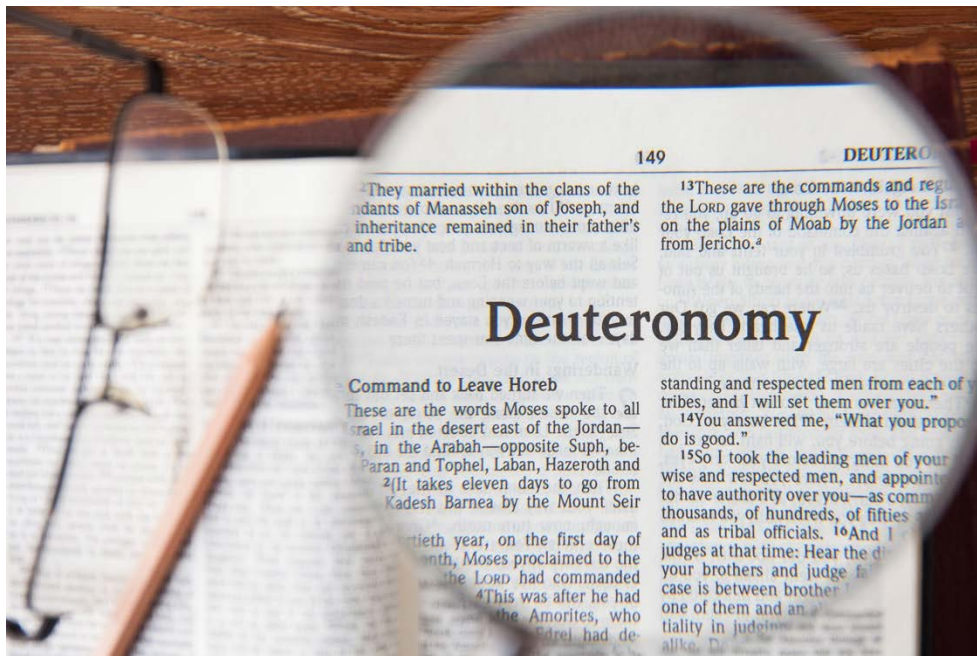


# THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

## FROM EGYPT TO MOAB: DEUTERONOMY I, 2



T. M. and Susie Moore

*A Scriptorium Study*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

Egypt to Moab: Deuteronomy 1, 2  
Copyright 2021 T. M. and Susie Moore  
Susie Moore, Editing and Finishing  
The Fellowship of Ailbe  
[www.ailbe.org](http://www.ailbe.org)

*Except as indicated, Scripture taken from the New King James Version. © Copyright 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. All quotations from Church Fathers from Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy: Ancient Christian Commentary Series III, Joseph T. Lienhard, S. J. ed. in collaboration with Ronnie J. Rombs, General Editor Thomas C. Oden (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001). All quotations from John Calvin from John Calvin, Commentaries on The Four Last Books of Moses Arranged in the Order of A Harmony, Rev. Charles William Bingham M. A., tr. and ed. (Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1863. All psalms for singing are from The Ailbe Psalter (available by [clicking here](#)).*

## Introduction to Deuteronomy 1, 2

The book of Deuteronomy consists of a series of messages Moses delivered to the people of Israel, east of the Jordan River on the plains of Moab.

These are Moses' last words, and they are powerful. He begins with a brief history lesson, because he is speaking to a new generation of Israelites, many of whom were born during the years of wandering in the wilderness. Moses needed to make sure they understood both the promises of God and the mistakes of their forebears, before he turned the reins of leadership over to Joshua.

Chapters 1 and 2 bring us from the deliverance of Israel from Egypt to God's people, assembled on the plains of Moab, waiting the command to enter the land of Canaan.

Susie and I hope you will find this study challenging and enriching for your walk with and work for the Lord.

We're pleased to provide *Scriptorium* studies in PDF format at no charge. We hope you will find them helpful and encouraging as you press on in your journey toward spiritual maturity with the Lord.

Please visit our website, [www.ailbe.org](http://www.ailbe.org), to discover the many other resources available to serve your needs. The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Visit our website also to subscribe to our worldview study *ReVision*, our devotional newsletter *Crosfigell*, and our worldview newsletter *The Week*.

If you find these studies, or any of our other resources helpful, we hope you will consider making a contribution to help support our work. You can do so by using the donate button at the website or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

T. M. and Susie Moore

## 1 Eleven Days, Forty Years

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 78.1-5*

Give ear, O my people, to my law;  
Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.  
I will open my mouth in a parable;  
I will utter dark sayings of old,  
Which we have heard and known,  
And our fathers have told us.  
We will not hide them from their children,  
Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD,  
And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.  
For He established a testimony in Jacob,  
And appointed a law in Israel,  
Which He commanded our fathers,  
That they should make them known to their children...

