

Episode: Promised Land Series No. 11

Narrator: Moses

Primary Scriptures: Deuteronomy

Story Summary: Moses reviews the exodus and laws; prepares Israelites to enter Canaan

Location: Plain of Moab

Time: c. 1526 BC Birth of Moses
c. 1446 BC The plagues and exodus
c. 1445 BC The Ten Commandments
c. 1406 BC The Israelites enter Canaan

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Deuteronomy 1:6; 2:7; 4:2, 9, 29; 6:4-5; 7:26; 8:17-18; 11:13; 14:16-17; 30:19-20; 31:46-47

The book of *Deuteronomy* can be split into four sections. The first three are speeches given by Moses on the Plain of Moab shortly before the Israelites enter the Promised Land, while the fourth recounts matters having to do with Moses.

As you read this book, you almost get the feeling that Moses is a crotchety old man who slants the facts just a little. Perhaps he is out of sorts because he knows his life is at an end and that even after all his hard work, he will not get to enter Canaan.

The first speech by Moses is a review of the rebellion of the Israelites and their resulting forty years of wandering in the wilderness. It summarizes the Israelites' history until they reach the Plain of Moab. It ends with encouragement by Moses for the Israelites to follow the law.

The second speech is a demand by Moses that the Israelites follow the laws of God they have been given. Deuteronomy 6:4 and 6:5 are two of the most important verses in the Bible. Moses emphasizes that the Israelites' possession of the Promised Land depends on their faithful obedience to the many laws.

The third speech offers comfort to the Israelites in the event that they prove to be unfaithful. Moses comforts them that even if they fail, they can be restored if they repent. Perhaps Deuteronomy 30:19 and 30:20 are two summary verses that are useful in all times and places. You can imagine Jesus saying these exact admonitions. Choose between life and death, blessings and curses. Moses advises them to choose life and blessings.

The fourth section recounts speeches and admonitions of Moses, the passing of the leadership role to Joshua, and the death of Moses. In this section, God tells Moses that the Israelites will again rebel after they take the Promised Land. That must have been discouraging to Moses, but not surprising. He was probably more than ready to turn over leadership to Joshua, his aide for about forty years. Knowing the Israelites well, Joshua must have looked upon his upcoming leadership role with a fair amount of trepidation.

Discussion Questions:

1. Deut. 1:3 says that the speech of Moses began after 40 years and 11 months. What did it come after?
2. In Deut. 1:22, Moses explained that the people had asked to send the twelve spies into Canaan. Is that what Numbers 13 says?
3. In Deut. 1:37, Moses blames the Israelites for him not being able to enter Canaan. Is he shading the actual reason?
4. Read Deut. 13:1-5. How serious is God about his people not following false teachings and false teachers?
5. Deut. 17:14-19 gives instructions about the future times when Israel would have a king. How many years in advance of the first king was this prophetic instruction given? Did the Israelites follow these instructions?

1. This probably refers back to Numbers 1:1, after the Israelites came out of Egypt. 2. Numbers 13:1 says that God commanded Moses to send men to explore Canaan. 3. God didn't let Moses enter because of his disobedience in striking the rock. 5. About 350 years. Solomon is an example of a king who disobeyed every one of these instructions.

Application Questions:

1. In Deut. 4:2, Moses commands the people to keep the commands of the Lord, and not to add to them or subtract to them. As a Christian, how might you add to or subtract from the Lord's commands? How does this align with Jesus' teaching about the law (and his claim to fulfill it) in Matthew 5:17-20?
2. According to Deut. 4:5-7, what does being obedient to God show?
3. Read Deut. 6:4-8. How might you implement a plan to teach your family to love God and know his commands for them? Would Deut. 8:5 be part of your plan?
4. Read Deut. 8:17-18. How do these verses apply to you and your family? Do they apply to your church congregation?
5. According to Deut. 10:12-13, what is one reason we should follow the Lord's commands for us?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. According to Deut. 4:29, how are you to seek the Lord when you want to repent?
 2. Read Deut. 7:1-6. The instructions given in the section seem barbaric and inhumane according to modern standards. Why was God so harsh with the commands? Does Deut. 7:7-9, 25-26 explain part of the reason?
 3. Do you think Deut. 8:9 has any application to modern Christians?
 4. Read Deut. 11:16. How can you be careful not to be enticed to follow false gods?
- Read Deut. 30:19-20. How can you choose to have life?