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These are the Words Moses Spoke

1: 1-5

These are the words Moses Spoke DIG: Where were the Israelites encamped? How far had they traveled? Why is that significant (Numbers 14:33-34, 21:21-26)? Where were they to go? To do what? Why? Consult a map of this time period. How could the God of Isra'el expect desert nomads to take possession of such a large area of land?

REFLECT: Who has been like a Moshe to you, reminding you of the LORD's faithfulness (past, present, and future)? Is it time for you to move on in your spiritual journey? Where to? With whom? What for? What is your next step? What has prepared you so far for this? Describe how you walk with YHVH at this time. Are you close? Distant? Why?

Parashah 44: D'varim (Words) 1:1-3:22 (to see link click [Af](#) - Parashah)

The Key Person is **Moshe**, speaking to all **Isra'el**, and **Joshua**. Since **Moshe** was not allowed to enter **the Land**, **Moses desired to explain this Torah to the people (1:5)**, so that **they** would clearly recall everything that **ADONAI** said once they took possession of **the Land** of Promise.

The Scenes include **the Jordan**, in **the wilderness** on the plain opposite **Yam Suph (the Sea of Reeds)**, between **Paran** and **Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Di-Zahab**. This parashah (and book) opens with the Israelites in the land of Mo'av, just east of the Jordan River, shortly before they would enter the Promised Land.

The Main Events include **Moses'** words reviewing the past: **Ha'Shem's** command to enter **the Promised Land**, appointment of **judges, spies** and disbelief, thirty-eight years of **desert** wandering, victory over **Sichon** and **Og**, land for **the tribes** settling **east of the Jordan**, and encouragement for **Joshua**.¹⁹

The introduction to this book sets us up to hear Moses preaching to the nation

poised to enter the Promised Land. Knowing their past history, this new generation could avoid repeating the sins of their parents.



Moshe, the preacher (Hebrew: *kohelet* in **Ecclesiastes 1:1-2**), stood at a point between **the people's** past history of disobedience and **their** potential future obedience. **He** was a leader. Battles and burdens had given birth to messages. Experience had taught **him** well what to say. After **forty years** of aimless wandering and unrealized potential, **he** was compelled to press on in the direction that **ADONAI** desired. **Forty years** of facing failure motivated **him** to emphasize **God's** ability to provide success. Some **preachers** prepare their messages, others prepare themselves. **Moses** was ready on both accounts.²⁰

While the book of Numbers covers a period of 38 years, Deuteronomy only covers a period of 37 days. Deuteronomy opens 37 days before **Moshe** was to die (**to see link click Gj - The Death of Moses**). **Moshe** died on the seventh of Adar. The Bible proves this as follows: In **Deuteronomy 34:8** we read that the Jews mourned for **thirty days** following **Moshe's** death in the Plains of Mo'av. This area borders **Isra'el**, just east of the Jordan River. The book of **Joshua** begins with **God's** command to bring **the Jewish people** across the Jordan River. **ADONAI** specifies that **they** are to cross in **three day's** time. This instruction was given immediately after **Moshe** died, meaning at the earliest possible opportunity after **his** death. This would have been following the thirty days of mourning. In **Joshua 4:19** we are told that **the Jews** crossed the river on the tenth of Nissan. If we subtract the three days between the command and actual crossing, plus the thirty days of mourning, we find the date of **Moshe's** passing is the seventh of Adar. Incidentally, the seventh of Adar is also **Moshe's** birthday. On the day **he** died **Moshe** said: **Today I am one hundred and twenty years old (Deut 31:2)**. As such, the book has the overall tone of a farewell address from **Moshe** to **the people of Isra'el**. In fact, unlike the previous four books of **the Torah**, the speaker in **Deuteronomy** is **Moses himself**.

