

# D'VARIM

## DEUTERONOMY (D'VARIM1:1 – 3:22)

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Officially, the name of this book is, אלה הדברים *eleh ha'd'varim* – “these are the words.”
  - a. Was shortened to *d'varim* – words.”
2. In ancient times this book was known as *mishneh torah*, commonly translated as “repetition (review) of the Torah.”
  - a. Based on phrase in 17:18.
3. Greek speaking Jews translated this phrase to deuteronomion – “second law.”
4. Moses had led the people to the borders of Canaan and recounts in three different addresses the wanderings over the last 40 years.
  - First – A review of Israel’s journey (1:6 – 4:40).
  - Second – Foundations of the Covenant (4:44 – 26).
  - Third – Enforcement of the Law (27 – 30).
  - End of book is last days of Moses and the charge given to Joshua.
  - The central declaration in all of *D'varim* is the Shema.
5. Once they crossed the Jordan, the people would no longer have Moses or God’s constant Presence among them as in the wilderness.
  - a. Warns them about the temptations they would encounter in Canaan.
  - b. Would need faith and discipline to avoid snares and temptation posed by neighbors.
  - c. This was the purpose of “reviewing the Torah” before Moses’ death.
6. More than a review because of 200 laws mentioned, over 70 are “new.”
  - a. This is said to be because Moses was commanded to “teach” the Torah.
7. Vilna Gaon wrote:

**“The first four books were heard directly from the mouth of the Holy One, blessed is He, through the throat of Moses. Not so Deuteronomy; Israel heard the words of the Book the same way they heard the words of the prophets who came after Moses.”**

8. They would need to grow accustomed to this in the future and respond to it.
  - a. Hints that “an evil and wicked generation seeks a sign.”
  - b. Needs something to grab their attention like a Sinai revelation.
  - c. Less likely to respond when facing the routine of daily life.
9. If they could sin when God was daily providing miracles, what would they do when there were no constant reminders of His Presence?
10. *D'varim* is a book where Moses speaks to the people those things God had spoken to him.
  - a. Occurs within last five weeks of his life.
  - b. On multiple occasions he says, “the LORD spoke to me.”
  - c. Compared to rest of Torah – “the LORD spoke to Moses.”
11. Moses conveyed to the people his understanding of what God had spoken.
  - a. Rabbinical sources consider *D'varim* to be start of Oral Torah.
  - b. God instructed him to write his words as part of the Written Torah.

12. Thus, Judaism considers Moses as *rabenu* – “our teacher.”
  - a. He was the vehicle by which God spoke to Israel.
  - b. He also explained to Israel what God meant by His instruction.

## CHAPTER 1: HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

1. Verse 1: “These are the words which Moses spoke unto all Israel ... in the wilderness.”
  - a. “Wilderness” is מדבר *midbar* which could be rendered *m’daber* – “to speak.”
2. This was beyond the Jordan as they prepare to enter the Land.
  - a. Interesting that no part of Torah was given in the Land but beyond and outside of.
3. Specifically, the region was the Aravah (Heb. ערבה).
  - a. Valley that runs north and south of the Dead Sea.
  - b. Southern portion seems to be area because it was “against Suf.”
  - c. Supposedly shortened version of *yam suf* – “Red Sea.”
4. Rabbinical sources suggest the different place names hint at sins.
5. Verse 2: “It is eleven days journey from Horeb to Kadesh Barnea by way of Mount Seir.”
  - a. The distance is only 160 – 170 miles.
  - b. One 19<sup>th</sup> century pilgrim made the journey on camel in 11 days.
  - c. Emphasizes their disobedience; at Kadesh Barnea they were poised to enter land.
  - d. Their refusal to enter upon hearing spies’ report cost them 38 years of wandering.
6. Moses is uttering words to be “heard” – “faith comes by hearing and hearing by Word of God.”
  - a. God had declared they were to possess the Land.
  - b. The spies “saw” the giants and the people “heard” their words.
  - c. Result was unbelief.
7. Spiritually speaking, more important to hear than to see.
  - a. Impressions received through sight compared to analysis involved with hearing.
  - b. Traffic cop at an auto accident.
8. Many people “listen” but do not “hear” the message.
  - a. On multiple occasions, Y’shua said, “He that has ears, let him hear.”
  - b. Implying that you might listen and still not hear.

