

Leaders Appointed: Deuteronomy 1:9-18 Explained

Scriptures for Today:

Deuteronomy 1:9-18 *And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone: 10 The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. 11 (The LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you, as he hath promised you!) 12 How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife? 13 Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you. 14 And ye answered me, and said, The thing which thou hast spoken is good for us to do. 15 So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes. 16 And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. 17 Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it. 18 And I commanded you at that time all the things which ye should do.*

Introduction

We are back in the book of Deuteronomy. 5th book of the Bible. 34 Chapters. Let's look at a quick overview of everything leading up to this book...

Genesis reveals God as the Creator of all things, the entrance of sin into the world, and God's promise of redemption. It traces God's covenant through Abraham and his descendants, showing how God preserves His plan despite human failure.

Exodus shows God delivering Israel from bondage in Egypt by His power. He redeems them through the Passover (which is a picture pointing ahead to Jesus Christ), He gives His law, and instructions to build a tabernacle where He would dwell among the children of Israel.

Leviticus explains how a holy God can dwell with a sinful people. It establishes God's laws, sacrifices, and priesthood, emphasizing holiness, atonement, and obedience.

Numbers records Israel's unbelief and wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. It shows the consequences of disobedience, while also highlighting God's faithfulness and provision.

That brings us to Deuteronomy... Moses' time on earth is coming to end. God did not allow Moses to enter the promised land because of his unbelief. (*God told him to speak to the rock to make the water come out for Israel to drink, but instead he hit the rock twice with his staff.*) Imagine knowing that your time is almost up. There would probably be a lot of things you would want to say to the people that you care about the most.

That's what this is...this is a record of Moses' final message and charge to the children of Israel. He rehearses what God has already done, re-states God's law, and calls the new generation to love the Lord, obey His commandments, and choose life as they prepare to enter the promised land.

Moses saw a lot of amazing things throughout his life. He saw God deliver His people with great power. He saw the parting of the Red Sea. He saw God's glory and terrible presence on Mount Sinai. He witnessed God's wrath upon a stiff-necked and rebellious people, but He also witnessed God's mercy and provision even when they didn't deserve it.

If you're sitting here this morning you've most likely witnessed God's power, mercy, and love in your own life. *(I know God has done amazing things for me)* You don't want to keep those things to yourself. You should want to share them with others; you should want to pass on that wisdom and experience. You should want to pass on the Word of God to the next generation.

That's what Moses was doing here. Not only was he passing on the experience to the next generation, but he was passing on specific instructions that were given to them by God Himself.

Just like Israel had specific instructions, we too have instructions from God that we need to be reminded of. That's why we come to church. So the Holy Spirit can bring all things to our remembrance through the preaching of the scriptures.

So now that Israel's wanderings in the wilderness were coming to an end. It was time for the next generation to rise up and take hold of what God promised to give them.

Recap of Deuteronomy 1:1-8

Last time we were in Deuteronomy we studied verses 1 – 8. That was an opening introduction that sets up everything Moses is about to communicate to God's people.

- Moses begins his final address in the wilderness east of the Jordan River. He's giving a historical recap of Israel's journey from the past 40 years.
- It's mentioned that it was only an 11-day journey from Horeb to the promised land. Mt Horeb / Sinai is where Israel received God's law. That's where they were given the 10 commandments.
11 days turned into 40 years because of disobedience and unbelief.
- Moses recalled God's message: "You have dwelt long enough in this mount" —it's time to move.
- The promised land was set before them. All they had to do was go in and possess it.

In these next verses, Moses is continuing to remind Israel what happened 40 years ago before they departed from Horeb.

Deuteronomy 1:9-18 Exposition

Deuteronomy 1:9-11 And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone: **10** The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye *are* this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. **11** (The LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye *are*, and bless you, as he hath promised you!)

Moses was reminding the people that he was not able to bear this great burden on his own. And you might be asking, "what was the burden that Moses had to bear"?

Think about what happens when you have a lot of people together in one place... Even in a small church like this, drama and turmoil can arise.

If you can have problems within a small group of people, imagine all the problems that can arise when you have a congregation of well over a million people.

