

Clough Deuteronomy Session 7

Deuteronomy 1:1-23 - Yahweh Demonstrates His Royal Grant Faithfulness
Fellowship Chapel; 24 Nov 09

Before we have a word of prayer let's remember some of the promises that we were talking about last week in this session 7. "There is no testing," remember, from 1 Corinthians 10 which is going to be one we'll do tonight, "There is no testing but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tested above that which you are able, but will, with the testing, make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it." One of those great promises.

Let's turn once again in our Bibles to Deuteronomy 1 and just mention that, as kind of a review, some of the lessons we've learned before we get in chapter 2, and that is that that whole chapter 1, from verses 19-46, is a narration of a failure of a generation. If you look at history entire generations can fail, and when a generation fails it makes a heavier weight on the following generation. And in our country we are about at that point. So the young people who are in their teens right now will probably be, as one man I listen to gave a lecture at a high school and he pointed out, he said your generation is probably the first generation in the history of this republic that will not be able to go beyond your parents as far as your prosperity is concerned. And that what you will have to do, because of the destruction that you are going to inherit is that you're going to have to take one step backwards so that your children can take two steps forward. And so it's that kind of a situation. And Moses faced that; that has happened several times in history, more than several.

And Deuteronomy, these chapters, these early chapters, is Moses' attempt to prepare a generation that lived when their parents failed. So he's addressing that issue and he's got to change the way they think and we said there's several lessons in this, we said that it shows the law of responsibility, and that's one of the things we'll see again and again in the Mosaic Law and I guess that's one reason why people kind of don't like the Old Testament, because it's quite clear that it holds us responsible. And what we mean by that is God gives us the freedom to choose, but He does not give us the freedom to dictate the consequences of our choices. So the law of responsibility is very heavy.

And we said that in order to meet the different tests we had four promises last time that we covered. And these four aren't the only ones, I just give them as sort of a help, if you're not familiar with these kinds of things, if you're new in the faith or if you're struggling with memorizing, these are four great promises and they are expressive of this thinking that has to happen in the middle of testing in life. One of them is 1 Corinthians 10:13 which is the one I quoted that "no testing has taken us," and that's so hard to think about when you're in the middle of it. When you're in the middle of it, it's hard to say that this particular test in my life at this particular point is not a super exceptional thing that God is laying on me that He hasn't laid on thousands of other believers, and if they can do it I can do it because of it being filtered by His loving sovereignty, "that no testing has taken us, but such as is common," meaning it's repeated, "to man, that God is

faithful, who will not permit you to be tested above that which you are able."

And we discussed, we threw this out, the second one, Romans 8:28, the one everyone knows, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28 does not say that everything is good, it says everything works together for good," a little fine print.

And then we said in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 that it's the will of God that in everything we give thanks, not because of the situation but because of the lessons we will learn in the situation; 1 Thessalonians 5:18, the third in the series of great verses.

And finally, Philippians 4:6-7, "Be not anxious for anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication," and then the phrase, "with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, [7] And the peace of God that passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." And the Greek verb there to "keep" is a word for sentry, it means to protect.

So one of the slides I would show you right at this point but we'll have to turn over on the back side of your handout, and that is the test slide, and that's the providence of testing. And that's a lesson that is at this point in the history in Deuteronomy, that's one that we'll have to see again tonight, that here, remember, as the diagram points out God doesn't change so the idea as you move from left to right in the test that's time, that's a sequence of experiences that you may be having in your Christian life, if you're not having them right now you will. So the idea of a sequence of testings. And we gave the illustration, test number 1 with a plus sign means that that test was passed, in that test a person was able to trust the Lord in the middle of it, retain his peace, being able to give thanks and move on and then hit with test number 2. And test number 2 in the story, we are dealing with here was the test of the various logistical tests that God gave the nation.