**“I speak to them in parables, because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not; nor do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which said, ‘By hearing you shall hear and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see and shall not perceive; for this people’s heart has become gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and they have closed their eyes, lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.’ But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.” – Matthew 13:13 - 16**

9. Therefore, Israel’s heart was dulled toward God’s Word – “possess the Land.”
  - a. Even though it was a land of “milk and honey” all they could “see” were giants.
  - b. They listened to Moses but did not hear the message in what he said.
  - c. Instead of traveling 11 days from Horeb to Land, they spent another 38 years.
10. Verse 3: “In the 40<sup>th</sup> year, in the 11<sup>th</sup> month on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month, Moses spoke.”
  - a. This teaching began on 1 Shevat – 11<sup>th</sup> month counting from Aviv.

- b. Tradition places Moses' death on 7 Adar meaning it took 5 weeks to recite the book.
- 11. That he spoke these words in closing days of his life gives it special emphasis.
  - a. Jacob, Samuel and David gave this type of address as they prepared to die.
  - b. This has a deep influence upon hearts of those who hear.
- 12. Verse 5: "On the other side of Jordan...Moses began explaining this Law."
  - a. Explanation came outside the Land.
- 13. Some commentators consider this – "explaining this Law" – to mean, Moses wanted to unveil the hidden meaning in the Torah; i.e. that they could "hear" rather than just "listen."
  - a. Would hear with their heart and avoid similar catastrophe as with the spies' report.
- 14. Verse 6: The LORD spoke to us in Horeb, 'You have dwelt long enough at this mountain.'
  - a. Suggesting they had spent enough time listening to instruction.
  - b. Now it was time to walk it out.
- 15. Verse 7: "Turn and take your journey" to the Land promised to Israel.
  - a. Perhaps Hebrew Roots movement has come to that point – enough of dwelling at Sinai.
  - b. Time to start making the journey to the possession – the goal.
  - c. Flashlight analogy (knowledge, understanding and wisdom).
- 15. Verse 7: "Go to the mountain of the Amorite...until the great river Euphrates."
  - a. The land was the goal and Torah gave them ability to possess and keep.
- 16. Territories mentioned here are not in boundaries mentioned in Numbers 34:1-12.
  - a. These lands guaranteed to Abraham but withheld from them because of spies' affair.
  - b. Israel will possess these lands at coming of the Messiah.
- 17. Verses 9 – 18: Moses recounts how assistance had to be employed in order to lead them.
  - a. Not only the judges suggested by Jethro (Ex. 18).
  - b. Also 70 elders selected to help in administration of the congregation.
- 18. Verse 12: "How can I alone bear your problems, your burdens and your strife?"
  - a. It must have been overwhelming to deal with the pettiness of that many people.
- 19. Verse 13: "Choose wise, understanding and knowledgeable men ... I will make them heads."
  - a. This was not a popularity contest but men who have proven themselves.
- 20. Hebrew terms convey: חכמה *chakhmah* (wisdom), בינה *binah* (understanding) and דעת *da'at* (knowledge).
  - a. First letters in these words forms acrostic חבד Chabad.
- 21. Verse 15: "I made them heads over you."
  - a. These are distinguished from the "judges" mentioned in next verse.
- 22. The judges were to hear the issues that arose among the people without regard for station.
  - a. "You shall hear the small and great" – either meaning people or the issue itself.
  - b. Not a different law for the rich or for the poor.
  - c. Same attention given to a "great" matter should be given to a "small" matter.
- 23. "The judgment is God's" – Judge is God's representative.
  - a. Therefore, they were to "listen" and not make hasty decisions.
  - b. They are not to fear any man because of his influence; they are to fear God.
- 24. Anything that was considered too hard for these judges to decide was brought to Moses.
  - a. Hints that there are matters too hard and only Moses can decide.
  - b. Suggests to me that there are matters too hard for us and will be resolved by Messiah.
- 25. To "hear" requires knowledge, understanding and wisdom.