On Thursday we saw that there were over 600,000 men among the children of Israel, 20 years and older, who were ready for war. On top of that you had women and children. So the entire congregation could have easily been over 1 million.

10 The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye *are* this day as the stars of heaven for multitude.

Moses was dealing with a lot of people. With all those people comes a lot of drama, fighting, and disputes. We can get a glimpse of that if we go back to Exodus 18...

Exodus 18:13-17 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. **14** And when Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What *is* this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even? **15** And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God: **16** When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make *them* know the statutes of God, and his laws. **17** And Moses' father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest *is* not good.

Moses was judging the people from morning until evening. It would be like if all of Louisville Metro was coming to Josh every day to have their disputes settled. I'm sure Josh would love if everyone brought all their problems to him all the time.

That was the burden that Moses was carrying. His father-in-law said this thing that you're doing is not good.

Exodus 18:18 Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that *is* with thee: for this thing *is* too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone.

Jethro, Moses' father in law, was 100% right. This was not a one-man job.

Going back to Deuteronomy 1, Moses is reminding Israel of this account...

Deuteronomy 1:12 How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife?

Maybe there are things in your life that are a great burden for you. It can often feel like you're carrying a heavy weight. Being a parent can feel very challenging at times. Being a husband or a wife can feel very challenging. Being a pastor or a leader can feel challenging. There are many different types of burdens that we carry in this life...

It was very clear that Moses could not do this alone. And if Moses couldn't do it alone, how much less can we do it alone. So what was the solution to his problem? Look what he told the people...

Deuteronomy 1:13-14 Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you. 14 And ye answered me, and said, The thing which thou hast spoken *is good for us to do*.

Moses listened to Jethro's council, and he appointed leaders among the people to help carry the load.

This is a great reminder that in our own lives, there are things that we should not be bearing alone. Moses was a very meek and humble man that accepted the help. *The Bible says he was meek above all men which were upon the face of the earth.*

Sometimes it's hard to admit when we need help. Or we can be prideful and puffed up and think that we can do everything by ourselves.

Moses could have been like that. And if he had this would have been a very different story. But thank God he set an example for us on how to show some humility.

Like the leadership of a church should not fall on one person. There are men...and women out there that think the entire show revolves around them. That's not going to work, especially if pride is involved. *Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*

That's why in the New Testament we see churches that have multiple elders and multiple deacons to help distribute responsibility among the people.

It takes someone that is meek and humble to say, "I can't do this by myself, I need help so that the Word of God can increase more and more". This is not about us...This is about Jesus Christ. Man is not exalted and lifted up. Jesus Christ is exalted.

Moses set that example for the church in the wilderness in the Old Testament, and the New Testament churches followed in his footsteps.

Look what Moses did...

Deuteronomy 1:15 So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes.

Moses took the men who were wise and well known among the tribes and made them heads and captains over the people. Understand these are not wise men according to the wisdom of this world.

Having a Masters or PhD does not make you wise.

In exodus 18 we have a more detailed description of what character these men should have.

Exodus 18:21 Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place *such* over them, *to be* rulers of thousands, *and* rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens:

So these wise men were those that had the fear of the Lord, men that loved the truth and hated covetousness. That means when they were out judging the people, they would have integrity and would not be seeking to take advantage of others or seeking gain for themselves.

That's really hard to find today. Countless leaders in our government, in churches, in our judicial system— leaders all over are men of corrupt minds. They have no integrity, they are lovers of themselves, have no fear of God.

Psalms 12:1 Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.

Micah 7:2 The good *man* is perished out of the earth: and *there is* none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net.

Proverbs 20:6 Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?

Where are all the faithful men who want to walk with integrity and truth? Go out into this city and you'll have a very hard time finding even one. That is very sad.

This church needs faithful men that will step up and stand in the gap for a lost and dying world.
Our homes need faithful men who will lead in meekness and with the fear of God.
Marriages need faithful men who will love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it.
Children need faithful men who will set Godly examples and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Men, it's time for all of us to step up and be those faithful men that are lacking in this world.
We need to answer that call and fill in that void. Ask yourself what do I need to fix in my life so God can depend on me to do His work? His work is not just for Pastors and Deacons. It's for everyone.