*Psalm 78.1-5*

(Foundation: [\*How Firm a Foundation\*](#))

Give ear, O my people, attend to my word,  
dark sayings and parables sent from the Lord,  
things we have before by our fathers been told,  
which we would not dare from our children withhold.

The glorious deeds of our God in His might,  
and all of the works He has done in our sight,  
together with all of the words of His Law,  
would we on ourselves and our children bestow.

*Today's Text: Deuteronomy 1.1-8*

*Preparation*

1. What's strange – and sad – about the time parameters mentioned here (vv. 2, 3)?
2. In verse 5, what is suggested about the Law of God and the land of promise?

*Meditation*

The book of Deuteronomy caps the Law of God and leads into the next phase of divine revelation and the unfolding of God's covenant promises to His people. This is one of the most important books in the entire Bible, for reasons we will see as we proceed through it.

We must be willing to receive God's Word, embrace His promises, and go forth in faith and obedience if we are to realize the blessings He has in store for us. Which is precisely what the generation of Israelites who were delivered from Egypt did *not* do. Verses 2 and 3 rate high on my list of saddest verses in the entire Bible: An eleven-day journey that took forty years to complete. That's what disobedience, fear, and thinking we know better than God will get you.

In our text we find the people of God assembled on the plains of Moab east of the Jordan River. Moses is about to remind them of their covenant obligations to God and all the glorious promises that come with obedience to His Word. The people had already seen what God could do, when He led them to victory over the two kings of Moab who sought to resist their passage into Canaan (v. 4). Now, because this was a new

generation, who had not received the Law from Moses before, he begins to put it before them with new urgency, beginning with a preamble reviewing God's history with them since their deliverance from Egypt (vv. 5-8). Moses recalled the time, after the Law had been declared to Israel, when God commanded them to get moving (v. 6). Moses was getting ready to rehearse the Law once again, at the end of which this new generation of Israelites would be instructed to go forth in faith, following Joshua into the land of promise.

This is the pattern that confronts us every day: Read God's Word. Hear Him. Then go forth in obedience, following Jesus into the promises of God. Just as the land of Canaan was spread out before the people of Israel (v. 7), and the precious promises given to Abraham were recalled (v. 8), so God holds out to us the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior and the precious and very great promises that are ours in Him (2 Pet. 1.4; 2 Cor. 1.20).

Will we get moving, or stall around for forty years, thinking we know better than God how to find the way to full and abundant life in Jesus?

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119,162*

Peter was perilously close to espousing the "Eleven Days, Forty Years" theology when he said to Jesus, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" (Matt. 16.22) What Jesus proposed sounded too hard, too awful, too frightening. When He told Peter exactly how things were going to be – He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes; and be killed and raised on the third day. To Peter, this sounded too much like giants and grasshoppers (Num. 13.32, 33). But Jesus' response to Peter – and to us – is: "You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matt. 6.23, 24) Now. Not tomorrow. Not in forty years. Now. And really, why do we wait? Full and abundant life is ours in Jesus today, as we go forth in faith and obedience, following our Lord into the promises of God.

#### *Reflection*

1. What has the Lord given you to do that you've been putting off, avoiding, or failing to carry out?
2. How can believers help one another to avoid the "Eleven Days, Forty Years" theology?
3. How do you hope this study of Deuteronomy will help you in your walk with and work for the Lord?

*And here this other fact will not appear to be without significance, that it is Moses who bears from God all that is written down in the law of Leviticus, whereas in Deuteronomy it is the people who are represented as listening to Moses and learning from him what they could not hear from God. This indeed is why it is called Deuteronomy, meaning the second law. Origen (185-254), On First Principles 4.3.12*

*Thank You for Your Law, O Lord. I know it is holy and righteous and good, and so today I will...*

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 78.6-16.*

Pray for the rising generation of Christians – the children of our churches. Pray that they will know and love the Lord and His Word, and that they will embrace their calling to His Kingdom and glory.

*Psalm 78.6-16.*

(Foundation: *How Firm a Foundation*)

Lord, let all our children arise and declare  
the truth of the Lord every day, everywhere,  
and set all their hopes in God's wonderful Word,  
and never forget all the works of the Lord.

*From Egypt to Moab: Deuteronomy 1, 2*

Our fathers were stubborn; they would not obey;  
when faced with their foes they in fear turned away.  
God's work of redemption they wholly despised,  
forgetting the pow'r He had shown to their eyes.

## 2 Leaders, Judges, Shepherds

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 106.1-3, 48.*

Praise the LORD!

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is good!*

For His mercy *endures* forever.

Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD?

Who can declare all His praise?

Blessed *are* those who keep justice,

And he who does righteousness at all times!

Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel

From everlasting to everlasting!

And let all the people say, “Amen!”

Praise the LORD!

*Psalm 106.1-3, 48*

(Trust in Jesus: [\*Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus\*](#))

Praise the Lord! Give thanks and praise Him! He is good, His love endures!