Then he comes to test 3 which is darkened on that because of the color in the slide, and test 3 was the command by God to the nation Israel to begin the conquest. That was heavy duty. Test 1 and test 2 would be the logistical test, but test number 3, that one that's darkened there, that was the test where the rubber meets the road; that was a test for maturity, it was a test that required a lot of courage because it directly moved them into the sphere of spiritual conflict. And it was that test that they flunked. That's why that minus sign is after that test number three, which means, then, in the terrain of testing the line slopes downward to the right with test number 4 and test number 4 we said is a test to deal with the consequences of the previous bad decision, and that's what happened to Israel. And we learned last time that test number three, which was to go invade the land, they flunked, which meant that God said I'm through with this generation, you are going to be put out in the wilderness and you're going to just wander around because that's the way, that's the consequences of your choice. You know, I didn't twist your arm, you made the choice, you reap the consequences. So God said I'm not going to help you, the conquest is over for your generation; I gave you that test to start spiritual conflict and you basically chickened out.

So, then the issue was that, you remember what they did in the end of chapter 1 is that they decided oh, we sinned against the Lord so we're going to go ahead, we're sorry, we're going to get our weapons together and we're going to start the conquest like You told us God, and God told Moses tell them to cool it, because I'm not going to be with them when they do this. So then they flunked test number 4, so that's easy to do and that's the sort of thing that is remembered in Scripture about this incident. And in the notes I have the fact that Moses and David were two believers who passed the fourth test; in other words, David failed, as we know, in his life, and he had to live with the consequences of his failure. But he did, he recovered and he passed those other tests that came into his life because of the bad decision that he made earlier. So David was victorious in that, he recovered. And Moses also recovered, because Moses, he's one of the few guys here in the middle of this mob who has his head screwed on, and so he's going to deal with the consequences, and he even throws into the text the editorial remark, oh, by the way, I'm not allowed to go in the land either. So he points out the fact that he, also in his own way, flunked test number three.

This is humbling to say but all of us have test 3's that we've flunked, and the nice thing about the Scripture is that it tells the stories of how people dealt with that situation. It's hard to deal with failure sometimes because one failure leads to another one, you begin to start doubting whether the Lord loves you, doubting whether he's going to get you out of this mess and so on and so forth. But the great men of Scripture inevitably have failed, but where they didn't fail is they recovered from that failure and were able to trust the Lord in the middle of all the extra heavy circumstances from the first test that they didn't pass.

And in the New Testament, we won't spend time on that tonight but I listed for you on the notes, the New Testament references to this Kadesh-Barnea incident; it's not forgotten. It comes up again and again; in Jude 1:5 it comes up, where Jude says that... he uses the Kadesh-Barnea incident as a failure of faith. Hebrews 6, Hebrews is a notoriously difficult epistle to interpret with the warning passages, but it's interesting that in chapter 6 is that passage where it says, "It is impossible to renew them unto repentance," that bothers a lot of people. Some people think that means you can lose your salvation. But in Hebrews 6, if you look at the background and the context of the argument, it's talking about Kadesh-barnea. So if you know the Old Testament history that helps you interpret the New Testament passages. And it prevents you from doing the copout that many people do that oh, the people in Hebrews really aren't believers. Well, Moses was a believer and there were many believers in that generation that failed. Believers do not necessarily persevere to the end. And that collides with certain theologies, but the point is that that's what the Scriptural testimony is, believers do not always persevere to the end; they fail and then they fail again and again and again. That can happen.

And then we list the third New Testament place where this Kadesh-barnea thing; lo and behold, the promise that we quoted, "There has no testing taken you but such as is common go man," that's at the end of 1 Corinthians 10 which deals again with Kadesh-barnea. So there's three

different places in the New Testament where this Mosaic theology that we just covered helps you interpret and understand the New Testament authors.

Now we want to just put ourselves in Moses' position for chapter 2 because tonight we're going to basically finish most of chapter 2. Let's put ourselves again in the flow of the argument of the book because if our interpretation and our emphases in a passage don't fit with the overall argument of the book then we're not following the way the book was created by the Holy Spirit. The point at this juncture, in these first four chapters, in this long sermon as it were, this long exposition, what Moses is trying to do is prepare a generation to go back to test number 3.

