

Deuteronomy 1:19-25

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[0 : 00] Deuteronomy chapter 1, starting in verse 19 and going to verse 25, says this. Then we set out from Horeb and went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which you saw on the way to the hill country of the Amorites, just as the Lord our God had commanded us, and we came to Kadesh Barnea.

I said to you, you have come to the hill country of the Amorites, which the Lord our God is about to give us. See, the Lord your God has placed the land before you. Go up, take possession, as the Lord the God of your fathers has spoken to you.

Do not fear or be dismayed. Then all of you approached me and said, Let us send men before us, that they may search out the land for us, and bring back to us a word of the way by which we should go up, and the cities which we shall enter.

The thing pleased me, and I took twelve of your men, one man from each tribe, and they turned and went up into the hill country, and came to the valley of Eshcol and spied it out.

Then they took some of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down to us, and they brought us back a report and said, It is a good land which the Lord our God is about to give us.

[1 : 13] And we're going to stop right there. The temptation is to continue reading on, especially for me, but we're going to stop right there this evening. If you remember the book of Deuteronomy, it is Moses' final sermon to the nation prior to their crossing of the Jordan River and entering into the promised land.

It is really the last words of Moses. It is what he commands the people. It is what he instructs the people as they are in the plains of Moab, looking at the promised land opposite of Jericho in preparation for the occupation of the promised land.

We know that he's going to hand his leadership over to Joshua, and Joshua would lead the nation. Moses himself will not go into the promised land. Rather, he is just the one preparing the way.

We know that when Moses sets out to do this from our introduction, and then even Sunday night when we looked at this, that Moses' aim, as it is recorded for us there in verse 5, is to expound the law.

That is, to make it clear. He wants to open up the law of God, or the word of God, to the people of God, so that they will have confidence, so that they will have understanding, and so that they will have motivation to do everything God is commanding them to do.

[2 : 33] We also looked at Sunday night, that as part of that exposition, just as we should do in Scripture, he always wants to set it in context. And setting it in context, he takes about the first five chapters, because Deuteronomy chapter 5 is the Ten Commandments, the second giving of the Ten Commandments, which is kind of where we get our name, Deuteronomy, second law.

It's not the second law given, but a second telling of the law. But anyway, he takes the first five chapters, and looks back at where they have been, so that they know how they got there.

Because it's always important to know how we got here, if you will, to put yourself in context of Scripture. So he's bringing them to the point of, this is how we got to this place, this is the law of God, and then he takes the bulk of the book of Deuteronomy, there in the center section, and really expounds it, fleshes it out, since we know how we got here, and we know what it is God has commanded us to do, this is what it looks like when we live it out in a daily practice.

And then he encourages the people at the end of the book of Deuteronomy with a choice, and he's facing them with a challenge of whether they're going to hold on to the blessings that come from obedience, or the curses that come from disobedience.

But here is, he is looking back at their past. It's amazing to me, when you get into the book of Deuteronomy, he doesn't start in Egypt, right? He doesn't start with the Exodus event.

[3 : 58] As a matter of fact, he starts at Mount Sinai, or Mount Horeb. He starts at the giving of the law, because the reality that they were free people is something that was already self-explanatory.

They had the freedom to choose, because they had chose for 38 years to wander around in the wilderness, and he's trying to set the stage of how they made that choice. They were also God's people, and that was something that's going to be reiterated.

Now, he is going to highlight the fact that God called them out, God led them out, and God's faithfulness in choosing them, but he doesn't start all the way back to where they were enslaved in Egypt.

Rather, he starts at when they were free as God's people in a covenant relationship that they entered into with him. And then he is talking about how they will live in light of that covenant.

Now, as we saw in verses 1 through 18, God commanded his people, okay, you've been here long enough, it's time to start moving. Before they move, Moses says, I couldn't handle the bulk of you, you're such a large number, there's so many of you, I couldn't do it on the most, so there's the appointment of all these leaders, and the thing that astounded us there is that the leaders came up from among them.

[5 : 08] Now, these things are important because the Abrahamic promise hinged on two things, right? The promise that God gave to Abraham hinged on two key things, people and property.