More His works than can be spoken; let His praise be ever sure!

*Refrain v. 48*

Blessèd be our God and Savior, evermore His praise proclaim!

Let all those who know Your favor praise Your holy, glorious Name!

*Today's Text: Deuteronomy 1.9-18*

*Preparation*

1. Why did Moses appoint judges and leaders for Israel?

2. What did these judges and leaders do?

*Mediation*

Exodus 18 gives us the longer account of what Moses summarizes in these verses. The leaders who were appointed as judges were to make sure that everyone in Israel was living within the blessings of God's Law and covenant. Every person was accounted for; every family and all its members had shepherding oversight from these judges.

Moses selected “wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men” from every tribe (v. 15). He taught them the Law of God and showed them how to use it in overseeing and caring for the people in their charge. They were to teach the people and deal with any issues related to the Law that came up between them. Difficult cases could be referred upwards to Moses.

This manner of shepherding the people was so effective that God would command the people to implement a similar structure once they settled in the land (Deut. 16.18-20). The Law of God was given to guide the people in how to love God and their neighbors. The shepherds of Israel – the leaders and judges – were established to make sure that sound instruction and right understanding and application of God's Law were realized household by household, village by village, and tribe by tribe.

This is the model which churches in the New Testament followed, as they set elders as shepherds over every congregation (1 Pet. 5.1-4). Churches that did not have such shepherds (elders, overseers) were considered to be not in order (Tit. 1.5). Paul provided qualifications for serving in the role of elder (1 Tim. 3.1-7; Tit. 1.6-9), and he counseled elders to take seriously their role as shepherds of the Lord's flock (Acts 20.17-35). For love

to flourish – for God and others – we need shepherds who will watch over us according to the Word of God.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

In the film, *Fiddler on the Roof*, a husband asks his wife in song, “Do you love me?” She doesn’t answer with a direct “Yes,” but lists all the ways she has shown him love through the years. But he still wants to hear her say, “Yes, I love you.” The song closes with the lines, “Then you love me?” “I suppose I do.” “And I suppose I love you, too.” Then they sing together, “It doesn’t change a thing, but even so, after twenty-five years, it’s nice to know.” Jesus asked Peter, as He asks today’s shepherds, and all of us as well, “Do you love Me?” “Tend My sheep” (Jn. 21.15-17). Words and actions. Trusting and obeying. Tending, caring, feeding, loving. This is the love that speaks to Jesus. This is the love we must show others. God loves us; we love and obey Him. “It’s nice to know.”

*Reflection*

1. Why did Moses appoint judges (shepherds) over the people of Israel? What were they supposed to do?
2. How should this model of shepherding carry over into the New Testament?
3. We are called to shepherd one another. How can we fulfill this calling to love one another?

*Wherefore let all those who are called to any public office, sustain themselves by this doctrine, that they are doing God's work, who is well able to keep them safe from the violence as well as the craftiness of the whole world. Yet, at the same time we are taught by these words that all posts of command are sacred to God, so that whosoever are called to them should reverently and diligently serve God, and ever reflect that His is the dominion whereof they are the ministers. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Deuteronomy 1.16*

*Thank You, Lord, for those who shepherd us in Your church. Let me encourage our shepherds by...*

*Closing Prayer: Pray Psalm 106.44-48.*

Pray for your church’s leaders and shepherds. Pray that they will look to the Lord for wisdom and guidance, and will be diligent in leading the people of God into the green pastures and beside the still waters of the Word of God.

*Psalm 106.44-48*

(Trust in Jesus: [\*Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus\*](#))

Look upon us, Lord, with favor, see us in our sore distress!

Hear our cries, with love surround us – turn again to heal and bless!

*Refrain v. 48*

Blessèd be our God and Savior, evermore His praise proclaim!

Let all those who know Your favor praise Your holy, glorious Name!

Save us, Lord, from every nation; gather us from all our ways.

And we to Your Name will offer glorious thanks and endless praise!

*Refrain*



### 3 Unbelief and Rebellion

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 78.7-16*

That they may set their hope in God,  
And not forget the works of God,  
But keep His commandments;  
And may not be like their fathers,  
A stubborn and rebellious generation,  
A generation *that* did not set its heart aright,  
And whose spirit was not faithful to God.  
The children of Ephraim, *being* armed *and* carrying bows,  
Turned back in the day of battle.  
They did not keep the covenant of God;  
They refused to walk in His law,  
And forgot His works  
And His wonders that He had shown them.  
Marvelous things He did in the sight of their fathers,  
In the land of Egypt, *in* the field of Zoan.  
He divided the sea and caused them to pass through;  
And He made the waters stand up like a heap.  
In the daytime also He led them with the cloud,  
And all the night with a light of fire.  
He split the rocks in the wilderness,  
And gave *them* drink in abundance like the depths.  
He also brought streams out of the rock,  
And caused waters to run down like rivers..