Remember what test number 3 was? Conquer. Well, this generation is going to have to do that. Their parents failed test number 3; their parents failed test number 4, but because God has a destiny for that nation, because He's got it locked into His plan, that nation has got to conquer and therefore if the first generation isn't going to do it, the second one is going to be required to do it. So He's got to prepare the generation and the problem He's got is that this is a generation who's lost their fathers; this is a generation that lost their husbands, so you've got women and children that have grown up in an environment for years listening to this horrible story of what a mess happened and what a horrible defeat and a bloody massacre it was because our dad or our husband went up there and tried to do it, and he was out of it and he didn't and the Lord disciplined us. Now if you can imagine living in a tent city, which they were, and hearing this story over and over and over and over again, you've got an entire generation that is defeated in their minds and Moses has got to do something to change this whole attitude. And that's what these four chapters are all about. And they're a model for how a leader deals with a discouraged group of people.

And so thinking about an illustration that might make more sense from us as Christians living in this area is think of what happened out here in western Maryland at Gettysburg; think of what a marvelous job that General Robert E. Lee did with a destroyed army; he moved it quickly south and basically saved the army of the south for another battle. And that army had been chewed up; that army had had casualties, that army had seen the horror of Pickett's charge, so they had to recover and it was Robert E. Lee who had the wherewithal as a leader to take a broken, defeated group of people, first of all get them out of Harm's way to survive, that was the number one thing and then after you get these people into position where they can survive, you've got to re-energize them, you've got to show them how to deal with the situation.

And what Moses is doing... so now we're going to say okay, how is Moses going to do a generational turnaround, and this is a lesson in training. And if you look at how he's doing it, he's doing it two ways. He's using exhortation but he's running that exhortation with a consistent logical thought process. He's going back to God's covenants. Remember we said... already we've seen it in Deuteronomy 1, we've seen him refer to the land boundaries. Remember the map we showed with the land boundaries; that comes out of the Abrahamic Covenant. Remember the three things in the Abrahamic Covenant: God is going to promise the nation a land, a seed and worldwide blessing. So he refers to that land promise, God is going to

take us into that land and it's going to be those boundaries that He outlined back in Genesis 12:13.

And this is why, if you look in the second slide, just to review, you'll see where I have the Abrahamic Covenant and characterizing it as a royal grant. And remember the definition of a royal grant is this, that an unconditional blessing by a superior to an inferior merely on the basis of the benefactor's good will and loyalty of beneficiary. In other words, the point is it's sovereign and it's unconditional. And then I gave you four references on the left side of that chart where that Abrahamic Covenant is reaffirmed in Genesis. Then in the third slide I give you a quotation, one by Eugene Merrill, who wrote a great systematic theology, a biblical theology of the Old Testament, and he summarizes this point. He says: It is now agreed that the Old Testament gives evidences of the royal grant model based upon ancient Assyrian prototypes.... The Abrahamic Covenant is akin to the royal grant model in that it is... unconditional in form and intent, and consists of the awarding of a blessing by a superior," in this case God, "to an inferior," in this case Israel, or Abraham, "merely on the basis of the benefactor's good will and loyalty of the beneficiary," the benefactor being God. So God's good will toward Abraham says I'm going to do this in history. The problem is that each succeeding generation can only enjoy the blessings of that covenant if they will submit to it, and that's the lesson in the Sinaitic Covenant.

So now with that background we come to chapter 2, and we had to do that because immediately, in the first part of chapter 2, we've got a problem and it creates a little question in how we approach the text, what is going on here. It doesn't seem, when you first glance at it, that this fits, trying to recover the thinking of a generation of defeated people. So in Deuteronomy 2:1-7, if you'll follow with me, let's watch and see if you can spot the problem.

[1] "Then we turned and journeyed into the wilderness of the Way of the Red Sea, as the Lord spoke to me, and we skirted Mount Seir for many days. [2] And the Lord spoke to me, saying: [3] 'You have skirted this mountain long enough; turn northward. [4] And command the people, saying, "You are about to pass through the territory of your brethren, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. Therefore watch yourselves carefully. [5] Do not meddle with them, for I will not give you any of their land, no, not so much as one footstep, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession. [6] You shall buy food from them with money, that you may eat; and you shall also buy water from them with money, that you may drink. [7] For the Lord your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand. He knows your trudging through this great wilderness. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing."

