

# The Christian Arsenal

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## DEUTERONOMY 1:1-3:29

Today we begin a brief study of the **Book of Deuteronomy**. I'm excited about getting into this book and I hope you are, too.

I want to set a little background for this book before we actually get into it. **Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers** and **Deuteronomy** are known as the **Pentateuch** and they were all written by Moses.

The **Book of Genesis** describes how God called Abraham out of the Ur of the Chaldees and how He established through Abraham the family that eventually became the people of Israel. God made an unconditional covenant with Abraham, setting forth several promises that are as valid today as they were back then.

God told Abraham that He would make him **a great nation**, and **He** told him that He would make **his name great**. God told Abraham that He would make him **a great blessing**. God also told Abraham that He would **bless those who bless him** and that He would **curse those who curse him**.

But, the promise that He made to Abraham that also includes us is that **in Abraham all the families of the earth would be blessed**. **See, the Lord Jesus Christ would come through the seed of Abraham and in the Lord Jesus Christ, all the families of the earth are blessed!!!**

This is known as the **Abrahamic Covenant**.

The **Book of Exodus** describes Israel's deliverance from bondage in Egypt and it also describes how God made covenant with the **children** of Israel and He used Moses as the mediator of that covenant. Unlike the Abrahamic Covenant, the **Mosaic Covenant** was not unconditional. It could be broken. And we'll see that as we go along in this book.

The **Book of Leviticus** instructs the people of Israel in the worship of God. The **Book of Leviticus** lays down specifications for the priesthood and the **worship** and **sacrifices** and **feast days** and **offerings**.

The **Book of Numbers** describes how the people moved from Mt. Sinai where the Mosaic Law was given, to Kadesh-Barnea, the point from where they were to enter the Promised Land. The **Book of Numbers** tells us of the twelve spies who went over into the Promised Land and how ten of them came back with a bad report and it tells us that God was angry with that generation and made them wander in the wilderness years until that generation had all died.

But, the **Book of Deuteronomy** speaks to the **children** of that generation. The generation with whom God was so angry had died out just as God said they would and now the children are about to enter the Land of Promise...

Many times we discuss if the sins of the fathers are visited upon the sons. Well, in a way they always are, aren't they? I mean, most of the time, if a man is sinful, his children will have to pay the consequences of their father's sin. These children did. Many of them were born in the wilderness or were small children when all this began.

But, if you'll remember when we studied the **Book of Ezekiel**, God said He doesn't hold the child of a sinful man accountable for the sins of his father, nor does He hold a father of a

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sinful child accountable for the sins of his child. There was an old proverb that said, “the fathers eat the sour grapes but the children’s teeth are set on edge.” And God said through His prophets, *Ezekiel* as well as *Jeremiah*, that this was not true.

When God said that the iniquity of the fathers is visited upon the sons, He said, “of those who hate Me.” See, God didn’t hold the second generation responsible for the sins of the first generation. But, by the same token, He is going to put upon them the same **expectation of obedience** that He put upon their fathers.

But first, Moses wants to speak to them. He wants to review with them what has happened and make sure they **understand** what God expects of them.

By the way...this is a good thing for you and me to do from time to time. We need to review our own lives and see if we’re doing what God expects of us!

The *Book of Deuteronomy* is a **book of love**...in fact, one commentary I have is entitled DEUTERONOMY, THE GOSPEL OF LOVE. This book not a dry, crusty, dusty old book. **It tells how God set His heart on these people and how He had a plan for their lives and how He longed for them to return His love so that He could fully shower His blessings upon them.**

The *Book of Deuteronomy* is quoted over forty times in the *New Testament*, exceeded only by *Psalms* and *Isaiah*.

*Deuteronomy* reveals that the Lord is the only God and that He is **jealous** and **faithful** and **loving** and **merciful**. *Deuteronomy* also tells us God is angered by sin and He expects obedience from His children...even His special servant Moses was not exempt from that expectation of obedience.