*Psalm 78.8-16*

(Foundation: *How Firm a Foundation*)

Our fathers were stubborn; they would not obey;  
when faced with their foes they in fear turned away.  
God's work of redemption they wholly despised,  
forgetting the pow'r He had shown to their eyes.

*Today's Text: Deuteronomy 1.19-33*

*Preparation*

1. What happened when the people arrived at Kadesh Barnea?
2. Why did the people fail to enter the land?

*Meditation*

It took eleven days of trudging through the wilderness to arrive at Kadesh Barnea, which was on the southern border of the land of promise. At that point, Moses reiterated God's command to "go up *and* possess" the land (v. 21). At that time Moses urged them to recall the promise of God to their forefathers – reminding that generation of their history, even as he was reminding the generation before him of theirs. The implication was clear: God had promised to give this land to their fathers, and He would not fail to keep His Word.

But the people hesitated, asking that spies be sent out into the land to "bring back word to us of the way by which we should go up" (v. 22). Moses agreed, and twelve spies were sent out, one from each tribe, to view the land and bring back samples of its bounty (vv. 23-25). The spies admitted that the land was indeed good; however, they frightened the people by their report of the fortified cities and strong people who lived in the

land (vv. 25-28). We remember that only Caleb and Joshua, out of the twelve spies, encouraged the people to go forward in conquest.

The people blamed the Lord for wanting to destroy them (vv. 26, 27); and they refused to enter the land of promise. Though Moses urged them on, reminding them that God was with them, that He had carried them through eleven hard days of journey, and led them by the cloud and fire, still, the people refused to go forward (vv. 28-33). Their unbelief was seen by God as rebellion (v. 26), as all unbelief ultimately is.

God had promised. He had delivered them with a mighty hand and outstretched arm. He had been with them and provided for them throughout their journey through the wilderness to Kadesh Barnea. But upon arriving at that good land, the people said, “Thanks, but no thanks” and rebelled against the Lord. How often do we do the same? Knowing the commandment of God and remembering His promises, when the opportunity for obedience arises, we turn back to the wilderness of unbelief, rebellion, and sin.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Indeed, how often do we judge the Israelites for their unbelief? Their rebellion? Their lack of trust? Their astonishing disobedience? They had seen God’s work “carrying them to this place” (Deut. 1.31), going with them “in the fire by night and in the cloud by day” (Deut. 1.33), going before them to fight for them. “Yet for all that, you did not believe the LORD your God” (Deut. 1.32). And...here we are. Knowing that Jesus has suffered for us. Knowing that He rose from the dead. Knowing that He has already fought the giants of sin and death and won! Knowing He is going before us into Galilee (Mk. 16.7). Knowing that He tells us He is going to prepare a place for us, that “where I am, there you may be also” (Jn. 14.3). And God tells us, “Go up and possess it...do not fear or be discouraged” (Deut. 1.21). “There’s a crown and you can win it/if you go in Jesus’ Name” (Suffield).

#### *Reflection*

1. Why did the Israelites fail to go into the land of Canaan? Do you ever allow the fear of people to keep you from doing God’s will?
2. What great and precious promises does God hold out to us? How can we lay hold on them?
3. What can we expect if we fail to obey God’s clear Word to us?

*He accuses them of unbelief with reference to the promise; for, whilst faith is not only prompt and ready in obedience, but invigorates and quickens the whole man, so the cause of their inertness was that they gave no heed to God who had promised to bestow upon them the land of Canaan, and did not rest upon His covenant. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Deuteronomy 1.32*

*Lord, I believe; help my unbelief today as I...*

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 78.65-72*

Plead with God to send revival to His churches, and to renew us in our witness for the Lord Jesus, our King.

*Psalm 78.6-16.*

(Foundation: *How Firm a Foundation*)

While they were still suffering, He rose in His strength  
and fought for His people and saved them at length.  
From Judah a king He set for Israel,  
a temple He built with His people to dwell.

Now Jesus, God’s servant, is King evermore,  
and we are His people, and He is our Lord.

*From Egypt to Moab: Deuteronomy 1, 2*

His heart is upright as He leads by His hand  
and causes us ever before Him to stand.

## 4 The Promise Lost

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 106.24-27*

Then they despised the pleasant land;  
They did not believe His word,  
But complained in their tents,  
And did not heed the voice of the LORD.  
Therefore He raised His hand *in an oath* against them,  
To overthrow them in the wilderness,  
To overthrow their descendants among the nations,  
And to scatter them in the lands.

*Psalm 106.13-43, 48*

(Trust in Jesus: [\*Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus\*](#))

Though Your works we're oft forgetting, and Your counsels we despise,  
though we often try and test You, yet You hear our plaintive cries!