God was going to multiply his seed as the stars of heaven, and he was going to give him the land in which he was walking on. Now, when Moses makes the statement that you were as numerous as the stars of heaven, he is showing God's faithfulness to fulfill the covenant promise of people.

And then he's going to remind them of God's covenant promise of the land or the property that he's going to give them. And it is here that we kind of get to in verses 19 through 25.

I want you to see this evening how God led them to the edge. They were led to the edge. Now, a little teaser, if you will, or a little looking ahead. What we'll see next time we get together is how they stepped back from the edge, how they failed to take hold.

We understand that because we've already read the other books that led us up to this point, right? But here they are led to the edge of promise. And I want you to see how, what God does just in these few verses when he brings them to this place, because these are things that we lose in the book of Numbers when we're reading it and we kind of get lost in all the counting and all the organization and we get lost in all the wilderness wandering there.

[6 : 30] We kind of lose the brevity, the simplicity which Moses states it here, because this is a hundred mile trek, probably an 11 days journey, as it says there in the first few verses of Deuteronomy.

It's a hundred miles from Horeb to Kadesh Barnea. And he summarizes that in about three verses. But he tells us what happens there.

All right, there's some simple things. And I want us to see that, what it's like when God leads his people to the edge and they're there. I mean, they're right there.

Just by way of application, even before we get into it, so often. I know my brother could probably testify to this as well. I don't want to say probably. I know he could.

I can testify. You see God leading people. It's almost like right to the edge. But there's a hesitation. There's a resisting.

[7 : 28] There's a pushing back. Just like we joked, if you remember when we were painting a sanctuary and we held our services right up the road at that beautiful old chapel, that's the old chapel up here.

And I joked with you and I told you that the most worn out pew in the whole place was the one in the very back. The top of that pew was worn raw because people had been holding on to it.

Didn't want to move forward right over the years. Every other pew looked fine, but the one in the back, how they'd held on to the top. And we joke about that, but it's the reality that so often God leads people to the edge, either salvific truths or even beyond that, because we're talking about the people of God here.

God leading his people to the edge of usefulness and willingness and complete surrender. And then something holds them back. But here we see God's faithfulness and leading them to the edge.

Number one, we see the preparation of the people. The preparation of the people. And if we're not careful, we'll miss it. Look at what he says. Then we set out from Horeb. So they left.

[8 : 34] Okay, God commanded them, it's time to go. God said, you've been here long enough. They probably camped in that region for about 18 months. Now it was a fruitful 18 months and it was a very good 18 months. We know that it didn't start out too well because Moses was on the mountain for 40 days.

And when he came down, the people were playing the harlot with the golden calf. So he crushes up the golden calf. He causes them to drink it. There's this great slaughter. There's this division of the people standing with the Lord. Moses goes back up on the mountain.

He gets the 10 commandments and he gets all these pictures. But while they're there for that 18 months, they construct the tabernacle, the furnishings of the tabernacle. They set aside the tribe of Levi. They have all the priesthood set up and established.

They have the order of the camp. So there's a lot of things that take place in that 18 months. And it's really a place of comfort. It's a place of ease. I mean, it's a place of fellowship with God uninterrupted because who's going to mess with you when you're on the backside of the wilderness?

That's literally where they were at. It's in a desolate location. You're set apart and nobody's going to mess with you. Everybody's going to kind of leave you alone and you can just go commune with the Lord your God.

[9 : 37] Now you need to understand this. That's great. But God didn't call his people into isolation. He called them into being a public display to the world, right? He didn't call them to be separate and to be isolated and completely confined to the backside.

God says, I chose you to be my people so that the world may know what I look like. So then he says, okay, it's time to go. So he calls them out and he calls them to move and they start the hike.

So we set out from Horeb. Now look at this simple verse as the New American Standard says it. And we went through, and then we set out from Horeb and went through all that great and terrible wilderness which you saw on the way to the hill country of the Amorites.

Now when God called them, he said, it's time for you to leave and go to the hill country of the Amorites. Right? Now up to this point, let's put ourselves in this, in their place.

