

## **Lord Allocates Land**

HN 9/1/05 pm

Reading: Deuteronomy 2:1-34-46, Acts 17

Study: Deuteronomy 2:1-23

Psalms: 100, 96:1-6, 96:7-10, 46:8-11

Moses was speaking to Israel *on this side of the Jordan in the wilderness*. This book of Deuteronomy is a record of Moses explaining the law to a new generation of Israelites as they were poised to go in and possess the land. Their parents had failed to go up and possess it. Their disobedience brought the wrath of God upon them. They were sent back into the desert where they would live – and die – for forty years.

Moses was teaching a new generation the law of God and his mighty works done among them. Their parents had failed to teach them how to live by faith. Fear blinded them to God's mighty works in the past, his deliverance, his provision and his protection. Moses wanted this next generation to know their past and to learn from it – to understand the works of God in their midst.

It is amazing how in just one generation there can be a complete turnabout in the way people respond to the gospel. Too often we see the second generation of Christians turning away from the Lord. And when they as parents fail to teach their children the way of the Lord their children suffer greatly, lacking a knowledge of God and his ways.

Some of you are thankful for parents who taught you the Scriptures. Those who did not have such parents will have found it more difficult to learn about the Lord and walk in his ways. Of course we must all be thankful for his abundant grace that overrides any parental teaching or lack thereof.

But let us be attentive to the great responsibility we have as parents to teach our children, and indeed teach the young in our society, the ways of the Lord. The 'baby boom' generation largely turned away from the Lord and made the things of this world their gods. They were sent to Sunday School to learn about the Lord, but spurned what they learnt. Consequently they have denied their own children such a blessing. We have a new generation of Biblically illiterate young people.

This new generation of Israelites needed to be taught the law of God. They needed to see how the hand of God guided them in the past and to be thankful for his provisions and his blessings. Their parents remember were grumblers. They grumbled against Moses and grumbled against the Lord. They did not set a good example for their children. Are you part of a grumbling generation or are you thankful to the Lord for his mercy and grace?

### **Lost Generation**

*We skirted Mt. Seir for many days*. With these brief words Moses covered the 38 years Israel spent in the desert after refusing to go up into Canaan. Later in this chapter he reminds them that the previous generation all perished, they were destroyed according to the word of the Lord (2:14-16).

Fighting men, men 20 years and over at the time of the rebellion, all perished in the desert. Not one was left as they crossed from Moab to Ammon (2:19) – except Joshua and Caleb.

For 40 years they would bear their guilt before they died- one year for each day they were on their spying mission. But the Lord was with them during those desert years. He was watching over the next generation. Even their ungodly parents were better than none, and so this next generation grew up under the blessings of the Lord – *they lacked nothing* (2:7). They were now the leaders of the people of God being instructed by the great servant of the Lord, Moses.

### **Land Given To Others**

Moses was leading the people all those years in the desert. Then the Lord told him to take them up the eastern side of the rift valley or the Jordan valley. They were to pass through the territory of Esau (Edom), of Moab and Ammon. The Lord had already given these three nations land as their own possession. Israel would not be given an inch of their territory.

Esau was of course the brother of Jacob or Israel, the father of their nation. Moab and Ammon were also related but they go back further. They were sons born to Lot the nephew of Abraham.

Esau inhabited land south of the Dead Sea around Mt. Seir. Israel wanted to pass through this, traveling along the King's Highway. They would not take any food or water from the Edomites without paying for it. Elsewhere (Numbers 20:18) it is written that Edom did not give them permission to pass through their land. It seems they had to skirt around the territory of Esau.

Moab lived north of Edom, between the Zered and Arnon rivers, and then Ammon still further north. These two nations were also given their land as a possession from the Lord and Israel would not get any of their land (2:19).

God has in fact determined the place where all nations dwell (Acts 17:26). God rules over all the nations of the earth and determines where each one will dwell. Esau, Moab and Ammon were in their allotted places and Israel would have their own land according to the divine plan. In fact long ago, even in the time of Abraham, God had determined that they would become a nation and dwell in Canaan – they would have their own possession.

Is this still true today? Does God determine where each nation will dwell? Does he determine where each family will dwell? Does he give us each one our own possession? Men and their leaders think they determine such things. But the sovereign Lord is active is doing more than we might realise.

Let us note two things in this regard before we move to our last point. After stating that the Lord determines the dwelling places for men Paul says that this is for the purpose *that they should seek the Lord* (Acts 17:27). The Lord made the nations and settled them within the *boundaries of their dwellings* – that they should seek him. O what trouble comes, what disaster overcomes men and nations when they are not content to live within the land the Lord gives them.

Secondly remember that those who are in Christ Jesus look not to any earthly inheritance but to their heaven inheritance in Christ Jesus. The time we spend in our earthly dwelling place is

but a fraction of that which we will spend in our heavenly dwelling place – we will be there for eternity. As those who are in Christ Jesus let us look to our heavenly home, the place Jesus has gone to prepare for us.

### **Defeat of Giants**

Not only were Esau, Moab and Ammon given their possession by the Lord, but they destroyed the Rephaim or giants that lived there before them. These people lived there in the days of Lot (Genesis 14:5). These were much the same as the Anakim who their fathers saw in their spying mission. They were called different names by the Moabites and Ammonites.

Moses even goes to the trouble of telling them about similar people (Avim) who lived across in the west at Gaza. They were defeated by the Capthorites – possibly another name for the Philistines. Goliath who stood at 3m (9 feet) tall may we have been a remnant of this tribe of giants.

Why did Moses go to the trouble of telling the Israelites all this detail, all this history that was not their own history? The record of these prior inhabitants is given like a postscript in the text – most versions have it in parenthesis. Moses considered it important because he was encouraging the people to go in and possess the land. They may well meet more giants.

They had in fact met giants in their possession of the lands east of Jordan (2:12). Og, king of Bashan, was no small fellow – his bed was over 4m long (3:11).

Do you face any giants in your life at present? Do you face an enemy so big and powerful that you wonder how you will go on? Do you wonder if you will ever get victory over some vice or some obstacle in your life?

We learnt last time of the failure of their parents to go up and possess the land. Fear ruled in their hearts rather than faith. In moving north towards the ‘promised’ land the next generation passed through territories given by the Lord to their brethren. Moses explained to them how these people had defeated giants. They had gone in and possessed the land the Lord gave them.

Moses gave them a divine view of history, a heavenly perspective upon the history of the nations. In fact most of Scripture is an historical record – a history of the nations and of the people of God. But it is a history from the divine perspective. It is a history in which we see the hand of God determining all things, not only where people and nations dwell.

You will be encouraged in your life if you read this book and learn from it. You will be able to go up against the giants in your life knowing that the omnipotent and ever faithful God whom you serve has defeated all your enemies. Even the ultimate enemy of all mankind, death, has been defeated by the ultimate and supreme sacrifice of the only begotten son of God, Jesus Christ our blessed saviour and Lord.

*Rev. Dr. Dennis K. Muldoon*