

Deuteronomy Chapter 1

Importance

Foundational for the history, theology, prophecy of the Old Testament.

Third book most Cited in the New Testament after Psalms and Isaiah.

Title

English / Greek / Latin Deuteros + nomos = second law.

Torah is more than law; it is instruction or an exposition of the faith.

Hebrew Canon “these are the words.”

Setting: Seven Questions

Who? Moses to all Israel.

What? Exposition of the Torah.

When? About to enter the promised land after 40 years of wandering.

Where? Plains of Moab.

Why? A new generation must respond in faith to the Lord’s call.

Form of Deuteronomy:

Similar to Hittite Treaty documents defining the relationship between the suzerain (big king) and the vassal (little king).

Tone of Deuteronomy

More sermon than legislation

Urgency of a dying man calling for decision, commitment and full allegiance

Covenant Gen 12.1–3; 15.1–16; Ex 6.5–8

1. A nation / people
2. A blessing
3. A land

The Covenant Keeping God is fulfilling his oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants.

1. The Lord gives them the land he promised. (1.8) The land is an inheritance, it is given by God, but it also must be taken. It is a gift, but the people do not own it.
2. The Lord multiplies the people. (1.9–18) and they must be governed righteously, as the Lord himself governs. (1.16–18)

Remember the Rebellion .19–33

The scouts brought a good report that the land is good and fruitful and the Lord is giving it to us.

The scouts brought a bad report that the people there are powerful, and the cities are fortified.

The people rebelled and refused to enter the land despite the command of the Lord and the evidence that he would fulfill his promise to them.

What should have motivated the people to obey the Lord?

The Word of God, both promise and command.

The evidence of God's power, care and guidance.

What did motivate the people?

Fear outweighs truth

Discouragement—our brothers have caused our hearts to melt.

Accusing the Lord of evil motives.

The consequence of disobedience was the loss of entry into the promised land. 1.34–2.1

The Lord swears an oath that no one of that generation will enjoy their inheritance except Caleb and Joshua.

It's not all bad

Caleb was the one bright spot because he followed the Lord wholly and had a different spirit.
The Lord always has a remnant by faith.

The point of the sermon

Not to learn the facts of history,

nor to feel superior to the previous generation,

but to trust and obey the Lord instead of following their bad example

The point of the sermon for us today

For us it is also not about memorizing the facts of Israelite history. Nor is it to feel superior to those who went before. It is the challenge to trust, obey and enter the promised land to enjoy the blessings of God's covenant promises. There is a greater promise of rest, a greater inheritance

Psalm 95 calls a new generation to respond to God's call by faith and shows that there is more promised than the land of Canaan. The same challenge is given to each and every generation, each and every church and each and every believer: "Today if you hear his voice, harden not your hearts as they did in the rebellion." (Heb 3.15)