They have left Egypt. They have wandered around a little bit on the other side of the Red Sea because they went down this way, then back up this way, then around this way, and then they got between a rock and a river and then Pharaoh's army was coming.

[10 : 46] Then they crossed the Red Sea and then they went to the place of the springs and the water and all that, but they were at Mount Horeb. Now all that's behind them. They have no idea what's in front of them. All they know is God says it's time to go to the hill country of the Amorites.

So they get ready to leave. Now as they go, they pass through that great and terrible wilderness which they saw. Now this, I believe, is God's preparation of his people to stand at the edge of what he's promised them.

God led them through a great and terrible place because he wanted them to see the beauty of his provisions in light of the awfulness of what they just passed through.

God was taking them to the glorious promise land. But before they could get there, they had to pass through that great and terrible wilderness and see it with their own eyes.

Because until we see how bad this place is, we don't realize how good that place is. Maybe compared to Egypt, it would have been okay.

[12 : 05] It's like, okay, well, Egypt is a pretty fertile area. It's right beside the River Nile. Egypt is, you know, got the delta there. Egypt seems to be pretty prosperous. Egypt is a world power. Maybe the promised land would have looked, you know, okay.

But when you have to pass through the great and terrible wilderness, Canaan begins to look so much better. Because one way God prepares his people to enter into that which he has promised them is to allow them to pass through things which they will not like.

It's to allow them to pass through things which have no appeal to them. To allow them to pass through things which seem to be repulsive. We love the book of Romans and I had this discussion with someone this past week, Romans 8, 28, we all love that.

Now God causes all things to work together for the good of those who love him or are called according to his purposes. We love that, right? And then we have to follow that up with the verses that come after that because it starts speaking of what will separate us from the love of Christ and, you know, all these tribulations and trials and struggles and pain and there's this one little word and I like Tony Evans always highlights it when he's preaching that section because it says, but in all these things, Christ keeps his people.

All these terrible things, you know, Dr. Evans likes to say that people would like to say in spite of, but it doesn't. It says in the midst of all this awful stuff, God keeps his people because the end part that his people see is the preparation part for what he has waiting for them on the other side.

[13 : 44] The great and terrible wilderness was the visual picture that God's people needed to appreciate the beauty of his provisions because when we realize that this world definitely does not satisfy or meet the needs which the soul longs for, we live with a greater anticipation of what is to come.

Those who think that this is all there is, and are finally awakened to the great and terrible state of the world in which we live in.

And it's okay to say that because sin has so marred our world that when we look at it, it is great and it is terrible and we see it with our own eyes. But rather than walking around with such a downcast look, maybe we ought to look up with a heart full of preparation for what is to come.

Because then and only then do I believe when we read scripture says that he's going to make all things new. This thing will be purged, that everything will be shaken.

Peter speaks of everything being shaken. The only things that will remain are those things which cannot be shaken and the world will be cleansed as if by fire and there will be a new heaven and a new earth and all those things that are promised to us much like the land.

[15 : 08] They only look sweeter when we're walking through the wilderness and understanding it's not what it should be. So part of the preparation, a big bulk of the preparation that God has for his people is to allow them to pass through those things which are terrible.

And I know it's hard. But he didn't take them from the mountain into the promised land. He took them from a place of fellowship through a desolate land so they could get to the promised land.

And even today in what we call our sanctification because when we looked at the book of Numbers we said the application is our wilderness wandering is the sanctification process. Right?

Took God a moment to get the people out of Egypt. Took 40 years to get Egypt out of his people. It takes him a moment to redeem us and to save us. We are forgiven, redeemed, and saved in an instant.

We are sanctified through a lifetime. And it is during that sanctification process that the wilderness that we are walking around in has less and less and less appeal to us.

[16 : 17] Or at least it should. Because this, I mean, I know we've seen it and I understand it. It seems kind of, you know, easy to say but the reality is this is not our home.

This world is not our home. And as they're walking through the wilderness I can imagine them going, I'm glad this is not it. Now the sad reality for many of them, it will be it.

But at least God showed them the choice. You can either stay here or we can go here. He prepared his people. The second thing we see is the promise of the Lord reiterated or restated.

