

## **Session 4: Out of the Desert**

### **Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth**

#### **Deuteronomy:**

The book of Deuteronomy is the final book of the Pentateuch. The book is aptly named since both in its historical context and its content it truly is the second law. Strangely Deuteronomy is the only book of scripture that has its contextual and historical setting mentioned in the Bible. In 2 Kings 22:8 the priest Ezra goes into the temple and finds a book of the law. This event should seem strange to us. Wouldn't they know they were missing one of the books of the law? This issue poses a lot of questions regarding the authenticity of the book: was there an earlier version of Deuteronomy? Was this used simply to justify King Josiah's reforms? How does this fit in with the rest of the books of the Pentateuch? As we read through the book of Deuteronomy, you will notice the sharp change in style compared with the other four books: Moses is speaking, much of the same stories and ideas repeat, less about the journey and more about preparation. The most striking issue with Deuteronomy is that at the end of the book of Numbers the Israelites are already at the edge of the Promised Land. What does Deuteronomy add to the journey? Nevertheless the book of Deuteronomy contains the preparation and the final stage of the journey before the entrance into the Promised Land in the book of Joshua. Deuteronomy in Greek means the "second law." In Hebrew the book is named "and Moses spoke." The Hebrew title tells us something important about the book: the primary emphasis of the book is Moses speaking to the Israelites.

#### Outline:

- I. Historical Review (1:1—11:32)
  - a. Appointment of elders (1:9-18)
  - b. Scouting the promised land (1:19-40)
  - c. Defeat of Sihon and Og (2:24—3:11)
  - d. 10 commandments revisited (5:6-21)
  - e. The Shema or "hear, O Israel" (6:4-9)
  - f. Blessings of obedience (7:12-26)
- II. Laws explained (2:1—26:15)
  - a. Sanctuary (12:1-14)
  - b. Clean and unclean foods (12:15-28)
  - c. The poor and slaves (15:1-18)
  - d. The first born (15:19-23)
  - e. Passover (16:1-8)
  - f. laws (19:1—26:15)
- III. Warnings and final words (27:1—34:12)
  - a. Curses and blessings (27:14—28:19)
  - b. Death of Moses (34:1-12)

#### Passages:

Deuteronomy 5:6-21:

The Ten Commandments are revisited in Deuteronomy. Since we have already covered many of the Jewish laws throughout the books of Leviticus and Numbers, many of the commandments should make more sense now: no one should work on the Sabbath including slaves, and animals, and don't kill or commit adultery. Maintenance of societal order is at the core of these commandments.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9:

This passage is also called "the Great Command." This command summarizes the 10 commandments into one saying and refocuses the attention of those commands on an interior devotion as opposed to an outward expression. The transition from an outward expression of laws to an interior is the main tension between the books of the Laws and the Prophets.

Deuteronomy 20:1-20:

This section of passages shows the dedication to cleanliness and purification. The Israelites established specific laws regarding how to properly conquer and maintain a conquered land. Notice the focus on each element of the conquered land: the people, the animals, the crops, the trees.

### **The Historical Books:**

This section of the Bible called the historical books are aptly named since they chronicle the history of the Jewish people from the moment they enter the Promised Land and ends with the Babylonian Exile in 2 Kings, restarts and ends with the persecution of the Jews under the Greek empire in the books of Maccabees. The following books compose the historical books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Ezra, Ester, Tobit, Judith, and Nehemiah. The main themes in these books are the development of the people of Israel and the formation of the country. Some of the other major themes that will develop in these books are the establishment of the monarchy, the development of the prophets, fidelity and infidelity, the divided kingdom, and exile.

### **Joshua:**

The book of Joshua begins the historical books. This book starts where Numbers and Deuteronomy finished with the people standing at edge of the Promised Land and ready to enter.

Outline:

- I. Conquering the Land of Canaan (1:1—21:45)
  - a. Preparation to cross the Jordan (2:1—3:13)
  - b. Crossing the Jordan (3:14—4:24)
  - c. Jericho (5:13-27)
  - d. Defeat of the other nations (9:1—15:19)
  - e. The cities of Judah and the placement of the tribes (15:20—21:45)
- II. Return to the "other tribes" (22:1-24:33)

- a. Renewal of the covenant (24:16-28)
- b. Death of Joshua (24:29-33)

Passages:

Joshua 3:14-24

The Crossing of the Jordan River reminds us very strongly of the Crossing of the Red Sea. Notice the parallels: God enters the waters, the waters stop flowing, everyone crosses to the other side, a memorial is set-up, and this becomes a defining moment for the Israelites. These moments where God intervenes and splits something in half is covenantal language like what we saw with Abraham and the cut-up animals. Another covenant has been established between God and His people: this is your land and I am your God. As long as you obey me, you can keep the land.

