

Deuteronomy 1 - Thursday, April 14th, 2011

- By way of introduction to the study through Deuteronomy, I want to take a moment and share a number of interesting facts about this book.

1. This is the fifth and final book in what's called the "Five Books of Moses," and referred to as the Torah, or Pentateuch; "pent" meaning five.
2. The name of the book, is the nature of what's in the book. Deuteronomy means second repeating of the law; "two," (deuce), "law," (nomos).
3. The book of Deuteronomy was read publicly during the sabbatical year at the Feast of Tabernacles in accordance with the command of God.
4. The book of Deuteronomy records several sermons preached by Moses to this second generation, who are about to enter the Promised-Land.
5. This book is amongst the most quoted books in all of the New Testament, with what some have counted to be over one hundred references.
6. It is from this book that Jesus would quote when He was tempted by the Devil in the desert after he had been fasting 40 days and nights.
7. Jesus quoted more from the book of Deuteronomy than He did from any one of the Old Testament books, not the least of which is Isaiah.
8. This is the final address, as it were, that Moses will give to the Israelites, prior to his death, as he passes the baton of leadership to Joshua.
9. Unique to this fifth and final book of Moses, we will find the word "love" used more than any of the other four books in the Pentateuch.
10. The book of Deuteronomy, while covering a great deal of needed information, actually covers a period of only 37 days for the Israelites.

(1) These *are* the words which Moses spoke to all Israel on this side of the Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain opposite Suph, between Paran, Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab. (2) It is eleven days' *journey* from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea.
- Here, Moses begins with something that would have most certainly pierced the heart as it relates to their 40 year journey to the Promised Land.
- In other words, their journey should have only taken them eleven days, but because of their disbelief, an entire generation would not enter in.
- The "disbelief" of the generation of Israelites turned an 11 day, 125 mile journey from Mt. Sinai to "Kadesh Barnea", into a 40 year "short cut".

(3) Now it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first *day* of the month, *that* Moses spoke to the children of Israel according to all that the LORD had given him as commandments to them, (4) after he had killed Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who dwelt at Ashtaroth in Edrei. (5) On this side of the Jordan in the land of Moab, Moses began to explain this law, saying, (6) "The LORD our God spoke to us in Horeb, saying: 'You have dwelt long enough at this mountain. (7) Turn and take your journey, and go to the mountains of the Amorites, to all the neighboring *places* in the plain, in the mountains and in the lowland, in the South and on the seacoast, to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the River Euphrates.
- This gives us a stark contrast between being obedient and disobedient. This generation was granted victory in battle over their enemies.
- Conversely, the disobedience of the previous generation to the law and commands of God kept them wandering in the desert of defeat.

(8) See, I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers—to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—to give to them and their descendants after them.'
- It's important to remember that this generation to whom Moses speaks, were either young children at this time, or hadn't even been born yet.
- It's for this reason we have the "second" repeating or giving of the law. It was for this next generation many of whom had never heard it before.
- Moses is telling them that the defiance of the previous generation kept them from possessing the promises of God for an entire generation.

(9) "And I spoke to you at that time, saying: 'I alone am not able to bear you. (10) The LORD your God has multiplied you, and here you *are* today, as the stars of heaven in multitude. (11) May the LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times more numerous than you are, and bless you as He has promised you! (12) How can I alone bear your problems and your burdens and your complaints? (13) Choose wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men from among your tribes, and I will make them heads over you.' (14) And you answered me and said, 'The thing which you have told *us* to do *is* good.' (15) So I took the heads of your tribes, wise and knowledgeable men, and made them heads over you, leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, leaders of tens, and officers for your tribes. (16) "Then I commanded your judges at that time, saying, 'Hear *the cases* between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the stranger who is with him. (17) You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man's presence, for the judgment *is* God's. The case that is too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it.' (18) And I commanded you at that time all the things which you should do.
- Here Moses tells them about how it had come to the point where he was unable to "bear all of them alone," because God had multiplied them.
- This is why he appointed elders as it were, in order to deal with the problems, burdens, and complaints of the children of Israel, and it was good.
- This begs the question of why Moses brings this up, at this time. I believe it's because he is readying and steadying them to possess the land.

- Let me explain; they are about to enter the Promised-Land without Moses, and this could very well be how Moses is weaning them off of him.
- In other words, this new generation has only known Moses as their leader, and knowing this, he knows he must take himself off the pedestal.
- Also, it may explain why it is that he says what he's about to say, recorded in the next few verses, as it relates to being fearful and discouraged.

(19) "So we departed from Horeb, and went through all that great and terrible wilderness which you saw on the way to the mountains of the Amorites, as the LORD our God had commanded us. Then we came to Kadesh Barnea. (20) And I said to you, 'You have come to the mountains of the Amorites, which the LORD our God is giving us. (21) Look, the LORD your God has set the land before you; go up *and* possess *it*, as the LORD God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged.'
- Moses recounts how the Israelites would start out in God's will and set out to heed God's call and possess the land that God was giving to them.
- All they had to do was go up and take possession of it, but they didn't because they were fearful and discouraged by the report from the spies.