*Refrain, v. 48*

Blessèd be our God and Savior, evermore His praise proclaim!  
Let all those who know Your favor praise Your holy, glorious Name!

*Today's Text: Deuteronomy 1.34-46*

*Preparation*

1. What did unbelief cost the people at Kadesh Barnea?
2. Who were the only ones of that generation excepted from this plight?

*Meditation*

Unbelief is as the sin of rebellion in God's eyes. The people of that earlier generation did not believe the Lord's promise, and at Kadesh Barnea they rebelled against His command to enter the land. God looked upon them as an "evil generation" (v. 35), because they refused to trust Him, spurned His promises, and thus cast doubt on His truth and faithfulness.

Caleb and Joshua alone of the twelve spies urged the people to go forward in faith and obedience. Of that generation, only they would enter the land of promise and the blessings God had prepared for His people there (vv. 36, 38). Even Moses would not be allowed to enter the land, because he lost patience with the people and with God, and disobeyed the Lord's command at the waters of Meribah (v. 37; cf. Num. 20.1-13).

The people to whom Moses spoke in the book of Deuteronomy were the "little ones" and "children" of those who died after thirty-eight years of wandering in the wilderness (v. 39). They were not responsible for the rebellion of their parents (v. 39), and so God determined to give the land of promise to them, and commanded their parents to turn back into the wilderness (v. 40).

The people realized too late how serious their offense was against the Lord (v. 41). They tried to make amends by gearing up to enter the land, but God warned them He had already made up His mind, and that they should not go against Him (v. 42). But the people rebelled again, and tried to invade the land, only to be beaten and chased away by the Amorites (vv. 43, 44). They wept and mourned before the Lord, but He would not listen to them (v. 45). They didn't even obey His command to "turn and take your journey into the wilderness" (v. 40); instead, they "remained in Kadesh many days" (v. 46).

All this history is intended as a warning to the people Moses was speaking to not to make the same mistake their parents had made. They must learn from the errors of their forebears to obey the Lord and keep all His Word (Rom. 15.4). By recounting these events, Moses hoped to drive any fear or rebellion from the hearts of those who heard him, so that they might enter the land and secure the promises of God.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

“...you would not listen but rebelled against the command of the LORD, and presumptuously went up into the mountain” (Deut. 1.43). King David knew about such things firsthand; but he also knew how to bring them to the LORD: “Keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me” (Ps. 19.13). In the description of the game “Chutes and Ladders” we learn that going up the ladders and down the chutes, a child will learn (by the pictures) the rewards of doing good deeds and the consequences of naughty ones. The Israelites were not learning by the pictures – the parted sea, the fire and cloud, the smoking mountain, the earthquake, the manna, the quail, the gushing rocks, the snakes, the healing bronze serpent, and so on. And because they were not learning, they embarked on an epic game of “Chutes and Ladders,” and they definitely were not the winners. We too have been given the opportunity to learn by the pictures. And the picture we see is Jesus – incarnate, suffering, exalted, reigning in glory, returning in judgment, victorious over all. And He tells us how to follow Him: “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps...” (2 Pet. 2.21)

*Reflection*

1. Why did Moses take the time to recount Israel’s history to the people on the plains of Moab?
2. How did the people of Israel act presumptuously? What does it mean to sin presumptuously?
3. How can we improve in our ability to “learn by the pictures”?

*God so tempered His judgment that, whilst none of the guilty should escape with impunity, still His faithfulness should remain sure and inviolable, and that the wickedness of men should not make void the covenant which He had made with Abraham.*  
John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Deuteronomy 1.39*

*Help me always to obey Your Word at once, Lord, even today, as I...*

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 106.1-6*

Recount the many good blessings of the Lord. Praise Him for all His mighty works on your behalf. Confess your sins and failures, and commit yourself afresh to following Him.

*Psalm 106.1-6, 48*

(Trust in Jesus: [\*Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus\*](#))

Praise the Lord! Give thanks and praise Him! He is good, His love endures!  
More His works than can be spoken; let His praise be ever sure!

*Refrain v. 48*

Blessèd be our God and Savior, evermore His praise proclaim!  
Let all those who know Your favor praise Your holy, glorious Name!

Lord, when You Your people favor, help me, O, remember me,  
that I may Your blessings savor and in joy and glory be!

*Refrain*

We have sinned, just like our fathers; we have done iniquity.  
Just like them, our hearts have wandered; we have acted wickedly.

*Refrain*

## 5 Thirty-Eight Years

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 95.1, 2, 6*

Oh come, let us sing to the LORD!  
Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.  
Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving;  
Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.

Oh come, let us worship and bow down;  
Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.

*Psalm 95.1, 2, 6*

(Tidings: [\*O Zion, Haste, Thy Mission High Fulfilling\*](#))

Come, let us sing with joy to God, our Savior!  
Let us with joy to Him, our Rock, bow down!  
Come now before Him, grateful for His favor;  
let joyful psalms break forth from all around.