Joshua 21:1-8:

Since the Levites did not receive a portion of the conquered land, they needed somewhere to live. Thus Joshua established cities for the Levites to live in. One of these cities was the city of Shiloh.

Joshua 22:10-29

The two-and-a-half tribes across the Jordan set up a second altar. This altar is in conflict with the command to have only one altar. They said to the now very angry other tribes, this altar is to remind us of the connection we have with you. Notice the words they chose: “What have you to do with the Lord?” In Greek these words would translate to “What to you and to me?” Notice the parallel to John 2:4? How do these two passages help us understand the meaning of Jesus’ words?

### **Judges:**

The book of Judges seems somewhat out-of-place compared to the other historical books. The book has no clear progression nor a sense of development. This book contains the stories of the notable judges from Israelite history. As we know from Exodus and Deuteronomy Moses was unable to care for the many legal concerns brought to him by the people. His father-in-law Jethro steps in and suggests that he appoints some other reputable men to help him adjudicate the cases. Moses consents and appoints 72 elders to help him adjudicate cases. This tradition is maintained in both the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, and Judges. At this point in Israelite history the judges have taken on a more formal and official role. One type of judge was known to sit at the entrance to the city, i.e. the city gates, and await people to bring their cases to him or her to adjudicate. The second type of judge was more unformalized. This type of judge would go about and call out the problems he or she sees in the society, e.g. Samson, Gideon. Nevertheless the judges served an important role and their role continues unabated until the exile.

Outline:

- I. Life after the death of Joshua: the judges begin their reign (1:1—3:6)

- a. The Israelites again fall into idolatry (2:1—3:6)
- II. Stories of the Judges (3:7—16:31)
  - a. Othniel (3:7-11)
  - b. Ehud (3:12-30)
  - c. Shamgar (3:31)
  - d. Deborah (4:1—5:31)
  - e. Gideon (6:1—8:28)
  - f. Abimelech (8:29—9:57)
  - g. Tola (10:1-2)
  - h. Jair (10:3-5)
  - i. Jephthah (11:1—12:7)
  - j. Ibzan (12:8-10)
  - k. Elon (12:11-12)
  - l. Abdon (12:13-15)
  - m. Samson (13-17)
- III. Problems in the tribes of Dan and Benjamin (17-21)

Passages:

Judges 2:1-23

Judges 4:1-24

### **Ruth:**

The story of Naomi and Ruth fit within the historical context of the time of the judges. This short book chronicles two women who were not Israelite but eventually became part of the Israelites through marriage. This story is probably pleasing to the Israelites because it follows their commands and laws on every account. Ruth is the daughter-in-law of Naomi. Ruth decides to take her mother-in-law and care for her even after the death of her husband. After leaving their ancestral home, they find themselves destitute. Ruth goes to provide for them by picking grain. Through her hard work and the advice of Naomi, she ends up married to a rich and powerful man.

Outline:

- I. Naomi and Ruth move to Bethlehem
  - a. Story intro (1:1-18)
  - b. Move to Bethlehem (1:19-22)
- II. In Bethlehem (2-4)
  - a. Ruth begins her work picking grain (2:1-16)
  - b. Boaz take notice of her (2:17-22)
  - c. Ruth presents herself to Boaz (3:1-18)
  - d. Boaz marries Ruth (4)

Notable passages:

Deuteronomy 1:1-5 – Introduction to the book

Deuteronomy 1:9-18 – Appointment of judges, precursor for the Book of Judges

Deuteronomy 1:19-46 – surveying the Promised Land and the invasion

Deuteronomy 5:6-21 – the 10 Commandments, Deuteronomy style

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 – The Great Commandment

Deuteronomy 7:12-20 – The Deuteronomic Code

Deuteronomy 12:15—26:19 – The Laws revisited

Deuteronomy 28:49-69 – rules for the siege of the Promised Land

Deuteronomy 32:1-44 – The Farewell Song of Moses

Deuteronomy 33:1-29 – Blessing of the Tribes

Joshua 1:12-18 – Entering the Promised Land

Joshua 2:1-24 – Spies and Rahab

Joshua 4 – The 2 ½ tribes and the memorial stone

Joshua 5:13-27 – siege of Jericho

Joshua 20:1—21:19 – establishing the land and the cities for the Levites

Joshua 24:16-28 – renewal of the Covenant

Judges 4:1—5:31 – Deborah the Judge

Judges 6:1—8:28 – Gideon the Judge

Judges 11:1-40 – Jephthah the Judge

Judges 13:1-16:31 – Samson the Judge

Ruth