These are the words. The reference is to all the commandments contained in this look beginning with the Ten Commandments (5:6). Some of these have been previously recorded in the other books of Moshe and are now repeated for the

benefit of the new generation which was to enter Canaan. Others are repeated because of additional details and points of explanation. But there are new commandments which are reported here for the first time, for example those relating to divorce, Levirate marriage, etc., although these, too, had been received by Moshe either on Mount Sinai or in the Tent of Meeting during the first year after the departure from Egypt. The main part of the book begins with the Ten Words. What precedes is an introduction in which Moshe admonished the people and recalled ADONAI's mercy towards them.

The first verse of the book explains the nature of the whole book: **These are the words that Moses spoke to all Isra'el (1:1a)**, a second generation of **Israelites**, after the first generation of the **Exodus** had died out. **As the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai in Exodus was witnessed by the entire nation, so on this occasion, after forty years of wilderness wandering, as Moshe expounded on the completed Torah, all Isra'el had to be present. The LORD** was developing a relationship with the generation born in the **wilderness** that would influence succeeding generations. A covenant would be renewed, a **Land** would be possessed, an identity would be given. **All the people** needed to understand and participate in the formation of **their** nation.

According to the Talmudic Sifri (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ei - The Oral Law**), **the numerous places listed here are not landmarks indicating where Moses spoke these words - indeed some of these places do not even exist as geographical locations. Rather, these are words of rebuke to the people of Isra'el. However, instead of mentioning their sins outright, he alluded to them with these place names: across the Jordan:**

in the wilderness: the time when **they** complained **if only we would have died in the wilderness (Ex 17:3),**

in the Arabah (Plain): where **they** worshiped of **Ba'al Peor** on the plains of **Mo'ab (Numbers 25),**

opposite Suph: the trouble **they** made at the shores of Yam **Suph**, the Sea Reeds (**Exodus 14:11),**

Paran: the sin of **the twelve spies**, who were dispatched from **Paran (Numbers 13),**

Tofel (complaining) and **Lavan** (white): when **the people complained** about **eating the white manna (Numbers 21:5),**

Hazerot: where Korah's mutiny against Moshe took place,

Di-Zahab (literally "too much gold") **(1:1b): the sin of the golden calf (Sifri; Rashi, et al). It is eleven days' journey** (one day's journey would vary according to circumstances, from eighteen to thirty miles) **from Horeb** (which is the name used for **Mount Sinai** in **Deuteronomy**) **by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh-barnea (1:2).**

The generation that had experienced **God's** liberation in the exodus had failed to enter **the Promised Land** because of **their** fear and rebellion, and had perished in **the wilderness**. The present generation here is addressed as if **they** had shared in that collective failure **(1:26)**. A journey that should have taken **their parents eleven days** had already lasted **forty years**. The implication, which is hammered home repeatedly in the following chapters, is that **they** should not squander the opportunity this time.

Now Moshe spoke to Bnei-Yisrael, according to all ADONAI had commanded him for them. This is the only date in the whole book given here, **in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month (1:3).** **Moses** is thus a man under orders; the demand for obedience is a prominent theme throughout **Deuteronomy**, and in declaring that demand, **Moshe** was **himself** living **his** message.²¹

Moses, like any sensitive spiritual leader, does not dare **speak** unless **Ha'Shem speaks**. By ourselves we have nothing to say. Without **Him** we cannot **speak**. Without us, **He** will not **speak**. To address a congregation without any assurance that **the preacher** (Hebrew: *kohelet*) brings a divine message is the height of arrogance and folly. When we are convinced that **God** is who **He** says **He** is - **the light of the world (John 8:12)** - then we will be compelled to **speak**, whether **preacher** or lay person.