*Refrain, v. 6*

Come let us worship, kneel to our Lord;  
worship our Maker: Father, Holy Spirit, Word.

*Today's Text: Read Deuteronomy 2.1-25*

*Preparation*

1. Which nations were the Israelites *not* to harass? Why?
2. What did God promise His people?

*Meditation*

These verses recount the thirty-eight years of Israel's wandering in the wilderness, waiting for the last of the unbelieving and rebellious generation to die off (v. 14). The book of Numbers gives more detail on these years (chapters 14-36).

God cautioned Israel not to trouble the people of Edom and Moab. He had given them their land, and Israel was to respect that and "pay their way" *en route* to their own land (vv. 2-12). That didn't mean that those nations would be friendly to the people of God; quite the opposite, in fact, as time would tell.

Two curious historical asides appear in this text. The first, in verses 10-12, explains about the people called the Emim and those called the Horites. Notice what is said here: "The Horites formerly dwelt in Seir, but the descendants of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their place, just as Israel did to the land of their possession which the LORD gave them" (v. 12). This is important because it gives us an insight to the culture of the times. The descendants of Esau "dispossessed and destroyed" the Horites, because that's what people did in those days. That's why God would instruct Israel to do the same. International affairs was not a game for sissies in those days; it was kill or be killed. Period.

The second historical aside, verses 20-23, deals with the people called the Zamzummim, "a people as great and as numerous and tall as the Anakim." But they, too, became victims of the way of things in those days. It was apparently the Ammonites whom God enlisted to destroy and dispossess them. Then, in verse 23, we read about the Avim whom the Capthorites destroyed and dispossessed (v. 23).

This was the way of things in those days. And if Israel was to gain and keep the land promised to them, it would not be by diplomacy or treaties or fond hopes. They would have to fight to the death for it, and they

did (v. 25). God promised to be with them, just as He had promised to be with their unbelieving parents (v. 25). The implied lesson was clear: Don't make the same mistake they did.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

As Jesus would say it in His day, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8.31, 32). Trust and obey – that's the only way for believers to gain entry to the promises of God:

When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word,  
What a glory He sheds on our way!  
While we do His good will, He abides with us still,  
And with all who will trust and obey.  
Trust and obey, for there's no other way  
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey." (Sammis and Towner, 1887)

"Therefore watch yourselves carefully" (Deut. 2.4).

#### *Reflection*

1. Why does a lack of trust in the Lord invariably lead to failing to obey?
2. Does God sometimes leave us to wander from Him? How can we know when that happens to us?
3. Why was it important that Moses should rehearse the history of their parents to the generation of Israelites before him? What's the lesson here for us?

*He says, then, that after thirty-eight years they had at length returned to the land from whence they had been obliged to retire; and briefly reminds them how long the course of their deliverance had been interrupted through their own fault, since they had gone forth to enjoy the promised land. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Deuteronomy 2.13*

*Lord, I know that we must lay hold on the promises through faith and obedience, so help me to believe and obey as I...*

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 95.6-11.*

Worship the Lord, and rejoice in His salvation! Prepare in prayer for the temptations, trials, and distractions of the day, and resolve before the Lord to obey Him in all your ways.

*Psalm 95.6-11.*

(Tidings: [\*O Zion, Haste, Thy Mission High Fulfilling\*](#))

You are our God, we are Your sheep, Your people:  
Speak, Lord, and let us hearken to Your Word.  
Let not our hearts grow hard through sin, and feeble,  
as when our fathers sinned against You, Lord.

*Refrain*

Long years You loathed that wicked generation,  
who in their hearts, rebelled against Your path.  
Them You forsook, and kept from Your salvation;  
them You subjected to Your fearsome wrath.

*Refrain*

## 6 Canaan Warm-Up

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 105.1-5*

Oh, give thanks to the LORD!  
Call upon His name;  
Make known His deeds among the peoples!  
Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him;  
Talk of all His wondrous works!  
Glory in His holy name;  
Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD!  
Seek the LORD and His strength;  
Seek His face evermore!  
Remember His marvelous works which He has done,  
His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth...

*Psalm 105.1-5*

*(Warrington: Give to Our God Immortal Praise)*

Give thanks unto the Lord Most High;  
call on His Name, before Him cry!  
Make known His deeds in every land;  
sing praise for all the works of His hand.

Glory in God, rejoice in heart,  
all you who seek His holy part.  
Him and His strength and presence seek;  
His works proclaim, His judgments speak.

*Today's Text: Deuteronomy 2.26-37*

*Preparation*

1. Why did Sihon resist the progress of Israel?
2. What was the result of this confrontation?

*Meditation*

Everything went swell as Israel passed through Edom and Moab, but then they hit an obstacle to their progress into Canaan. Moses sent messengers to Sihon, the Amorite king, expecting, we can imagine, the same result as with Edom and Moab (vv. 26-29), that he would allow them to pass peaceably, paying their way as they went. But Sihon had other ideas. He refused to let them pass, leaving them thus stuck on the banks of the Arnon River (v. 30, cf. vv. 24, 25).