The *Book of Deuteronomy* is Moses’ final message to his people. In fact, we’re going to see the death of Moses recorded by Joshua in the last chapter of this book.

The word *Deuteronomy* means “second law.” This doesn’t mean this is merely a repeating or repetition of the Law. It was called by one commentator I read “a recapitulation”. And that’s exactly what it is. After I looked that word up in the dictionary, I found it to mean “to review by way of an orderly summary, as at the end of a speech or discourse.” So, what we’re going to see in this book is an orderly summary **with emphasis on certain things**.

The Holy Spirit of God has a way of saying something in an outline form, then coming back and putting an emphasis upon a particular portion of it.

We need to remember that when God says something one time that’s enough, but if He says it more than once we should know that He really means business. Moses had given the Law to the parents of these folks, and now, in the *Book of Deuteronomy*, Moses is saying... *“You better pay close attention...because the Law wasn’t just given to your parents, the Law was also given to you!”*

As we said before, the *Book of Deuteronomy* was given to the new generation that was unfamiliar with the experience at Mt. Sinai when God gave Moses the Law. The adults of that generation, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, which had left Egypt **were all dead and their bones had been buried all over the wilderness they had been wandering.**

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The children of that generation needed to have the Law explained to them by Moses. These folks were about to do what their fathers **should** have done forty years before. So, **for one solid month**, Moses addresses them and instructs them and tells them exactly what God expects of them.

My prayer as we go through this precious old book is that God would teach **us** as Moses attempted to teach these folks. There is much for us to learn from this book. So, please study each week. Some weeks there will be several chapters and of course, we won't possibly be able to cover them all in class and that's all the more reason why you should cover them at home.

Moses begins this oration by telling the people that what should have taken them 11 days took them 38 years. It had taken the children of Israel two years to get from Egypt to the Promised Land and then when unbelief caused them not to go into the Promised Land, they wandered around in the wilderness for 38 years...so they actually traveled around 40 years in all.

Moses tells the younger generation in this address how he had gotten to the point that he thought the burden of that many people was overwhelming so he appointed heads over the people...

leaders of thousands, and of hundreds,  
of fifties and of tens and appointed  
officers for their tribes.

## Verses 16-18...

Moses had a tremendous responsibility. God had called Moses to a huge task. Moses was a great leader. Moses was God's man for that very important time...but with all that said...he was still just a man. And like all men, Moses had feet of clay. And we'll see in this lesson how we know that.

In this passage, Moses also tells the people how it came about that he sent twelve spies in the land.

## Verses 19-33...

What is the basic problem here? **It's unbelief! It's a lack of trusting God!** The people didn't believe God was capable of doing what he said!

Think about it...

The spies looked the land over and agreed it was a good land...so different from what they had seen in their two year journey from Egypt to Kadesh-Barnea.

Moses however reminds the second generation that their parents had rebelled against God. Instead of laying hold of God's promises, they had focused on the difficulties of conquering the land.

- 1) **the Canaanites were stronger and taller**
- 2) **the cities were larger with walls to the sky**
- 3) **the sons of Anakim were there...they were a race of giants**

The **Book of Numbers** tells us the children of Israel said, "and we're like grasshoppers in their sight."

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But God had said He had already given them the land and all they had to do was go in and possess it. God had told them He would deliver their enemies into their hands. The bottom line here was they simply refused to believe God, didn't they?

Many times, you and I are confronted with giants in our lives. And when we face giants, we must make a choice. We choose either to trust God to be our **shield** and **protector** and **defender** and **deliverer**, or we can choose to be afraid and not believe God can do what He promises.

We choose to look at outward circumstances and let them overwhelm us or we choose to look at the promises of God and allow His grace to sustain us!

We choose to be one of the crowd, or we choose to be a Caleb or a Joshua.

Moses goes on to tell us that Joshua and Caleb would be allowed to enter the Promised Land, but the rest of that generation wouldn't.

## **Verses 34-40...**

Do you see what Moses is doing? He's talking to the very people God mentioned in **verse 39**. And Moses is telling them all this so they will learn from it.