Amos expressed this thought well when **he** said: **My Lord ADONAI has spoken, who shall not prophesy (Amos 3:8)?** Similarly, **Paul** declares: **But we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed, and therefore I spoke." So, we believed, and therefore we also speak (Second Corinthians 4:13).** **The spirit of faith** to which **Paul** refers is the conviction that **the LORD** has **spoken**. If we are persuaded that **YHVH** has **spoken**, then, like **Moshe**, we must also **speak**.²²

Then a historical orientation is added: **After he had struck down Sihon king of the Amorites who lived in Heshbon, and Og king of the Bashan who lived in Ashtaroth and Edrei (1:4).** Why are these two **kings** mentioned here at the beginning of **Deuteronomy**? The fact is that both **kings** were **Amorites**, connecting the text of **Deuteronomy** directly with the Abrahamic Covenant. In **Genesis 15:16** we read: **Then in**

the fourth generation they will return here - for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete. Not only is the defeat of these two **Amorite kings** mentioned, but just in **Chapter 1** alone **the Amorites** are mentioned six times. It was as if **the LORD** was reminding **the Israelites** of the promise **He** made to **them** in **Genesis 15:16**. **The Ruach Ha’Kodesh** was telling **them** that the way for **them** to conquer **the Promised Land** had opened, and **the iniquity of the Amorites** had reached a point of no return. **They** were finally defeated at last.²³

After **forty years** of wandering in **the wilderness**, **the Israelites** finally arrive at the threshold of **the Promised Land**. **Across the Jordan** is here defined as **in the land of Mo’ab**, **Moses desired to explain** (Hebrew: *be’er*, meaning *to expound* or *make absolutely clear*) **this Torah (1:5)**. Only a few passages in the book is **ADONAI** represented as **speaking** in the first person (**7:4, 11:13-14, 17:3, 29:6**). Nevertheless, **Moses** as the covenant mediator might be thought of as bringing **God’s Word to the people**.²⁴ In the course of the book **Moshe** sought, in various ways, to instill an obedient spirit in **the people**. **He** used that threat of judgment, the promise of reward, and appeals to **the LORD’s** faithfulness, kindness and mercy (see the commentary on **Ruth Af - The Concept of Chesed**) to accomplish that goal. **Moses** was not merely stringing together a “to do” list of 613 **commandments**, **he** was instructing (Hebrew: *hattovrot* from *Torah*) **the Israelites** (and us) how to walk with **YHVH**.

It is essential for any reader of **Deuteronomy** to understand that this book represents an *explanation* of **the Torah**, which **ADONAI** had already given at **Sinai**, and not a second giving of **the Torah**. It does not serve as a simple repetition of **the Torah**, nor does it constitute a contradiction of those divine standards. **Moses** provides an explanation of **the Torah** as a means of preparing **the LORD’s** children for the daunting task that lay before **the Israelites** then, and for the formidable mission that lay before us today.²⁵

They would **cross the Jordan**, and begin to take possession of **the Promised Land** beginning with the city of **Jericho**.

*Dear Awesome Heavenly **Father**, We praise you for how great you are! It is so wonderful to have such an awesome **father**! Thank **You** that **Your** discipline is never too long or too hard, though sometimes it may feel that way, **You** are acting as a caring **father** to guide us away from what will hurt us and back to the joy of following **You**. Praise **You** that in disciplining **Your** children, **You** do it in **love: My son, do not take lightly the discipline of ADONAI or lose heart when you are corrected by Him, because ADONAI disciplines the one He loves and punishes every son He accepts***

(Hebrews 12:5-6).

Praise **You** that someday for all who **love You**, all trials and problems will be over and our salvation in heaven will be real (**John 14:6, Romans 10:9-10**) Our **sins** will be washed away and we will be given **Messiah's righteousness** so that we can enter **Your Holy heaven** thru **Yeshua's blood**. **He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21).**

Heaven will be wonderful and **Your** children will be rewarded for deeds done with a godly attitude. **For no one can lay any other foundation than what is already laid - which is Yeshua the Messiah. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear. For the Day will show it, because it is to be revealed by fire; and the fire itself will test each one's work - what sort it is. If anyone's work built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. (First Corinthians 3:11-14).** Wow! **Sins** forgiven and rewards! **You** pour such wonderful gracious **love** on **Your** children! We **love You** so much and desire to live godly lives to please **You**. In **Your** holy **Son's** name and power of resurrection. Amen