When we all step up and do our part, it distributes the load evenly and we can all bear the load together.

Deuteronomy 1:16 And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear *the causes* between your brethren, and judge righteously between *every* man and his brother, and the stranger *that is* with him.

Understand that God wants us to make righteous judgments in our life. How do we do that?
We first have to take the beam out of our own eye, before we point out the mote in our brother's eye.
We remove sin out of our lives, by walking in the Spirit of God. You can't make righteous judgments if you are doing the same things or worse.

Deuteronomy 1:17-18 Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; *but* ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment *is* God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring *it* unto me, and I will hear it. **18** And I commanded you at that time all the things which ye should do.

Just as God is not a respecter of persons, He expects us to judge all men according to the same standard. That standard is God's Word.

It doesn't matter if you're rich or poor, great or small; God's Word applies the same to all people.
Like if President Donald Trump or President Barrack Obama walked into this service, we would not change a single thing.

They would be given the same gospel, they would be told the same message that they are sinners that are destined for hell and that they must believe on Jesus Christ to be saved. We will not be afraid of the face of man. We will not tell people what they want to hear. We are called to make righteous judgements.

When someone wants you to drink alcohol and do drugs with them, you make a righteous judgement and say no, I will not do those things with you. As a matter of fact, do not come around me if you are going to continue to do those things and ask me to take part in them because those things will kill you.

Don't be afraid of the face of man. Don't compromise on the truth and integrity of God's Word. Apply that to every area of your life. Examine yourself first. Then make righteous judgement.

Application of Deuteronomy 1:9-18

Moses was retelling this account of his need for help that took place 40 years ago.

- The people were great in number. As the stars of heaven.
- It was a heavy burden that Moses was bearing alone. But he could not do it by himself.
- He listened to council and appointed leaders to be judges between the people.
- The burden was then spread amongst many and not on one man.

Some things we can learn...

1. Growth is a blessing—but it also brings “cumbrance”

Moses says God multiplied them “as the stars,” and then immediately says, “I can’t bear it alone.”

So don’t be shocked when blessing comes with complexity.

Because of our sinful nature, more people = more needs, more decisions, and more chances for “strife”.

As we pray for increase, we also need pray for wisdom, structure, and more laborers.

2. “Strife” is part of the burden—so unity is everyone’s job

Moses makes it very clear in verse 12 that part of the problem was the strife amongst the children of Israel. That means disputes among God’s people becomes a weight that drains leadership and slows the mission.

Don’t be a Christian who constantly adds to the “strife” pile. Remove strife from your life by obeying the Word of God, and through your obedience the burden is lightened for others around you. And I’m not talking about people that genuinely need help with certain situations in their life. I’m talking about bringing strife to other people because of your choices to disobedience God.

The more we get things right, the more we will be able to help others; therefore you are helping to bear the burdens of others.

3. Wise delegation protects both the leaders and the people.

Remember what Moses’ father in law said. “Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people...”

When tasks are delegated to others, it doesn't just help the leader —it helps the congregation as well.

When leadership gets help, the people get better care and quicker judgment.

4. Human leadership will fail

Even when the congregation had wise leaders that feared God, loved the truth, and hated covetousness, they still fell into disobedience and unbelief later on. No man is exempt from failure.

That's why it says "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." If we are going to successful work for God we must continue in humility and meekness and examine ourselves continuously.

Even when human leadership fails, God still prevails. That's why you must elevate and exalt God above all others. Do not put your trust in man.

5. There is one man that can do it all—by himself.

Moses couldn't bear the weight by himself; we can't bear it by ourselves. Jesus Christ is the only one that could bear the weight of all mankind by his own self.

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree"

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."

Thank God salvation is found alone in Jesus Christ. If we had to bear even .0001 percent of what Jesus carried, we would be crushed. He conquered death and hell on his own for us.

Remember these things are written for our examples. Let's take hold of them and learn from those who were before us. Let's Pray