Well now, if you're Moses, why would you tell this story? Now if you look carefully on the map there's an arrow from Edom, see the little word "Edom" there, over to a place that's just southeast of the Dead Sea, the bottom of the Dead Sea. That's that area of Edom, and you'll see where the arrow, Kadesh-barnea points. And you'll see a road or a pathway from the tip of the Kadesh-barnea arrow working its way northeast toward Edom. Now that's what they are doing, they are approaching Edom, and here's the deal. They want to cross Edom to get on the right hand side of the Dead

Sea. They want to go up through Transjordan. And they need passage way through Edom, so that's the setting for this.

Now God tells them certain things that control what He wants them to do. And that is, he says they are descendants of Esau, and that I've given this land to Esau, and they're going to think that you're out to conquer them, so you've got to play it cool, I don't want you messing with these people, this is their land, I want you to see if you can negotiate passage through their land but pay for it. Well, that involves a few things. What is the deal with Esau? Well, again on the back of your handout you'll see a slide called Abraham's family tree, and you'll see where it says Terah, Nahor, Abraham, Ishmael/Isaac, Jacob/Esau. Edom is Esau's descendants, so the people who are the Edomites in whom they are setting on this land, they are descendants also of Abraham, generations ago.

But the point is that because they are part of Abraham's family, they were granted this land, because remember what God said to Abraham, I will give you MANY nations, many people will come out of you. And so this is one of the peoples who have come out of Abraham. And having come out of Abraham God has given him the land. So that's the point here, and this is an interesting thing about this concept of history, that God has given certain people certain real estate on this planet, and it's not always the same, Acts 17:26-27 gives you the historical controls of what God's thinking about when He's doing this, but basically what Acts 17 tells us is that He does it in order to maximize God-consciousness in a group of people. He says I determine the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation, purpose clause, in order that they might seek after Me and find Me. It's His gracious way of working history to stimulate people to search after Him. It doesn't mean that He's necessarily prospering them, it means that historically they are put in time/space dimensions that precipitate hunger, or trigger, should trigger a thinking after God, a hunger after God.

Now what God is doing here, though, is these people do not share the royal Grant. What they share is they share part of Abraham's blessing, but it's not the tight compact thing that Israel has. So what do we see? If you'll turn to Numbers 20, back a book, and we're going to read a dirty little secret with Edom, and interestingly, Moses did not bring this up. But here's what really happened. So here they are, they are approaching Edom and the following event occurs, but Moses does not bring this event up yet.

In Numbers 20:14 here's what happened when they tried to approach Edom. "Now Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom." It says, "Thus your brother Israel," why does he say "your brother?" Because they are in the same tribe under Abraham. "...You know all the hardships that has befallen us, [15] how our fathers went down to Egypt, and we dwelt in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians afflicted us and our fathers. [16] When we cried out to the LORD, He heard our voice and sent the Angel and brought us up out of Egypt; no here we are in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your border. [17] Please let us pass through your country. We will not pass through the fields, the vineyards; nor will we drink water from wells; we will go along the King's Highway; we will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory. [18] Then Edom said to him, 'You shall not pass through my land, lest I come out against you with the sword.' [19] So the people of Israel said

to him, 'We will try to by the highway, and if I, or my livestock drink any of your water, then I will pay for it; let me only pass through on foot, nothing more.' [20] And he said, 'You will not pass through,' So Edom came out against them with many men and a strong hand. [21] Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through the territory; so Israel turned away from him."

Now if you'll look at your handout you'll see the map shows that after they did that they had to come back down from where they were going to penetrate the western border of Edom, and they went back down to Ezion-geber which is the head of the Red Sea thing that's sticking up there in the map. So they had to move in a totally different path. Now what do you suppose is going on here? The question is why.... Oh, and then something else in the passage, not only do we have this question about why did God have them try to do this, we also have a question in verse 7 and that is where do you suppose they got their money to be able to buy food and buy water? And that's a question. Well, the answer is an interesting economic answer and this has to do with the economy of Israel. The first thing is that the economy, remember Israel became a nation at Sinai; it was just a group of people that left Egypt. What happened in the last plague, just as they were going to leave, that was very economically important. They asked for silver and gold and what happened was the Egyptians were so glad to get these people out of there that they gave them, plus the fact that they were scared, they gave them silver and gold. And what had happened is ironically that was the back wages for all the slave labor that those people had done building the pyramids and everything else, and so they were paid.

