

Sermon Notes Deuteronomy 1

10/7/2022

God's word of promise to trust and obey.

Introduction and background.

1. Deuteronomy is akin to a Sermon, a spoken word. It depicts a relationship between God and His people. They are to have a personal relationship with God on whom they are dependent. This relationship is based on God's word of promise, His action and His grace.

4. In response to God's action and grace the people are to respond in faith to His promises, that God will keep them, and obedience to His standards and laws. 'God is to be known through His word and through specific historical acts' (T. 83).

5. This same pattern is seen in the NT in Ephesians, Romans and some of the sermons in Acts – 'God has acted in grace to establish a people for Himself by redemption' (P 5) – the people are called to respond in faith and obedience.

6 Application – 'God wants our trust and faith as we respond to His grace, faithfulness and promises' (P 5).

7. Applying the OT laws – 'determine the theological and ethical principles behind each law, to recognise that laws in Deuteronomy combine general principles and specific applications' (P 5-6; see Deut. 10:12-13).

9. The Israelites have been wandering for 40 years in the wilderness and are now about to enter the promised land. The route of the conquest is not fully clear but the attempt in Deut. 1 seems to have come from the southeast.

10. For the Lord God to act in human history He must act in a sinful world. As the supreme ruler God undertook wars for both redemptive and judgment ends (T. TOTC. 72). The Israelites who had been oppressed and render landless were to be graciously provided with a homeland, the promised land. But in this provision God executes judgment on the people of the land, 'because of their corruption the divine government decreed the end of their rule' (T. 72, see Deut. 9:4-7).

Deut. 1

v. 1 God speaks to all the people of Israel through Moses before

they enter the promised land from the south. On the eve of entering the promised land they renew the Covenant.

Vv. 6-8. Moses announces God's command for the Israelites to possess the promised land. This land God had earlier promised to the forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They are to trust God, 'our God', that He will enable them to possess this land.

Vv. 19-25. The Israelites had become a numerous people as God had promised (Gen 15:5; Gen. 22:7). In preparation for the conquest Moses sends out 12 spies, one from each tribe, to get an idea of the land and they reported back that it was good fertile land.

Vv. 26-40. The spies also reported back that the peoples were strong and their towns well fortified. The Israelites were unwilling to attempt the conquest. Moses tries to encourage them by reminding them how the Lord had led them through the wilderness and the same Lord will fight for them. But the people still did not trust the Lord. The consequence of their refusal to obey the Lord was that the present generation, including Moses, would not enter the promised land. The exception would be Caleb and Joshua, who would replace Moses as their leader. Because of their refusal to trust God and to start the conquest of the land the Lord instructed them to turn around and head south along the route to the Red Sea (Sea of Reeds)

Vv. 41-42. The people acknowledge their sin in failing to trust God and decide to attempt an attack. Moses again brings God's word that they are not to go up and fight because the Lord said, 'I will not be with you'. So 'you will be defeated by your enemies'.

Vv. 43-46. But again, the people did not listen but rebelled against the Lord's command. The arrogance of the Israelites in believing they could conquer their enemies on their own resulted in the Amorites defeating them. The Israelites were forced to retreat to Kadesh where they stayed for many days before heading south to the Red Sea (see chapter 2).

Reflection/Response. How does being open to God's word and the fulfilment His promises give us courage to trust Him now and for the future? How do we discern God's word to act or speak as well as His word to not act or not speak?