## CHAPTER 11: MISSION OF THE SPIES

1. Verse 19: “We journeyed from Horeb and went through that great and dreadful wilderness.”
  - a. Rabbinical sources suggest they saw the dead bodies of great snakes and scorpions.
  - b. These were destroyed by God as He went before them.
  - c. Would accentuate how He was protecting them – they saw what could have happened.
2. Verse 22: “And you came to me and said, ‘Let us send men that they may search the land.’”
  - a. To bring back word of “the way by which we should go up.”
  - b. And “of the cities into which we shall come.”
  - c. Not to determine IF they should go into the land but HOW they were to go into land.
3. Note the plan originated with the people and Moses reminds them of that.
  - a. Led to the rebellion which resulted in wandering “great and dreadful wilderness.”
  - b. They didn’t “hear” what God said but “saw” the giants.
4. Verse 23: Moses says, “This pleased me well” but may not have pleased God.
  - a. Numbers 13:2 – “send for **yourself** men...” – If you wish to do this, you send them.
5. Verse 26: “You would not go up but rebelled against me.”
  - a. Might suggest they wanted to send spies to see IF they should go up to the land.

“And **you murmured in your tents** and said, ‘Because **the LORD hates us**, He has brought us forth out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, **to destroy us. Where shall we go? Our brothers have discouraged our heart**, saying, We have seen there a people **greater and taller** than we are. **The cities are great** and walled up to the heavens, also the sons of the Anakim (giants).’ Then I said to you, ‘Do not dread them nor be afraid of them. The LORD your God who goes before you shall fight for you, according to all that He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, and in the wilderness where you have seen how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came into this place. Yet in this thing **you did not believe** the LORD your God.’ – Deuteronomy 1:27-32

6. Their view of the Creator is as a harsh and ruthless God.
  - a. They see Him as a destroyer rather than a restorer.
  - b. This is fueled by their fear of giants and great cities.
  - c. The false claim may reveal their true feelings toward Him.
  - d. People often accuse others of what they are, themselves, guilty of.
  - e. Footnote: Different “giants” are mentioned throughout this portion.
7. “In your tents” is to say, “not to my face.”
  - a. “To your tents” in 1 Kings 12:16 was indicative of division and strife, later dispersion.
  - b. All because “you did not believe.”
8. This is of interest because there are those modern “servants” who see God as ruthless.
  - a. Indeed He will judge iniquity but always seeks to restore those who are repentant.
  - b. Do they see Him as ruthless because they, in fact, are the ruthless and harsh ones?
  - c. They hide away and “murmur in their tents” causing strife and division.

“He spoke a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and **because they thought that the kingdom of God was about to appear immediately**. Therefore He said, ‘A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive a kingdom for himself, and to return. And He called his ten servants and delivered ten minims, and said to them, **Trade (do business) until I come**’”

**back. But his citizens hated him. And they sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this one to reign over us.” – Luke 19:11-14**

9. His servants were to do business, presumably with some of same people who didn't want him to reign over them.

10. Two servants used what he had given them to multiply into more; the third servant said:

**“ ‘Lord, behold, here is your mina, which I have kept (hidden) in a handkerchief. For I feared you, because you are a harsh man. You take up what you did not lay down, and you reap what you did not sow.’ And he said to him, ‘I will judge you out of your own mouth, wicked servant! You knew that I was a harsh man, taking up what I had not laid down and reaping what I did not sow. And why did you not give my silver on the bank table, and coming I might have exacted it with interest?’ And he said to those who stood by, ‘Take the mina from him and give it to him who has ten minim.’ And they said to him, ‘Lord, he has ten minim.’ For I say to you that to everyone who has, more will be given. And from him who has not, even that which he has will be taken from him.” – Luke 19:20-26**

11. The point: the wicked servant did not engage people in order to “do business.”

a. He feared his master because of his perceived harshness.

b. He hid what had been given to him

12. Some feel, in anticipation of end time events – when the Kingdom is about to appear - we must flee cities and hide out in order to survive the harsh judgment of the Creator.

a. They say, “Where shall we go? Our brethren have discouraged us” with these reports.

b. It seems, in some cases, the will to survive what's coming is motivated by fear.

c. What about those who cannot flee cities – a single mother in Bronx NY?

d. Moses told Israel, we are not to fear or be discouraged by obstacles.