And what Moses wanted them to learn was that God is a God of love but He is also a God of wrath. God is a God of longsuffering, but He is also a God of judgment.

But, even in God's wrath and judgment, He is a God of mercy! The desire of Moses' heart was that these younger people learn from the mistakes of their parents.

Moses goes on to tell them how the older generation decided they had made a hasty decision and rash judgment and they attempted to go to war...but God had told them to turn around and set out for the wilderness. Moses says in **verse 43** that they rebelled against the command of the Lord and acted presumptuously.

God will not bless presumption, folks!

**By the way, what is presumption?** Well, as used here in this context, the Hebrew means **assuming something is true when it isn't and pridefully and arrogantly acting upon that assumption**. In this case, the children of Israel presumed God would be with them in the attempt to war against the Amorites when God had already told them to turn around and go back toward the Red Sea.

And presumption didn't end with these people. The Bible is full of examples of folks acting presumptuously. Remember when the children of Israel thought if they just had the Ark of the Covenant in their camp they would have victory over the Philistines?

Presumption is a very dangerous thing. That's why we must pray diligently for our president during these days. We mustn't presume upon God. We mustn't **assume** God is with us, we must **know** He is! **We mustn't run ahead of God.**

***Rebellion is presumption. Disobedience is presumption.  
And even doing the right thing in the wrong way or at  
the wrong time is presumption!***

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And because of presumption, these folks were defeated by the Amorites and when they wept before the Lord, the Lord didn't hear them.

## Chapter 2

tells us they turned and set out for the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea and Moses tells how God provided for every need they had. He tells who allowed them to pass through their land who didn't.

I think it's very interesting that when they left Kadesh-Barnea, they didn't know where to go. **Verse 2** tells us they simply circled Mt. Seir for many days and then God spoke to Moses and said, **"You have circled this mountain long enough."**

**Has that ever happened to you? Have you ever just gone around and around in circles and marked time and finally, God had to say to you, "Okay, you've circled this mountain long enough!"**

## Verse 25...

Moses told how they defeated and destroyed those who opposed their travel through their land and how they accumulated livestock and spoil from their captured cities. We need to remember this was **a vast number** of people...probably around **two million or so**...traveling through the wilderness. And many of the nations didn't want them traveling over their land...so all along they met with opposition. **But through all this, God led them and Moses said it was God who delivered their enemies over to them.**

There are several principles that I want us to notice in these chapters...

- 1) During these 40 years, God kept His promises even to the descendants of Esau and the descendants of Lot. God didn't allow the descendants of Jacob to encroach up their territory.

Wouldn't it be nice if everybody today would honor the boundaries God set for His children way back then?

- 2) During these 40 years, God kept His promises to Israel. He taught them they couldn't act presumptuously, but He also taught that He would empower and enable them to be victorious when they fought in His strength and under His direction.

And finally, during these 40 years, **all their needs were met...verse 7...**

Think about it...according to a military logistic expert,

**FOOD** - it would have taken 1,500 tons of food each to feed these folks. This much food would fill up two freight trains, each a mile long.

**FIREWOOD** - It would take 4,000 tons of firewood and more mile long freight trains...just for one day.

**WATER** - It would take 1,000,000 gallons of water each day or a freight train of tank cars 1,800 miles long...just to bring water.

**RED SEA** – They had to get across the Red Sea in one night. Now if they went on a narrow part, double file, the line would 800 miles long and would 35 days and nights to get through. So there had to be a space in the Red Sea 3 miles wide and they would have to walk across 5,000 abreast to get over in one night.

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**CAMPING** – Every time they camped at the end of the day, a campground 2/3 the size of the state of Rhode Island, or a total of 750 square miles was needed.

Let me ask you...do you think Moses sat down and calculated all this before they left Egypt? No, I don't think so...

Moses simply believed God and God said He would take care of all this and He did.