But this was all part of God's plan for His people. God hardened the heart of Sihon for two reasons (v. 30). First, to give the people of Israel some experience in battle. When they entered the land of Canaan, the people would need to be battle-tested and ready, because nations would enter into leagues against them. Thus, some "scrimmage" was necessary to ready them for the larger task of conquering Canaan, and to encourage them in their military capabilities and in the Presence of the Lord.

Second, the defeat of Sihon gave the Jews their first taste of the land of promise, as all the cities, livestock, and spoil over which Sihon ruled became theirs once he and his armies were defeated (vv. 31-35). This would certainly have whetted their whistles for the promise of milk and honey on the other side of Jordan.

We must remember that God is sovereign, and His people are His plan for His glory. Sihon and the



Amorites, as worshipers of pagan gods and scourges of their neighbors, came justly under the judgment of God at the hands of His people. Paul warns us against second-guessing God when He does things hard for us to understand (Rom. 9.14-18). God's ways are not our ways, and His understanding exceeds ours (Is. 55.8, 9). We must let God be God, and rest in His will and decisions, trusting and obeying in whatever He calls us to do.

Now Israel had gained some land, but it was not strictly within the borders of Canaan. As we will see in chapter 3, the lands gained east of the Jordan would be divided among two-and-a-half of Israel's twelve tribes.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

The work we've been given to do is spiritual in nature. We must prepare and "warm-up" for it every day by getting with the Lord in His Word and prayer. The Israelites had journeys to take and a land to conquer. We have been given a similar command, but with a different focus and intent. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit reign supreme. Jesus says to us, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations... And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt.28.18-20).

*Reflection*

1. What does it mean for us to rest in the sovereign wisdom, power, and timing of God?
2. We do not need to fear those who oppose as we go about the work of making disciples. Why not?
3. How do you experience the Lord with you always? How does knowing His Presence help you in your walk with and work for Him?

*The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; and he gives it to whom he pleases; but when there is no express direction, none can plead his grant for such proceedings. Though God assured the Israelites that the land should be their own, yet they must contend with the enemy. What God gives we must endeavor to get. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Deuteronomy 2.24-37*

*Lord, give me grace to live toward Your promises today as I...*

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 105.26-45*

Thank God for the wonderful ways He brought you to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Thank Him for all His precious and very great promises, and set your mind on those promises as you serve Him today.

*Psalm 105.26-45*

*(Warrington: Give to Our God Immortal Praise)*

He brought His people from Egypt alive,  
and made their joy and song revive.  
He made the nations' land their own,  
and all the wealth that they had known.

To them He granted the promised land,  
the portion of His gracious hand.  
Though they were few, and wandered far,  
He kept them close within His heart.

So let us all in our Savior confide,  
and in His holy Law abide.  
Let us observe His glorious Word,  
and praise our sovereign, faithful Lord!

## 7 A History Lesson

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 135.5-12*

For I know that the LORD *is* great,  
And our Lord *is* above all gods.  
Whatever the LORD pleases He does,  
In heaven and in earth,  
In the seas and in all deep places.  
He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth;  
He makes lightning for the rain;  
He brings the wind out of His treasuries.  
He destroyed the firstborn of Egypt,  
Both of man and beast.  
He sent signs and wonders into the midst of you, O Egypt,  
Upon Pharaoh and all his servants.  
He defeated many nations  
And slew mighty kings—  
Sihon king of the Amorites,  
Og king of Bashan,  
And all the kingdoms of Canaan—  
And gave their land as a heritage,  
A heritage to Israel His people.

*Psalm 135.5-12*

(St. Gertrude: *Onward, Christian Soldiers*)

Great and sovereign, Jesus rules o'er all above,  
doing as He pleases, sovereign in His love.  
Clouds and seas obey Him, lightning, too, and rain;  
He the winds brings forth in pow'r and sends them back again.

*Refrain v. 1*

Praise the Name of Jesus, you who serve His Word!  
Raise your voice and praise our good and glorious Lord!

Egypt's firstborn fell to God's redeeming pow'r;  
kings and nations crumbled in redemption's hour.  
He the land of promise to His people gave;  
thus His Kingdom Jesus gives to all He's pleased to save.

*Refrain v. 1*

*Today's Text: Review Deuteronomy 1 and 2; meditate on Deuteronomy 1.8 and 2.14*

*Preparation*

1. Why did the people turn away from the land?
2. To whom was Moses speaking in these two chapters?

*Meditation*

It might seem strange, after 38 years of wandering in the wilderness, having defeated two kings on the east side of the Jordan, and now primed and poised on the plains of Moab, ready at last to enter the land, that the people should be forced to endure a history lesson. Chapters 1-3 recount the history of Israel's journey from

Egypt to Moab, an eleven-day journey that ended up taking thirty-eight years because of Israel's disobedience at Kadesh Barnea.

