

MARCH 24

Deuteronomy 2-3

These two chapters are a review, but from God's perspective. You've read about these events as history, but now Moses is explaining the events from his and the Lord's perspective. It's an interesting slant on things.

Deuteronomy 2

Vs. 1-8 This is Israel passing through the land of Edom. Although we read about this event earlier, there are a couple of interesting additions here. First, in v. 29 it says that Esau allowed Israel to pass through. The Edomites didn't let Israel pass through the middle of their country on the King's Highway, but they did let Israel pass through on the eastern edge of their territory.

V. 7 Along with the command not to fight with Edom because of the relationship between Jacob and Esau, the other reason not to fight was God's blessing. Not only did they not need anything because of what God was doing for them daily, but He had already promised them a land of their own.

Vs. 9-17 This was Israel passing through the territory of Moab. Israel wasn't supposed to fight against them or take their land because they were descended from Lot.

Vs. 10-12 This is an editorial note added later by someone like Samuel, for example. These lands were full of giants. Remember that the spies said there were giants in the land and they couldn't fight against them? The Emim or the Rephaim and the Anakim were giants. Notice what happened to them. Apparently Israel was the only one afraid of them. The Moabites and Edomites knew that big guys make big targets.

It is interesting that the editorial note was placed here, because the next words have to do with the faithless men who caused the people to be afraid of the giants.

Vs. 13-15 It took about two years for the people to get organized under God and move to Kadesh-barnea where they rebelled. It was 38 years and some months before they were finally ready to enter the land. Not all 40 years were punishment.

V. 16 God made it His own project to eliminate that generation of people, using them as examples while preparing the next generation

Vs. 17-23 This was Israel passing through the territory of Ammon. These too were descendants of Lot.

Vs. 20-23 Notice the parenthesis. This too is a later editorial note, probably either from Joshua or Samuel. Once in the land they had the details of who had been dispossessed by the Ammonites. Oddly enough, many of these groups of people were giants.

Vs. 24-37 God had already planned to give Sihon's lands to Israel. Sihon's arrogance must have been stoked by the fact that Israel hadn't fought with the other nations they passed through. God hardened Sihon's own hardness and showed Israel that He could help them against a formidable army.

V. 36 Notice that one of the cities they took was fortified with high walls. This was another reason the 10 spies said to stay out of the land.

Deuteronomy 3

Vs. 1-11 In this account, once again, the report of the ten spies was laid to rest. In v. 5 they took several high-walled, fortified cities. And then in v. 7, there was the issue of Og himself. (Who names their kid "Og?") His bed may have been the coffin he had prepared for himself. In any

case, he was a big guy. A cubit was 18 inches, so 9 cubits puts him at 13.5 feet. I'll bet that's why no one made fun of his name.

Vs. 12-17 This is the giving of the conquered lands to Reuben, Gad and 1/2 Manasseh. This was a foretaste of what would happen in the land. The people had seen the battles, the booty, and 2.5 tribes find a home. God protected and blessed them in all of it and they never lost a man.

Vs. 18-20 In Moses' explanation of his leadership, he was showing that he commanded these tribes to fight for Israel in the land. We know the story in Numbers and these tribes sought God and permission to claim those lands and they were more than willing to fight to win the inheritance for the other tribes. This was a very positive thing and a sign of God's blessing.

Vs. 21-22 This was Moses' encouragement of Joshua.

Vs. 23-29 Because of all the blessing, Moses must have been encouraged in himself to ask God to let him go into the land. Verse 26 seems pretty strong, but it shows that God and Moses were close.

V. 28 Notice that God gave Moses an assignment. I don't think Moses would have stood around sulking, but this task would be very important and it would take Moses out of his own situation.

V. 29 Now we're back to "real time." If you know the song, "Sweet Hour of Prayer," you know the phrase from that third verse that nobody sings, "till from Mt. Pisgah's lofty height I view my home and take my flight." That's a cool verse.

For us in the harvest, God allows us to set goals, but our only sure goal is to follow Christ. God is the one who determines what fruit we bear, when we are to live and when we are to be "graduated." A disciple stays healthy by remembering that a disciple always follows. The commission and the harvest belong to the Lord.

Luke 6:12-38

Vs. 12-16 It would be great to put all of the Gospels together to get the full view of this. What follows is the Sermon on the Mount. Luke is the only one who tells us that the night before Jesus chose the Twelve and then gave the sermon, He had spent all night alone praying on the mountain. Mark says why He chose them in a very cool way. (Mark 3:14) It was immediately after selecting the Twelve that Jesus came down with them, saw the crowd and was moved by the Father to give the disciples their orientation to discipleship. We call that orientation talk the Sermon on the Mount.

Vs. 17-19 These verses give the idea that Jesus might not have planned to give this sermon here at this time. But when the crowds came to Him and He healed them, I'll bet He was moved with compassion for them and sensed from the Spirit that this was a good time and place to teach the disciples and His newly chosen apostles.

Vs. 20-26 Notice here that Jesus lifts His eyes on His disciples. This is how we know that the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 is really Jesus' orientation to His disciples. I guess that means to us too.

In reading Luke's version of this sermon, it is good to keep in mind that Matthew was writing to a Jewish audience and Luke was writing to Gentiles. Luke left out material about the law that Matthew included. Also, it is good to remember that Jesus repeated His sermons and stories everywhere He went. The slight difference in wording is probably due to Jesus saying things in a slightly different way on different occasions.

Notice in the *blesseds* and *woes* that the word *now* is used. This means that Jesus was suggesting that some disciples, for the sake of the kingdom and the harvest, would choose to deny themselves for this time on earth, so they could devote themselves to following the Lord in the harvest.

Vs. 27-36 What Jesus told His disciples only makes sense if a person is totally devoted to Christ, having no earthly treasure, working fully in the harvest. If we have been saved and understand what is happening on this planet, that should make us capable of living like this.

Vs. 37-38 A disciple is to offer Christ's gift in the harvest, not be a judge on earth. He is to give freely since he has received freely. All of discipleship and making disciples flows out of understanding the love and grace we have been shown in Christ.

Psalm 67

Just like with Psalm 66, this could have been written by Israel as it entered the land, but the declaration to all nations is truer to the way David praised God. I think this is David not just celebrating how God saved him, but I think David understood his place in God's plan and was celebrating the fulfilling of the promise to Abraham.

Vs. 1-2 Notice that this is the blessing that God gave to Aaron to pronounce upon Israel, but it is said here as a request so that God will be known in all the earth. This entire psalm is a testimony to the nations. Israel's destiny was to bring the saving knowledge of God to the entire world.

Vs. 3-5 The word *let* makes this block of verses stand out. This is to be the response of *the nations* to what they see in the grace of God's blessing on Israel. This will be true in the Millennial Kingdom. Verse 5 is quoted by Paul in Romans 15. The witness to the nations was what Israel was all about as a continuation of the promise to Adam and Eve and the promise to Abraham. All of God's working has always been focused on the redemption of mankind.

Vs. 6-7 Again, this will be true of Israel in the Millennial Kingdom when all the nations come to Jerusalem to meet their king.

Proverbs 11:27

There is a kind of justice in the Bible where God gives a person what they want, or here, what they seek. It is not always good to succeed, and just because the Lord lets you have something, doesn't mean it was His will, or that it's good for you. Those who seek God's glory will know His favor, even in death or hardship. Those who seek evil or their own gain may get more than they bargained for. Or as Jesus said, *What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?* (Mark 8:36)