And so now they go out in the desert and the point is that they have the money, they have initialized their economy, by they way, they didn't do it printed money, they did it with precious metal money, and that initialized their economy. So they go out in the desert, they can't spend the money out in the desert for food because God is going to provide the food and so on. Well, how did they, because God clearly says in verse 7 that He blessed the work of their hands. So it's apparent that in some way either they raised flocks out there and were able to sell, conduct business with the Midianites, because the Midianites traveled through that same area again and again, that's how Joseph got down to Egypt. So apparently they were involved in some sort of businesses that they were trying to get started out there in the dessert; they did something for forty years. So there was an economic life to these people. And so they had the economics but they had this strange thing where they can't go into the land of Edom.

Next we're going to answer how all this has to do in a moment but let's go now to the next section, verses 8-15. "And when we passed beyond our brethren, the descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir, away from the road of the plain, away from Elath and Ezion Geber, we turned and passed by way of the Wilderness of Moab. [9] Then the Lord said to me, 'Do not harass Moab, nor contend with them in battle, for I will not give you any of their land as a possession, because I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot as a possession.'" So now we have another strange thing, don't bug them, that is not your land. Now you keep this in mind because you'll hear people say well, gee, God let the Jews go beat to death everybody in the Near East. No He didn't, check out these passages; He was very clear about what land was the Jews and what land was not for Israel. And here

you've got distinct passages that show you that all the land was not given to Israel.

But then there's this other strange thing, verse 10, 11 and 12. And if you look, most of your Bibles will have this in a parenthesis, and that's because this is an editor of some sort that came in when this book was compiled, presumably after the death of Moses because the book had to be compiled after the death of Moses because it's got the account of Moses' death. So it's an accurate memory of his sermons, of his teaching, but it was obviously compiled postmortem. And this editor sticks this thing in here. So you want to start thinking about, when you see stuff like this, now what is going on here; first they can't... they're supposed to cross the land but it's not theirs, then we have this little thing in 10, 11 and 12, "(The Emim had dwelt there in times past, a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim. 11 They were also regarded as giants, like the Anakim, but the Moabites call them Emim. [12] The Horites formerly dwelt in Seir, but the descendants of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their place, just as Israel did to the land of their possession which the Lord gave them.)"

Clearly that editorial remark comes after the conquest. So what is the meaning of this little note? Well, the people, the Emim and the Horites that are like the Anakim are a group that are strange in the Near East, these were giant people. Now whether they were genetic freaks, or what happened, they were just giant people literally. And there's some archeological evidence, like King Og and we'll see him later, his bed, I mean, we're talking about ten, eleven feet long, his bed. So this is not a fairy story. These people literally are big people. Now what do you remember when Israel, forty years before, sent the spies into the land. When the spies came back, what was one of the stories they used to discourage the people? There are giants in the land, what are we going to do?

Now here's the argument that Moses is using; keep in mind Moses has got to turn the thinking around in this defeated group of people. Now what he's saying is: Look at these people, look at Edom; Edom doesn't even have the royal grant that you guys have and they took care of their land and they were given their land by God, there were giants in their land and what did they do? They kicked them out. What's the implication? You can do it. That's why this text is in there, to show them over and over again there's "no testing taken you but such as is common to man and God is faithful, and He will not allow you to be tested above that which you are able." And there's the historical illustration of it. When these people didn't have half the blessing that was given to Israel, but defeated, mental attitude defeat. They didn't have half the assets before God that Israel had and yet they possessed that land, God gave it to them, they prospered and they drove out the giants in their land, the Emim were eliminated.

So if you'll again look on the map you'll see the next word up is Moab, and see, that's north of Edom. And then north of Moab is Ammon. Now who are those people. Well, look down on the chart of Abraham's family tree and you'll see that they are related to Abraham through his brothers. You see there's Lot, and then Lot, you know, he goes out, he loses his wife, and his daughters get all excited because they don't have any man, they're wandering around, so they get their father drunk and you have an incest

situation. So now you've got Ammon, and by the way, where do you see Ammon in today's news? What is the capital of Jordan? Amman. Where do you think that word comes from? The incestuous created son of Lot. So you have Ammon and Moab, and they were given land, again as part of the peripheral outer ring of Abrahamic blessings, and they had their land and the Jews were not supposed to go into their land either.

