God spoke to us at Horeb saying you have stayed long enough at this mountain I repeated that on purpose because it was out of love in which God told them to move God said you've stayed long enough here Horeb was not to be their home right they were not to be content with a place on the back side of the wilderness that's literally where they were at when God had promised them land next to the land in the fertile crescent right they were not to be content with a nice private resort on the back side of the wilderness at Mount Horeb where God had caused the earth to tremble and the ground to shake and had revealed himself and given the ten commandments they were to press on to the land of promise which God had called them to so it was out of love that God says okay it's time to move you've been here long enough every time God commands his people to do something he does it out of love I'm reminded of when the rich young ruler went to Jesus and he asked him what he must do to inherit eternal life and Jesus said keep the commands he said I've kept all these from my youth up and in the scripture tells us and Jesus looking at him loved him and said go sell all that you own and give it to the poor and come and follow me Jesus looking at him and loving him told him to do the thing that was going to be most difficult for him and God here commands these people who have just recently been freed and for about 18 months they've camped out at Mount Horeb at the base they've been given the Ten Commandments they begin to see the manna here they've had the establishment of the Levitical priesthood they have built the tabernacle I mean they have their center of worship they have their organization in the camp everything seems to be going okay and now God says okay it's time to move well they thought well we have a pretty good thing going here nobody's bothering us right nobody wants this land we'll just stay right here but it is out of love because God was not going to let them be content with where they were comfortable rather he wanted them to be where he had called them he had brought them out to bring them in so he commands them to leave and he says turn and set your journey and go to the hill country of the Amorites and to all their neighbors and to the Aroba and to the hill country of the lowland and the Negev and by the seacoast and the land of the Canaanites and Lebanon as far as the great river the river Euphrates see I have placed the land before you go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your fathers to Abraham to Isaac to Jacob to them and their descendants after them we notice the love which he has shown them because he's beginning to feel the Abrahamic promise the Abrahamic promise had two things really that were hinged upon it right God was going to bless Abraham with a land and a people a land and a people and the first thing that God says go take possession of the land here is the love which God is showing them he said I'm giving you the land that land which I have promised your forefathers so many years ago that land which I told Abraham everywhere his footstep I'm about to give it to you go take possession of it I love you and I'm faithful to my promise go take possession of the land but look right after that is the second requirement of the Abrahamic promise because Moses says I spoke to you at that time saying I'm not able to bear the burden of you alone the Lord your God and the wording here is very specific look at this the Lord your God has multiplied you and behold you are this day like the stars

of heaven in number what did God say look to the heavens and if you could count the stars so shall your descendants be and look upon the earth and if you could count the grain of the sands so shall your descendants be all of a sudden Moses is reminding the people that God has showered his love upon him he is literally fulfilling the

[19 : 30] Abrahamic promise right before their eyes I'm giving you the land and I have multiplied your people like the stars of the heavens you're a great multitude of people and you're about to lay hold of the land that God has promised God has showered his love upon them he has caused them to grow though the world has hated them he has caused them to multiply and descendants of Abraham were so astounding Moses says I can't do them all and they were going to take possession God didn't tell him to earn it God told him to go take it right he says my love for you is here I'm providing everything I have promised and here is the love that he is showing them he is commanding them to be discontent with where they are comfortable and he is showing them what he is going to provide for them as they move forward in obedience Moses reminds the people it is out of love loving provisions which God has literally fulfilled the Abrahamic promise in their days and that Abrahamic promise by the way is one of the things the nation of Israel would have held on to more than anything else God has provided people and property and now

God is saying I'm giving it to you and your generation it's yours you can take it and lay hold of it third and finally we see the leaders appointed to serve them there's the length of time he sustained them there's a love he has shown them and here are the leaders appointed to serve them Moses is overwhelmed about this Moses never sought to be the sole leader right he didn't seek to be the one and only guy as a matter of fact Moses had that opportunity God said move out of the way Moses I'm going to annihilate them and I will build a great nation out of you Moses said may it never be a lord because then the people will say God could not sustain them and God could not keep them right Moses had the opportunity for self-exaltation but he decided not to he said how in verse 12 how can I alone bear the load and the burden of you and your strife he said it's just too much there's too much complaining there's too many discussions I could spend my day every day all day long trying to handle this choose wise and discerning and experienced men from your tribes and I will appoint them as your heads one thing we notice God is providing here the leaders from among them sounds a whole lot like the book of Acts right and the appointment of the deacons choose from among you those which they so desperately needed because Moses could not bear this alone that which was so desperately needed was already provided among them he says choose from among you discerning wise experienced men says you answered me and said the thing which you have said is good so I took the heads of your tribes wise and experienced men and appointed them heads over you leaders of thousands of hundreds of fifties of tens and officers for your tribes he is reminding them of the blessing of the leaders that serve them because

Moses is about to leave Moses is about to leave but Moses says it doesn't stop when I'm taken away right it's not just about me God has risen up leaders from among you and these leaders are wise discerning and experienced men and what a blessing it is when men rise up from among one another and serve in the capacity God has called them to do says then I charged your judges at that time saying hear the cases between your fellow countrymen and judge righteously between a man and his fellow countrymen or the alien who is with him you shall not show partiality and judgment you shall bear hear the small and the great alike you shall not fear man for the judgment is God's the case that is too hard for you you shall bring to me and I will hear it I commanded you at that time all the things that you should do Moses is simply looking back and reminding them of how blessed they are to have the provision from among their number of leaders who are now serving them and what a blessing it is because God has raised and met every need that the nation had and God is showing them listen when it comes to time to the book of judges we see this there's always a judge rise up right now the book of judges is not a good place to look for role models I understand that there's a lot of a lot of failures in the book of judges but what we see is that every time God wanted to deliver his people he came up from among them that's an important theme by the way in scripture the deliverer comes from among God's people why is that important theme because the deliverer of all men will come from among them a lion from the tribe of Judah who is Jesus Christ our Lord the great leader they need is really in their midst and Moses will tell them that again in Deuteronomy chapter 18 one like unto me will come from among you but he's looking back and saying look there's all this great need I couldn't do it alone I couldn't do it alone God had the answer right in front of us all the time he has called out these people when we needed a silversmith there

