

# Deuteronomy

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Study # 04

October 6, 2010

**"The deliverance from Egypt was a signal demonstration of the sovereign grace of God. The Egyptians were judged with respect to their idolatry, and the Israelites were rescued and spared, in spite of having become associated with their oppressors in idolatrous practices. It is plain that the principle of sovereign grace alone will account for such facts. This is called putting the difference between Israelites and Egyptians (Ex. 8:23; 11:7). In harmony with this it is repeatedly stated in the Pentateuch, that the source of Israel's privilege lies exclusively in free divine grace, not in any good qualities possessed by the people from themselves (Deut. 7:7; 9:4-6)." —  
Geerhardus Vos**

## MOSES' FIRST SERMON - PART ONE

The LORD, through Moses, tells the Israelites that they were a chosen people and why they were chosen.

Let me make a most important point regarding Israel as God's chosen people. They were chosen to be a separate people from all the other people on the earth to honor God and to be a witness to the other nations.

Their choosing has absolutely nothing to do with an individual's justification. If you ever truly grasp that signal truth it will settle your eschatology as to the place of the Jews and the Church.

It is my considered opinion that confusing God's choosing of a people with individual justification is the root of all the confusion about OT prophecy and its fulfillment and application to the redeemed of the Lord.

If the people referred to as "Israel according to the flesh," are justified it goes against Romans 9 and results in more than one way to be saved; viz. by grace through faith alone.

## They were a chosen people:

The fourth plague.

Ex 8:20-24

<sup>20</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh as he comes out to the water. Then say to him, 'Thus says the LORD : "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. <sup>21</sup> Or else, if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms *of flies* on you and your servants, on your people and into your houses.

The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms *of flies*, and also the ground on which they *stand*. <sup>22</sup> And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms *of flies* shall be there, in order that you may know that I *am* the LORD in the midst of the land. <sup>23</sup> I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be." <sup>24</sup> And the LORD did so. Thick swarms *of flies* came into the house of Pharaoh, *into* his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt. The land was corrupted because of the swarms *of flies*.

The final blow:

Ex 11:4-8

<sup>4</sup> Then Moses said, "Thus says the LORD: 'About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt; <sup>5</sup> and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the female servant who *is* behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the animals. <sup>6</sup> Then there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as was not like it *before*, nor shall be like it again. <sup>7</sup> But against none of the children of Israel shall a dog move its tongue, against man or beast, that you may know that the LORD does make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.' <sup>8</sup> And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, 'Get out, and all the people who follow you!' After that I will go out." Then he went out from Pharaoh in great anger.

## Why they were chosen:

Deut 7:6-8

<sup>6</sup>"For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. <sup>7</sup>The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; <sup>8</sup>but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Deut 9:4-6

<sup>4</sup>"Do not think in your heart, after the LORD your God has cast them out before you, saying, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land'; but *it is* because of the wickedness of these nations *that* the LORD is driving them out from before you. <sup>5</sup>*It is* not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart *that* you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations *that* the LORD your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. <sup>6</sup>Therefore understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you *are* a stiff-necked people.

## Their missionary purpose

Isa 49:6

<sup>6</sup>Indeed He says,  
'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant  
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,  
And to restore the preserved ones of Israel;  
I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles,  
That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

Moses first sermon [1:6 to 4:49] is brief but it is the foundation for what is to follow. Moses follows the same pattern in his sermons that the Apostle Paul used in his letters. First there is a statement of fact [what happened or doctrine] and then a "therefore" or the application of the facts or doctrine.

In Romans Paul gives eleven chapters of doctrine and then in chapter 12 he writes:

Rom 12:1-3

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. <sup>2</sup>And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

In Galatians Paul deals with the danger of apostasy; the Jews going back under the law with the conception of that being a way to be justified. Of course no one was ever justified by the “deeds of the law” but that is what most of the Jews believed.

Gal 5:1-6

Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. <sup>2</sup>Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. <sup>3</sup>And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. <sup>4</sup>You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt to* be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. <sup>5</sup>For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. <sup>6</sup>For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

And the same pattern is found in Ephesians; three chapters of doctrine and three chapters of “so what.”

Eph 4:1-6

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, <sup>2</sup>with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup>endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup>*There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; <sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

Moses, in Deut 1:6 to 3:29, tells the Israelites what God has done for them and because of that he tells them what they should do. Therefore....