13. Our goal (represented by possessing the land) is to be light to nations.

**“No one, when he has lighted a lamp, puts it in a secret place, or under a grain-measure, but on a lamp stand, so that they who come in may see the light.” – Luke 11:33**

14. If we are to possess the Land, sooner or later, we must face the giants and fortified cities.

a. We must learn to trust Him regardless of what situation we find ourselves in.

b. Lack of trust is why that generation did not inherit the land but died in wilderness.

**“And he said, ‘Take heed that you are not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Messiah; and the time draws near: do not go after them. But when you shall hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not yet.’ Then said he unto them, ‘Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: And great earthquakes shall be in various places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven. But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall be an opportunity for you to be a witness.’” – Luke 21:8-13**

15. Israel's mandate is to be a light to the nations – can't happen if removed from nations.

- a. Can't be a light in darkness if removed from view.
  - b. They were to possess the land in order to fulfill that purpose.
  - c. Their lack of trust undercut the purpose.
16. Messiah said we are to "occupy" till He comes not run and hide.
- a. Not to be terrified if war is imminent.
  - b. We will be persecuted and brought before rulers in order to be a light.
  - c. Daniel 3 – Nebuchadnezzar and three Hebrews.
17. We are to trust Him in every situation because "He shall fight for you."
- a. They (we) should know this because of "all that He did for you before your eyes."
  - b. Your experiences of the past should tell you that He is to be trusted.
18. Verse 31: "The LORD bore you (on eagles' wings) as a man bears his son."
- a. A loving father carries his son when he is too young or too weak to make journey.
  - b. He is our Father in Heaven who would never place us in situation to destroy us.
  - c. Will allow us to go through things that are in our best interests and serve His purpose.
  - d. Yet, we are not to fear.
19. Verse 34-35: The LORD heard the murmurings and determined none of that generation would possess the land.
- a. As a consequence of their perceiving the LORD as hateful and wondering where to go:
  - b. Their penalty was to live and die in a secluded place.
  - c. If objective is to flee to secluded place out of fear, might we be sentenced to same?
  - d. There is a distinction between wilderness we are called to and one we run to.
  - e. 38 years of their wanderings did not have to take place had they believed.
20. Verse 37: "The LORD was angry at me for your sakes saying, 'You shall not come go in.'"
- a. This was because of the incident at the Rock, 38 years after the mission of spies.
21. The only men of that generation who would go into the land were Joshua and Caleb.
- a. Because they did not fear the giants or fortified cities and had "heard" God's Word.
  - b. Caleb had "wholly followed the LORD."
  - c. Joshua, Moses' servant, was to go in and cause Israel to inherit the land.
22. Verse 39: "Your little ones, that you said would be prey... they shall go into the land.
- a. "This day (they) have no knowledge of good and evil."
  - b. Because of this, they are trusting of a kind and loving Father.
  - c. We are to come to Him as little children.

**"Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven (the Land). Therefore whoever shall humble himself like this little child, this one is the greater in the kingdom of Heaven." – Matthew 18:3-4**

23. Those who trust will inherit the Land (Kingdom) and will be considered greatest.
- a. It will not be what you know that matters most but who you know.
24. Many in this day fear what is coming and how it will affect their children.
- a. Because of the father's obedience to put blood on door, firstborn was saved.
25. Verse 40: That generation commanded to take their journey through the wilderness.
- a. They were to vagabonds and wanderers because of their response to God's admonition.
  - b. Reminiscent of Cain's sentence who ignored God's counsel.
  - c. Like Cain, they sought to overturn that decision by going up against the Amorites.
  - d. They were defeated by them soundly.

26. Verse 45: “You returned and wept before the LORD but He did not hearken to your voice.”
- These tears were not over the sorrow of sin but of the consequences of sin.
  - This is attrition as opposed to contrition (jail-cell salvation).