So I want you to see how precise God is here so that you can, in conversation when somebody tells you about how awful the Jews were and they went in and they just clobbered everybody, whoever tells you that has never read the text; just slow down and read the text. So let's look at what happens.

It says in verses 8-15 we have the story of Moab, and then we go to the third section, verses 16-23 and look at what it says again. "So it was, when all the men of war had finally perished from among the people, [17] that the Lord spoke to me, saying: [18] 'This day you are to cross over at Ar, the boundary of Moab.]19] And when you come near the people of Ammon, do not harass them or meddle with them, for I will not give you any of the land of the people of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the descendants of Lot as a possession.'" Now look, here's that editorial thing, see the parenthesis, [20]" (That was also regarded as a land of giants; giants formerly dwelt there. But the Ammonites call them Zamzummim, [21] a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim." Why do you suppose they keep saying they're as tall as the Anakim?" Because it was the Anakim that the spies saw that freaked them out.

They are as "tall as the Anakim, But," it says, "the Lord destroyed them before them, and they dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, [22] just as He had done for the descendants of Esau, who dwelt in Seir, when He destroyed the Horites from before them. They dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, even to this day.[23] And the Avim, who dwelt in villages as far as Gaza--the Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor, destroyed them and dwelt in their place.)" That was another thing that went on over toward the coast; there was another group of giants over there in the west, in the coastlands, and the Caphtorim, the Caphtorim came from Caphtor and they destroyed them. So what this editorial comment shows you, that in the flow of history these other people groups were able to handle themselves and they didn't have any of the operating assets that Israel had.

Notice something else in the text; notice in verse 16, and this shows you how precisely sovereign God is, "So it was, when all the men of war had finally perished from among the people," see, that's the death of the last guy, so the timing on the map is they have moved around Ammon, see, they're coming up now around Edom on the east side going north and they come to this river, Ar, and what God says, the timing is explicit here, the last guy, probably 70, 60 years old, the last guy of the first generation dies. As soon as they have that guy's funeral we have, right here said, when he had finished, then the Lord spoke to me and said let's go. So of all the hundreds of thousands of men who had to die in that first generation, it was God just kept waiting and kept waiting and kept waiting and He didn't give the command to move out until the last guy died. Now is that telling us that God is precise in history or not. Okay.

We want to look now on the chart, I think it's on your handout, here's the argument. Let's go back to that argument chart, make sure we understand what's happening here, and then we're going to go to a New Testament passage in a moment. We're expanding the outline so that in Deuteronomy 2:1-23 we have entitled it negotiating already allocated lands. Honoring the Abrahamic Covenant land grants, in other words, these were kind of minor grants off in the periphery of Abraham, not formal like the one to Israel. And then the three sections we've looked at tonight, verses 1-7, 8-15 and 16-23 honoring the land grant to Esau, honoring the land grant to Moab, honoring the land grant to Ammon. So there God's sovereignly giving areas of real estate to these people.

Now there's also a few things we left out and we want to go back now and recycle and pick these up. There's a passage in the New Testament that gives us a perspective on dealing with people, and in particular dealing with other believers, and dealing with other believers that may or may not get along with us. But they're God's people, so what do we do. Let's turn to the Gospel of John, John 21. In this passage, in John 21:20 we have a little incident that happens between the Lord, Peter and John. C. S. Lewis, in the Narnia Chronicles has a neat exposition of this. But here it is, the original. Peter, verse 20, "Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the table, and said, 'Lord, who is the one who betrays You?' [21] Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what about this man?" In other words, Peter wants to know somebody else's business. And isn't it interesting what Jesus says in response. [22] "Jesus said to him, 'If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me.'"