(22) "And every one of you came near to me and said, 'Let us send men before us, and let them search out the land for us, and bring back word to us of the way by which we should go up, and of the cities into which we shall come.' (23) "The plan pleased me well; so I took twelve of your men, one man from *each* tribe. (24) And they departed and went up into the mountains, and came to the Valley of Eshcol, and spied it out. (25) They also took *some* of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought *it* down to us; and they brought back word to us, saying, '*It is* a good land which the LORD our God is giving us.'

- Moses tells them how they wanted to spy out the land before taking possession of the land and that this idea seemed good to him so he agreed.
- The problem wasn't so much what Moses did, as much as it was what Moses didn't do like pray and seek the Lord before agreeing to their plan.

(26) "Nevertheless you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God; (27) and you complained in your tents, and said, 'Because the LORD hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. (28) Where can we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our hearts, saying, "The people *are* greater and taller than we; the cities *are* great and fortified up to heaven; moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there.'" (29) "Then I said to you, 'Do not be terrified, or afraid of them. (30) The LORD your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, (31) and in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.'

- Moses says that it was their unwillingness to go because they rebelled and grumbled and blamed others, even blaming God for hating them.
- Notice the progression from hearing the bad report to fear to discouragement to complaining to blaming, then finally to rebelling against God.

(32) Yet, for all that, you did not believe the LORD your God, (33) who went in the way before you to search out a place for you to pitch your tents, to show you the way you should go, in the fire by night and in the cloud by day. (34) "And the LORD heard the sound of your words, and was angry, and took an oath, saying, (35) 'Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see that good land of which I swore to give to your fathers, (36) except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and his children I am giving the land on which he walked, because he wholly followed the LORD.'

- It's interesting to note how the Lord heard the sound of their disbelieving words in the God who led them in the fire by night and cloud by day.
- It was for this reason that only Caleb and Joshua, who wholly followed and believed, would be granted entrance into the Promised-Land.

"Not merely the words themselves, but the inner speech of their hearts, which the words did not fully express; the Lord heard the voice of their words. ... God's oath was steadfast, and not one of that generation crossed the Jordan save Caleb and Joshua. The Lord notes and rewards the fidelity of individuals, and screens his faithful ones from many of the judgments which fall upon his erring church. Blessed are they who in all things endeavor to follow the Lord."

Charles Spurgeon

(37) The LORD was also angry with me for your sakes, saying, 'Even you shall not go in there.

- Moses now rounds a corner and describes how God was even angry with him, because of them, and because of that could not enter in the land.

"Because his example had not, in the case of the smitten rock, tended to sanctify the Lord's name among the people. If we are placed in eminent office, God will not only judge the fault itself, but he will consider the ill effect it may have upon His people."

Charles Spurgeon

(38) Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there. Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.

- This is where the humility and meekness of Moses shines the brightest. He tells them to encourage Joshua as their new leader into the land.

"Who but a meek man could obey the command? To encourage the man who is to supersede you is hard for flesh and blood, and the more so if that man has for years been our servant."

Charles Spurgeon

(39) 'Moreover your little ones and your children, who you say will be victims, who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there; to them I will give it, and they shall possess it. (40) But *as for* you, turn and take your journey into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea.'

- This is the irony of ironies in that the very thing that they blame God for they themselves will be the recipient of, because they accused God of it.
- Because they tell God their children will die in the Promised-Land, they're the ones who die and God lets their children enter the Promised-land.
- The bottom line is that in spite of all God promised to them, in His leading of them, they still would not trust in or have faith in what God said.

(41) "Then you answered and said to me, 'We have sinned against the LORD; we will go up and fight, just as the LORD our God commanded us.' And when everyone of you had girded on his weapons of war, you were ready to go up into the mountain. (42) "And the LORD said to me, 'Tell them, "Do not go up nor fight, for I *am* not among you; lest you be defeated before your enemies.'" (43) So I spoke to you; yet you would not listen, but rebelled against the command of the LORD, and presumptuously went up into the mountain. (44) And the Amorites who dwelt in that mountain came out against you and chased you as bees do, and drove you back from Seir to Hormah. (45) Then you returned and wept before the LORD, but the LORD would not listen to your voice nor give ear to you. (46) "So you remained in Kadesh many days, according to the days that you spent *there*."

- Moses tells them how, in their stubbornness, they would not listen, and in their arrogance, they tried to defeat the enemy anyway, their own way.
- Then, after suffering what becomes a "stinging" defeat, (pun intended), they wept before the Lord, but the Lord would not listen to their cries.
- I want to close by looking at 8 reasons, from this chapter, that we experience defeat in our Christian lives, as it relates to the promises of God.

REASONS FOR DEFEAT IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

1. DISBELIEF (Verses 1-3)

2. DISOBEDIENCE (Verses 4-7)

3. DEFIANCE (Verse 8)

4. FEARFULNESS (Verses 9-21)

5. PRAYERLESSNESS (Verses 22-25)

6. UNWILLINGNESS (Verses 26-31)

7. FAITHLESSNESS (Verses 32-40)

8. STUBBORNNESS (Verses 41-46)

- This is where the paradox of our Christian life comes into play. When we're defeated in ourselves it becomes the catalyst for victory in the Lord.
- Sometimes we need to suffer the stinging defeat of failure, in order for the Lord to, in and through that failure, lead us to a spiritual success.