In **chapter 3**, Moses continues to describe the various nations they encountered during their wilderness wanderings and in **verses 18-22**, Moses tells them how now, they must go in and possess the land that God has brought them to...

Moses ends this passage with telling the people how he had made a passionate plea to God to allow him to enter the Promised Land with them.

## **Verses 23-25...**

Moses had led these folks for forty years...He had put up with their **grumbings** and **murmurings** and **complaints** and **disobedience** and **rebellion** and **presumption**. But Moses had done something that deeply angered God.

## **Verse 26...**

What had made God angry with Moses?  
Well, when Moses and the children of Israel came back to Kadesh Barnea, there was no water for them. So what did they do? They murmured again! They said,  
***"Why have you brought us into the wilderness to die?  
Why have you brought us to this wretched place? We don't have any figs or vines or pomegranate. We don't even have any water."***

## Turn to **Numbers 20...**

The **Book of Numbers** tells us that Moses and Aaron went before the Lord and fell on their faces and God spoke to Moses and said, ***"Take the rod and you and Aaron assemble the congregation and speak to the rock that it may yield its water."***

And that passage goes on to tell us, "Moses took the rod from before the Lord just as He had commanded him..."

So far, so good...but then what happened?

## **Numbers 20:10-12...**

Some people say that the sin was that they struck the rock twice. But they weren't told to strike the rock at all, were they? **Let me quickly tell you what made this sin so grievous in God's sight.**

**First** of all, look in **verse 10**.

"...shall **we** bring water for you out of this rock?"

No, Moses, **we** aren't going to bring anything out of this

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rock! God is going to bring water out of this rock!

Next, look at **verse 12**.

God takes it very seriously when His servants don't regard Him as holy!

**Another reason** is that **“to whom much is given, much is required.”** Moses had been granted a very special relationship with Almighty God and God expected obedience from Moses.

**But the most important reason is that this rock was a picture or type of the Lord Jesus Christ!**

**1 Corinthians 10:1-4...**

Back in **Exodus 17**, we're told that Moses was told to strike the rock to get water for the people. But here Moses was told to **speak** to the rock, wasn't he?

See, God had placed that rock in the wilderness as a type or picture of the Lord Jesus and the Lord Jesus suffered once for our sins. And Moses had struck the rock back in **Exodus 17**.

Jesus died only once! God was teaching this to them in a type – and Moses should have guarded and protected the type by obeying God. God very clearly told him to **speak** to the rock, he deliberately struck it twice.

So, when Moses asked God one last time to allow him to enter the Land of Promise, God said, “No, and don't ask Me again.”

**And we're tempted to say that God was very hard and harsh with Moses, aren't we? But, we need to remember that in God is so gracious. Even after Moses and Aaron did everything as wrong as they could, God still allowed water to come from that rock, didn't He?**

And by the way, Moses got to the Promised Land. Remember when Jesus was transfigured before the eyes of Peter, James and John? Where did the transfiguration take place? **IN ISRAEL!**

Who appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration? Moses and Elijah!

Well, don't let anybody tell you the **Book of Deuteronomy** is a dry and dusty book. The Lord has some blessings in store for us! We need to remember that Paul told us in **Romans** that whatever was written in earlier times (the Old Testament) was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

**Deuteronomy was written that you and I might have hope!!!**

Before we close, I want us to look again at the one verse that sums up this lesson and actually the entire book. It's the key verse, I believe, of the **Book of Deuteronomy**.

I believe each one of us could claim that verse as our key verse, as well. We would have to change the 40 to 55 or 60 or 63 or 65 or something! ☺  
But, God has indeed blessed **us** in all that **we** have done.

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See, we have the same God Moses and these folks had. We think our problems are so big. Remember what God can do. If He can work out all the problems for these folks, I do believe He can solve ours, don't you?

He has turned our tragedies into triumphs and our failures into victories!  
He has known all the steps we've taken in the past and He knows the ones we will take tomorrow.

And for all these years, He's been with us and we haven't lacked a thing! To God be the glory!!