Because once they get to the whole country Moses tells them we got there to Kadesh Barnea and I said to you, you have come to the hill country of the Amorites, which the Lord our God is about to give us.

It is always with a air of expectation that Moses speaks of the fulfillment of the promises of God. It is an expectation he is going to give us.

[17 : 23] Not that he could or that he might or that he may or there's a chance we could. He says we have come to the place which the Lord our God is going to give us.

It is an expectation of the fulfillment of the promises of God. And how can he speak with such expectation? It's because he says, see the Lord your God has placed the land before you.

Look, since he has this expectation, look at his command. Go up, take possession. As the Lord, the God of our fathers has spoken to you, do not fear or be dismayed. So now he is leaning back on the character of God.

He is the God of our fathers. When we go back and we read of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, every promise that God gave to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the fathers, he has fulfilled.

And now 400 plus years later, they are standing, literally, on the fulfillment of the God of our fathers. And what Moses is saying is God's faithfulness to them is the confidence we need of God's faithfulness to us.

[18 : 25] And we look with expectation on what God is going to do. Unfortunately, so many of God's people today open up the word of God and they get right to the edge.

And they look at the promises of God. But they look at them with an anticipation, not an expectation. They hope that God will do it instead of expecting God will do it.

And that's a big difference. because one of the things that we have seen in history is the ones that God brings beyond the edge are those who live with an expectation of God's faithfulness to his promises.

And I know I've said this to you before and I know I've shared the illustration, but it bears repeating. If it's ever more saying once, it bears repeating. Again, George Mueller is probably one of the greatest examples of that.

George Mueller literally expected God to fulfill every promise that he had ever given. George Mueller said that God said you should provide for the orphans and the widows, right? So he opened up all these orphanages across England there and he opened them up and he never asked for any money, never asked for any contributions and he would just literally expect God to do something.

[19 : 36] He just always did. Through the prayer and the presence of God alone he would pray about a matter. Probably one of the greatest testimonies I've ever heard is how one of the leaders of the house, I think he had like five orphanage houses at that time and I think I might have shared this with you and they came to him and said Mr. Mueller, we don't have any food for any of the children to eat.

He said, well then let's pray about it. He said, well what should we do? He said, well we're just going to pray about it and I expect that God's going to bring it so he went to his room and he began to pray. A little bit later he had a knock on the door and someone came and said, Mr. Mueller, there's a gentleman who wants to speak to you and it was a guy who was driving a bread truck and the bread truck had blown a tire in front of the orphan houses and needed to offload all the bread.

So he said, today's food is provided. Well what about tomorrow? Well there's an expectation and God just, he just expected God to do what God said he was going to do. And there's a great comfort that comes from living in that reality that what God has promised he will fulfill.

What we see throughout scripture is God's people are commanded to literally take God at his word and live with an expectation of him fulfilling his word.

And when they get to the edge of that Moses is reminding them this is what God has promised. So go take it. It's right there.

[20 : 56] You've just seen what we passed through. He's prepared you to get to this place. So here's what he has promised. So take possession. Seems simple enough, right?

Seems pretty easy. If God has promised it I'm going to take it. If God has promised it this is not name it and claim it theology, right? This is read it, understand it, hear it, and obey it.

Theologies. That's what that is. God has said this is mine so I'm going to take possession of it. If he has said this belongs to me if God has commanded me to move forward then I'm going to do it. But that leads us to the third thing which so often happens and that it is the procrastination of the nation.

The procrastination. The people have been prepared they have been reminded of the promise and then they do what people so often do they procrastinate.

In the Southern Baptist life we say they form the committee. Just as a side note I need to go ahead and say this here. Everywhere in scripture that we read of a multitude of people making the decision the decision is normally wrong.

[21 : 59] I know that's going to get us get me in trouble possibly but when the majority rules normally the majority is wrong. And we need to understand it.

I'm not saying that we need to have because you also need to understand that there's also a multiplicity of leaders given in every local church. There's multiple leaders. Not one man making a decision. It's not one person making a decision.