The people to whom Moses spoke were a new generation. All those who disobeyed God, except Caleb and Joshua, died in the wilderness. Moses himself was forbidden from entering the land because of his own act of disobedience at the waters of Meribah. Before He gave them God's Law again, and turned the reins of leadership over to Joshua, Moses considered that a lesson from history was in order, lest the people, once the real fighting began, should lose heart and repeat the mistake of their parents.

History plays a large role in the life of a believer. Paul reminded us that the things written in Old Testament are there for us to ponder, so that we might be comforted and have hope (Rom. 15.4). The past holds two important lessons for us. First are the promises of God. He gave those promises in the past, and from time to time throughout the Old Testament, He renewed His people in them, and thus demonstrated His faithfulness and unchanging will. Jesus fulfilled all the promises God made in the Old Testament, and now He Himself is our great promise, that through Him we might actually participate in God (2 Pet. 1.4). By familiarizing ourselves with the course of Church history, we can learn about the many ways in past generations God showed Himself faithful to His Word in furthering His Kingdom and glory on earth as it is in heaven.

But history also shows us the mistakes of those who have gone before, so that we, like that generation listening to Moses on the plains of Moab, might not repeat the errors of our forebears. If we turn our backs on God's history with us, we will soon lose our bearings and our goal, and the faith we hold will become all about us – what makes us feel good, keeps us from fears and inconvenience, and allows us to enjoy God on our terms.

Which is precisely what they did who died in the wilderness and failed to attain to the promises of God.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

“You have dwelt long enough in this mountain. Turn... You have skirted this mountain long enough, turn... See, I have set the land before you, go...” (Deut. 1.6, 7, 8; 2.3). “For we are aliens and pilgrims before You...” (1 Chron. 29.15). “Blessed is the man... whose heart is set on pilgrimage” (Ps. 84.5). “Get out of your country... come to a land that I will show you” (Acts 7.3). “...they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb. 11.13). Pilgrims, travelers, wanderers – this is not our final home. And we should always be on the move toward holiness, and away from sin. We have a tendency to circle around sins, and complacency, like a dog looking for a good place to lie down. We have Jesus to follow, our Personal Mission Fields to work, and heaven to look forward to. He goes before us, leading us, loving us, prodding us, moving us. History shouts to us: “He is faithful!” Let's get going!

#### *Reflection*

1. Why does history matter in the life of faith?
2. What especially can we learn from being well-versed in Scriptural history and the history of the Christian movement?
3. How might a better knowledge and understanding of Biblical and Christian history enrich your prayer life?

*When mention is elsewhere made of forty years, the two years are then included which were spent both in Mount Sinai and in other places; and with good reason, because, during that time also, their sins prevented them from passing to the enjoyment of their inheritance immediately after the promulgation of the law. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Deuteronomy 2.13, 14*

*Remind me of Your promises, Lord; point me to Jesus; and send me forth today to...*

*From Egypt to Moab: Deuteronomy 1, 2*

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 135.1-4, 13, 14*

Praise God for His exceeding great and precious promises, for Jesus and His salvation, and for His daily compassion on us, His servants. Seek His will for your journey today.

*Psalm 135.1-4, 13, 14*

(St. Gertrude: [\*Onward, Christian Soldiers\*](#))

Praise the Savior, praise Him, for His Name is good;  
sing, for it is pleasant, to our glorious God!

All whom He has chosen and redeemed by grace,  
praise His Name together, praise Him in this holy place!

*Refrain v. 1*

Praise the Name of Jesus, you who serve His Word!

Raise your voice and praise our good and glorious Lord!

Evermore Your Name, O Savior, shall endure!

Your renown throughout all ages is secure.

For You have compassion, vindicating all  
those who serve Your Name and on Your saving mercy call.

*Refrain*

*From Egypt to Moab: Deuteronomy 1, 2*

*Questions for Reflection or Discussion*

1. Why did the people of Israel fail to enter the land of promise at Kadesh Barnea? What do we learn from this about laying hold on the precious and very great promises of God?
2. What leaders did Moses appoint for Israel? What were their responsibilities?
3. Why was it necessary for the Israelites to fight to possess the land God promised them?
4. Why was it important that Moses should recite this history to the people on the plains of Moab? Why does history matter to us as believers?
5. What's the most important lesson you take away from Deuteronomy 1 and 2? How are you implementing that lesson in your walk with and work for the Lord?

*For prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at [www.ailbe.org](http://www.ailbe.org) to learn more.

We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 360 Zephyr Road, Williston, VT 05495.

Thank you.