## CHAPTER 2: SECOND DISCOURSE

- While first discourse emphasized the reward of doubt, fear and rebellion, this portion accentuates the reward of repentance and obedience to God.
  - Before he noted defeats, here he recalls the victories that came 38 years later.
- He also warned them that, though they were again at Edom’s borders they were not to harass Edom in any way.
- Verse 1 -2: After circling Mount Seir for some time, they turned northward.
- Verse 4-5: They were not to contend with Edom because:

**“Do not meddle with them, for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot breadth, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau for a possession. You shall buy food from them for silver, so that you may eat. And you shall also buy water from them for silver, so that you may drink. For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the works of your hand. He knows your walking through this great wilderness. The LORD your God has been with you these forty years. You have lacked nothing.” – Deuteronomy 2:5-7**

- All nations have been assigned an allotment by the Creator.
  - Not even Israel is overstep the boundaries He has assigned; Israel must respect.
  - Notice it doesn’t say that Edom’s boundaries are conditional.
  - Even when David fought Edom and made them servants, he didn’t dispossess them.
- It is interesting that were to “buy” food and water from Edom.
  - This did not actually come to fruition.
  - Nevertheless, He blessed “all the works” of their hand.
  - They lacked for nothing even as they wandered in wilderness as result of rebellion.
- Turning from Edom they traveled to Moab (Heb. מואב *Moav*, literally “from father.”).
  - Again warned not to contend with Moab in any way.
  - Footnote: Route most likely traveled by Israel is part of route of Hajj.
  - Hajj steps on the path made by Israel – to cover up Israel’s footsteps?

**“Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, I have given that to you, as I said to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even to the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your border.” – Joshua 1:3-4**

- Verse 10: Had been giants (Emim) as tall and mighty as the Anakim, considered Rephaim..
  - Were called “dreaded or frightful ones.”
- Yet, they were not indestructible – they were overcome by Chedorlaomer (Gen. 14:5).

**“And the days in which we came from Kadesh-barnea, until we had come over the brook Zered were thirty-eight years; until the end of all the generation. The men of war were destroyed from the midst of the camp, as the LORD swore to them. And the hand of the**

**LORD was against them, to destroy them from among the camp, until they were consumed.” – Deuteronomy 2:14-15**

10. One rabbinic source suggests that some of these died before their natural time so as not to delay the new generation’s entry into Canaan.
  - a. Do certain generations need to pass first before another can “possess the Land”?
  - b. There is an exception – Joshua and Caleb.
11. Verse 17: God instructs them to move toward the region of Ammon.
  - a. Again, Israel is to respect the borders given to children of Lot.
  - b. Again there were giants in this place; type of Rephaim called Zamzumim.
  - c. Were destroyed by the LORD and Ammon succeeded them.
  - d. Even Lot’s children could overcome the giants.
12. Verse 24: In contrast to orders not to harass Edom, Moab and Ammon, Moses is told that the land of Sihon the Amorite is delivered into their hands.
  - a. Verse 25: God would put fear and dread of Israel upon the nations.
  - b. Even though Moses offered peace, Sihon came out against Israel and was defeated.
  - c. Israel thus possessed the land of Sihon.

### **CHAPTER 3: DEFEAT OF OG, LAST OF THE GIANTS**

1. Verse 1: Israel turns from there and makes their toward Bashan, land of Og.
  - a. Verse 2: God tells Israel they are not to fear him because God has delivered him.
  - b. Verse 4: Israel took all of his “fortified cities” (60) and possessed them.

**“For only Og king of Bashan remained of the rest of the giants. Behold! His bedstead was a bedstead of iron. Is it not in Rabbath of the sons of Ammon? Nine cubits was its length, and four cubits its width, according to the cubit of a man.” – Deuteronomy 3:11**

2. Og was the last of the race of Rephaim and with him they came to an end.
  - a. The word “bedstead” here has as Aramaic equivalent a word meaning “coffin.”
  - b. Some theorize this is speaking of his sarcophagus.
3. Verse 12-13: The land conquered was given to Reuben, Gad and part of Manasseh.
  - a. Specifically, the land of Og was given to the sons of Joseph.

**“And the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I gave to the half tribe of Manasseh, all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants.”  
– Deuteronomy 3:13**

4. He recounts the charge given to the tribes who will remain on the eastern bank that they are to fight with their brethren until the conquest is final.
  - a. He admonished them not to fear:

**“For the LORD your God, it is He who fights for you.”**

5. To possess the Land – fulfill the purpose – we must face giants and be strong and of good courage, trusting in the fact that it is He who fights for us.