There are multiple leaders entrusted by the church called of the Lord and leading. So don't ever say oh the pastor's saying everybody I'll just follow everything he says. That's not what I'm saying. I'm just saying that when the majority gets their way most often in scripture it ends in sin.

Because people have a tendency when they come together to procrastinate. I have a bad tendency of that myself. I can always put things off. Right? Or I can always pump the brakes just a little bit.

But what we see here is their procrastination because it says then all of you approach to me. All of you. So it's all the nation. Right? Then all of you all of you who has just seen with your own eyes that great and terrible wilderness.

[23 : 10] All of you which have just passed through that area. All of you which have just been reminded of the promises of God. Then all of you approach to me. Now just the way I read this and I understand it and as a Bible student and someone who's just seeking to flesh it out in my own mind I don't mind sharing this with you.

I know the reality that the people Moses is making this message to those he's declaring the word to were not the ones who failed to go in. He's preaching this message to their children. Right?

Because all of them that approached him and failed to go in have already died. Yet just as Nehemiah Ezra even Daniel Moses identifies himself and those alive with the sin of the nation.

He never says they sinned they sinned they sinned he said we sinned we sinned we own it. Nehemiah said we have revolted against you we have rebelled Daniel cries out when he sees the end of the 70 weeks oh God we have sinned against you we have failed to follow you completely.

Daniel identifies himself with the sin of the nation. He owns it. And this is what he's doing he says all of you he said you were there too he said well we went there that was my daddy or that was my mama or that was my my grandfather I didn't do that no he says we're going to own this we're going to identify this all of you approached me and said let us send men before us that we may go search out the land for us and bring back to us the word of the way by which we should go up and the cities which we shall enter now that sounds pretty good until we get to the second half of the end of this chapter which we're not going to get to tonight but let's just see how they procrastinate here Moses commands them this is the hill country this is what God has told us to take he says the Lord says go take it move up take possession of the land which he has promised you now their first thing is to say well now wait a minute we don't know where we're going we don't know anything about this land we don't even know the best strategy to attack this land so Moses we've got an idea we think it would be better for us to send a delegation or a group of spies let us send them throughout the land so that they can go before us and then they can tell us where we should go and they can tell us which cities we shall enter into now the problem

[25 : 37] I have with that is they already had one going before them because the Lord their God was going before them and he knew the land better than anybody just because they didn't know where they were going does not mean he didn't know where they were going see all of a sudden they are beginning to put themselves in the position of God we want to have it all figured out you know God's okay God can lead us out of Egypt though all we've ever been is slaves God can lead us to the springs though we never knew they were there God can lead us to Mount Horeb though we didn't know anything about it God can lead us through that great and terrible wilderness but we're not so sure God can lead us into this land that he's already promised us we'd rather have somebody tell us where to go we'd rather have someone from among us tell us what we should do rather than completely leaning upon the

Lord our God who has went before us up until this point because how did they travel that hundred miles we'll read just a little bit later on that pillar of cloud by day and that pillar of fire by night you remember that right went before them and he also told them where they should camp when they should camp when they should move God knew the direction but the way they delayed is well it may be wise if we searched it out ourselves now I understand what Moses says but it sounded good to me I understand this okay I understand that it seems to have at least an air of divine approval because Moses the messenger of God says okay sounds good to me let's do it God allows it but just because God allows it does not mean God ordained it and yet we see their procrastination their procrastination is rather than moving forward in confidence let's get a little bit more information let's gather a little bit more information probably one of the greatest testimonies of that in more recent days would be

Henry Blackaby you may know Henry Blackaby the author of knowing and doing the will of God experiencing God knowing and doing the will of God Henry Blackaby and his son Richard Blackaby did Blackaby ministries Henry Blackaby pastored a small church in Canada probably a little bit smaller in this church and as he's pastoring in Canada there they begin to really try to discern what it is God wanted them to do and really were praying about now Canada is a hard mission field by the way you've never spoken to anybody that's ever served in Canada you've never spoken to anybody that's ever ministered there some of you had the privilege of knowing a gentleman who served on the mission field in Canada that'd be brother Sidney Gibson who preceded me here as interim but Canada is a very hard place of ministry brother Henry Blackaby was there and they just really began to feel like God was laying things on his heart and the church began to move forward didn't understand how they were going to do it they built a Bible college they were supporting missionaries everywhere they were really just doing astounding things and you'd have to go back and read the history of it how they were supporting missionaries throughout Canada throughout North