Deut 4:1-6

Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you. <sup>2</sup> You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. <sup>3</sup> Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal Peor; for the LORD your God has destroyed from among you all the men who followed Baal of Peor. <sup>4</sup> But you who held fast to the LORD your God *are* alive today, every one of you.

<sup>5</sup> "Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according *to them* in the land which you go to possess. <sup>6</sup> Therefore be careful to observe *them*; for this *is* your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.'

Moses' first sermon is mostly an introduction to the main lessons in the second sermon [5:1 to 28:68].

What God has done [1:6 to 3:29]

The Israelites have arrived back at the plains of Moab after leaving Egypt and wandering for forty years in the wilderness. Much has happened during this time and Moses selects the events that will give reasons why they should obey God in gratitude and love.

Moses uses repetition in Deuteronomy which is a good technique in teaching.

George Adam Smith, in the "Cambridge Bible" on Deuteronomy, writes: "...like a flowing tide on a broad beach, the long parallel waves dashing, withdrawing and dashing again." University Press, 1950, p 13.

The main lessons are repeated several times. Perhaps the most important lesson is God's providential care for His people.

God often “interferes” with our plans. We tend to want to settle down and get comfortable but God puts something in our life that forces us to take action, often something that we otherwise would not have done.

You have waited long enough!

Deut 1:5-8

<sup>5</sup> On this side of the Jordan in the land of Moab, Moses began to explain this law, saying, <sup>6</sup> “The LORD our God spoke to us in Horeb, saying: ‘You have dwelt long enough at this mountain. <sup>7</sup> Turn and take your journey, and go to the mountains of the Amorites, to all the neighboring *places* in the plain, in the mountains and in the lowland, in the South and on the seacoast, to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the River Euphrates. <sup>8</sup> See, I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers – to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – to give to them and their descendants after them.’

God had given the Israelites a vast expanse of land, “to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the River Euphrates.”

The history of the conquest of Canaan shows that the Israelites never finished what God had commanded, i.e. the total destruction of the inhabitants of the land.

Josh 13:1

Now Joshua was old, advanced in years. And the LORD said to him: “You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed.

The only answer for this failure is unbelief. God had said:

<sup>1:8</sup> See, I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers – to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – to give to them and their descendants after them.’

See how tender God’s encouragement is. God speaks as a parent to a child.

Deut 1:29-33

<sup>29</sup> “Then I said to you, ‘Do not be terrified, or afraid of them. <sup>30</sup> The LORD your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, <sup>31</sup> and in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.’ <sup>32</sup> Yet, for all that, you did not believe the LORD your God, <sup>33</sup> who went in the way before you to search out a place for you to pitch your tents, to show you the way you should go, in the fire by night and in the cloud by day.

## Leadership 1:9-18

Moses had to learn how to delegate authority.

### Ex 18:13-27

<sup>13</sup> And so it was, on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening. <sup>14</sup> So when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, "What *is* this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?"

<sup>15</sup> And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. <sup>16</sup> When they have a difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His laws."

<sup>17</sup> So Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you do *is* not good. <sup>18</sup> Both you and these people who *are* with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing *is* too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself. <sup>19</sup> Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. <sup>20</sup> And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do. <sup>21</sup> Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place *such* over them *to be* rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. <sup>22</sup> And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be *that* every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear *the burden* with you. <sup>23</sup> If you do this thing, and God *so* commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their place in peace."

<sup>24</sup> So Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. <sup>25</sup> And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people: rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. <sup>26</sup> So they judged the people at all times; the hard cases they brought to Moses, but they judged every small case themselves.

<sup>27</sup> Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went his way to his own land.

### Num 12:3

(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)

Meekness means to be teachable.

Moses reminds them of this important change in government here in Deuteronomy.

Deut 1:9-18

<sup>9</sup>"And I spoke to you at that time, saying: 'I alone am not able to bear you. <sup>10</sup>The LORD your God has multiplied you, and here you *are* today, as the stars of heaven in multitude. <sup>11</sup>May the LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times more numerous than you are, and bless you as He has promised you! <sup>12</sup>How can I alone bear your problems and your burdens and your complaints? <sup>13</sup>Choose wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men from among your tribes, and I will make them heads over you.' <sup>14</sup>And you answered me and said, 'The thing which you have told *us* to do *is* good.' <sup>15</sup>So I took the heads of your tribes, wise and knowledgeable men, and made them heads over you, leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, leaders of tens, and officers for your tribes.