In other words, basically it's none of your business, I have a plan for John and I have a plan for you, you should be worried about my plan for you, not my plan for John. And isn't it interesting that in this maneuver we've watched, the entire nation of Israel, basically what God has told them is what Edom does is none of your business, I've got a relationship with Edom, now I have a relationship with you, so look to Me, don't worry about what Edom does, and don't worry about what we're doing with Edom, keep your eyes on our relationship, on how I'm relating to you. That is sufficient. And sometimes I think we need to do this, there's a boundary, there's a careful balance, I think, where between exhorting and coming alongside a brother and at the same time there's also kind of a boundary there where we respect the fact that God is working in that person's life and we have to respect that. And that's the plan and God basically says you know, I have a plan for that person and I'm concerned with it so just mind your business there. And you see Him working here with Edom, Ammon and Moab.

Now there's something else here too that we want to look at, going back to Deuteronomy, and that is the argument from the lesser to the greater and it's an argument that you see Paul use. Paul uses something like this in Romans 8, and I mentioned this last time but it's the same sort of logical argument, and Moses is using this with the people. Romans 8:32, he said, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not, with Him, freely give us all things." It's an argument from the greater to the lesser. In other words, whatever trial we face in this life, that trial does not compare in dimension to our biggest trial, which

was how are we to be reconciled as sinners before a holy, righteous God. That's our big test and that's been solved. That was solved with the complete atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. And what Paul is arguing here is that if God did the most for us at the cross, can we trust Him to deal with the mosquitoes of life, when He has already dealt with the major problem.

Now that's the same kind of logic Moses is trying to get through to these disheartened, discouraged people. On the eve of the conquest he is going to call them back to conquer; they are going to confront the test the first generation failed, and they are going to need encouragement. And the way we've watched Moses deal with this encouragement problem is he's gone back to the actual record of God's dealings. He could have, you know, done some emotional thing and gone through some work up, and it's not to say that emotions aren't there, but emotions have to follow thinking, and he has to get these people to think right. And there's an argument to this book, there's an argument to what Moses is doing. He wants them to reason, he wants them to see Edom and he wants them to think in their heads that if this people can do it, I can do it, under God of course. That if God could do this with Moab, and God could do this with Ammon, why can't He do it with us. So the argument from the lesser to the greater is the whole reason here in these first 23 verses of chapter 2. That's what's going on.

And what you want to take away from this is that in times of discouragement, in times of disaster one of the first things we never do is... we always forget and we never go back to the basics. And the basics are to go back and remember that God is sovereign over history, He works all things after the counsel of His will, and it's awfully hard, sometimes, to think this when you're upset. Now when you're excited you think, is He really in charge, and there's always a temptation there, there's a still voice that says no He isn't, or He doesn't really care. And that's where, when your thinking stops your faith is going to stop. Your faith cannot be greater than how you thought through what God is like and what His attitude is toward you, what He has done through the Lord Jesus Christ. So Moses has to create in these people a new mentality.

So now, having seen the three tests we've seen in chapter 2, what they should be saying to themselves, after three times, not two witnesses but we have three witnesses; they should say to themselves when we are given the order to move out, to conquer, in the name of Jehovah, that He is walking with us, and they ought to think was God's flaming, fiery presence with Edom? No. Was God's Tabernacle with Ammon? No. Did Ammon, Moab or Edom ever get the logistical grace that God has given to us for forty years in the dessert, bringing water out of rocks, bringing manna every twenty-four hours? Did they ever get any of that? No. Well now isn't this an amazing thing; they never experienced the depth of God's grace, they never experienced the provisions of God, and yet they were able to do it. Now why can't we do that?

So that's the thrust, and as we go further, I want to cut off here tonight because I think if we stop at Deuteronomy 2:25 you'll see what happens next, beginning in 2:26 you'll have the actual beginning of conquest. This is where they first have their first battle, and it's going to be with Sihon, and then in Deuteronomy 3:1 they're going to have another

King, Og, and then later in chapter 3 they're going to settle in their first conquered lands east of the Jordan River. Don't tell the United Nations that, that's supposedly occupied land, but in the Bible that is part of the Promised Land.

Okay, we let out a little early tonight because I just don't want to get involved in the big argument that's going to come up about the conquered; we want to see that as a separate thing. Are there any questions so far before we close. If you think of something I'll be up here for a few minutes.