America and around the world they were training pastors in this Bible college it never made sense on paper right whenever they would form a delegation called the budget finance committee they would look at it and they would always scratch their head and it never made sense they just really felt like God was calling them to do it so they did it and God blessed and God blessed and God blessed and God blessed and the church was doing phenomenal things Henry Blackaby ended up resigning from their Blackaby ministries I believe he moved down to Atlanta Georgia so he's in Atlanta Georgia a new pastor comes in a new pastor starts looking at the budget and finance sheet and says this doesn't make sense so he began to put things in numerical order and I believe that we ought to have wisdom right would be wise as serpents but gentle as doves and he began to try to get things in order as it made sense as he could see it long story short in a matter of years the church just about dried up died no longer does it support a Bible college no longer does it support missionaries because they started to do things that made sense instead of things that did because it was for faith and trust and obedience rather than seeing what the word of God had commanded them to do according to his promises they began to see what it is they could do according to their ability it made all the difference in the world because one way that man procrastinates is he tries to reason and make sure he can do it and I understand the principle the biblical principle you need to sit down and consider the cost I get that but you also need to stop and hear the word and when the word of God says go take possession of the land it's really no more consideration to the cost man procrastinated because they said let us find out everything we can we see the procrastination of the nation forth and finally we see the provisions of the

Lord because one of the things that is so kind about when God led them to the edge is that God solidified his promise because even in their I believe it was sinful choice to ask for a delegation by the way in my Bible I wrote beside it and maybe it makes no sense to you but I wrote beside it that hesitant obedience leads to open rebellion right sometimes when we hesitate to obey well wait a minute oh God it typically leads to open rebellion at least it did in this case they hesitated in their obedience and the eventual outcome of that was open rebellion but God here graciously shows them his provisions because it says that the men went out the 12 men went out and they turned and went up into the hill country the place God had commanded them to go right and they came to the valley of Eshcol and they spied it out and they took some of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down to it so what did God say it was a land flowing with milk and honey right it was a land of luscious provision so they took some of the fruit in their own hands and they brought it to them right what God has promised is real it's true look it's right here and it says and they brought us back a report and said it is a good land which the Lord our God is about to give us now I know the 10 of the spies say it's a good land but where I want us to stop tonight is to see this that when they came back and they're literally standing on the edge of claiming what God has promised them right before they step back God reaffirms that promise by showing them everything he said about that land is true it is a land flowing with milk and honey it is a land with crazy amount of produce it is a land that is good now we need to understand this God is not compelled to tell us everything about where he's taking us did God tell them the cities were fortified to the heavens no did God tell them that giants lived there no did

[33 : 06] God tell them all the things that the spies use to discourage them no but God is also not compelled to tell us those things but everything God had promised was proven true because God's call is this is what I'm bringing you it's a land flowing with milk like the other things God says leave it up to me you don't need to know all the details you just need to know the God who's leading you into those details that's what he's calling them to do the call to follow in obedience and to walk by faith is not a call that says God you have to tell me everything it is a call that says God as long as the things you are telling me is true and through these provisions it reaffirms the promises God had given them everything God had told them was absolutely true yet standing on the edge they stepped back they pull back and we'll see why Sunday night the word allows Harry why I think that they pull back but

God did everything he had to to get them there right we speak of God wooing us winning us over bringing us to himself drawing us in look at how he drew them in he led them through a great and terrible wilderness he reaffirmed his promises he showed them the provisions he was even content with their procrastination he said okay go that's what it takes go yet they fall short the question we ask the question we ask is not oh man look how bad they were because as Paul reminds us in the New Testament these things were written for our benefit that we may not fail to walk in obedience as they did these things are for our benefit so the question we ask is how many times has God led us to the edge and yet we step back unwilling to move forward in what he has called us to do and promised to do through us we see that there in Deuteronomy chapter 1 verses 19 through 25 thank you brothers so

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.