<sup>16</sup>"Then I commanded your judges at that time, saying, 'Hear *the cases* between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the stranger who is with him. <sup>17</sup>You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man's presence, for the judgment *is* God's. The case that is too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it.' <sup>18</sup>And I commanded you at that time all the things which you should do.

Learn from failure 1:19-46

Moses gives considerable space to the story of Israel's failure at Kadesh-Barnea.

The lesson to be learned is that God will bring judgment on disobedience. Because of the refusal of the people to enter Canaan an entire generation died in the wilderness in unbelief as they wandered about in circles for forty years.

Moses is saying, "It will happen to you as well; if you refuse to obey."

Verse 32 tells them why God judged the people.

Deut 1:29-33

<sup>29</sup>"Then I said to you, 'Do not be terrified, or afraid of them. <sup>30</sup>The LORD your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, <sup>31</sup>and in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.' <sup>32</sup>Yet, for all that, you did not believe the LORD your God, <sup>33</sup>who went in the way before you to search out a place for you to pitch your tents, to show you the way you should go, in the fire by night and in the cloud by day.



Heb 3:16-19

<sup>16</sup> For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, *was it* not all who came out of Egypt, *led* by Moses? <sup>17</sup> Now with whom was He angry forty years? *Was it* not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? <sup>18</sup> And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? <sup>19</sup> So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

But are we not all guilty of unbelief?

Take the miracle of Jesus healing of the boy with the mute spirit:

Mark 9:23-24

<sup>23</sup> Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things *are* possible to him who believes."

<sup>24</sup> Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

So there is a sense of simultaneous belief and unbelief. But I would add that does not extend to the matter of justification by faith.

Then were all those who died in the wilderness eternally lost and condemned?

Just as I make the argument that not all of Israel according to the flesh were justified, in the same way I argue that they all were not lost or condemned to hell.

To that I would plead ignorance. They all died in unbelief and in that sense were judged. But there is an Israel within Israel and the number of justified souls within the total number who died is an unknown to us.

The fact that they died physically does not prove they were lost because until the Lord returns at the end of this present age all believers will die.

God is the God of the heathen:

God is the Lord of all people whether or not they acknowledge Him as Lord.

We know that everyone will eventually acknowledge that Jesus is Lord.

Phil 2:5-11

<sup>5</sup> Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, <sup>7</sup> but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross. <sup>9</sup> Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

But with justification aside, God is merciful to all; He makes the rain fall on the just and the unjust.

So in chapter 2:1-25 Moses recalls how God protected the descendents of Esau; the Moabites and the Ammonites, who were enemies of Israel.

Deut 2:1-25

"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.

<sup>2</sup> "And the LORD spoke to me, saying: <sup>3</sup> "You have skirted this mountain long enough; turn northward. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> "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."

<sup>8</sup> "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. <sup>9</sup> 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.'"

<sup>10</sup> (The Emim had dwelt there in times past, a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim. <sup>11</sup> They were also regarded as giants, like the Anakim, but the Moabites call them Emim. <sup>12</sup> 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.)

<sup>13</sup> "Now rise and cross over the Valley of the Zered.' So we crossed over the Valley of the Zered. <sup>14</sup> And the time we took to come from Kadesh Barnea until we crossed over the Valley of the Zered was thirty-eight years, until all the generation of the men of war was consumed from the midst of the camp, just as the LORD had sworn to them. <sup>15</sup> For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them from the midst of the camp until they were consumed.

<sup>16</sup> "So it was, when all the men of war had finally perished from among the people, <sup>17</sup> that the LORD spoke to me, saying: <sup>18</sup> 'This day you are to cross over at Ar, the boundary of Moab. <sup>19</sup> 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."

<sup>20</sup> (That was also regarded as a land of giants; giants formerly dwelt there. But the Ammonites call them Zamzummim, <sup>21</sup> a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim. But the LORD destroyed them before them, and they dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, <sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> And the Avim, who dwelt in villages as far as Gaza – the Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor, destroyed them and dwelt in their place.)

<sup>24</sup> "Rise, take your journey, and cross over the River Arnon. Look, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land. Begin to possess *it*, and engage him in battle. <sup>25</sup> This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the nations under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you, and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.'

It was clear that it was God who gave the land to the Israelites and it is equally clear that God protected the Moabites and the Ammonites, at least to this extent.

God had also given lands to these other tribes.

In time, even though the Israelites believed that Jehovah was the universal God, they came to believe that He only cared for the Jews.