

Deuteronomy 1:1-18  
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These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel across the Jordan in the wilderness, in the Arabah opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel and Laban and Hazeroth and Dizahab [east of the Jordan River].<sup>2</sup> It is eleven days' journey from Horeb [i.e. Mount Sinai; about 150 miles] by the way of Mount Seir to Kadesh-barnea.<sup>3</sup> In the fortieth year [since the exodus from Egypt; ca. 1406/1405 BC], on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses spoke to the children of Israel [the second generation], according to all that the LORD had commanded him to give to them,<sup>4</sup> after he had defeated Sihon the king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth and Edrei [see Num 21:21-35].<sup>5</sup> Across the Jordan in the land of Moab [east of Canaan], Moses undertook to expound this law [בָּאֵר *baar* – expound = “to explain, elucidate, write down clearly” HALOT, 106], saying,<sup>6</sup> “The LORD our God spoke to us at Horeb [see Ex 19:1-8. Moses repeatedly mentions the contract event at Mt. Horeb/Sinai – Deut 1:19; 4:10, 15; 5:2; 9:8; 18:16; 29:1], saying, ‘You have stayed long enough at this mountain.’<sup>7</sup> ‘Turn and set your journey, and go to the hill country of the Amorites [north-east], and to all their neighbors in the Arabah, in the hill country and in the lowland and in the Negev and by the seacoast, the land of the Canaanites, and Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.’<sup>8</sup> ‘See, I have placed the land [of Canaan] before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to give to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to them and their descendants after them [Canaan was Israel’s by divine right; cf. Gen 12:1-3; 15:18; 17:7-8; 26:3-4; 28:13-14].’<sup>9</sup> “I spoke to you at that time [shortly after the exodus], saying, ‘I am not able to bear the burden of you alone [Moses became stressed and wisely shared leadership responsibilities; Ex 18:13-26; Num 11:14-17].’<sup>10</sup> ‘The LORD your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are this day like the stars of heaven in number [as God had promised; Gen 15:5; 22:17].’<sup>11</sup> ‘May the LORD, the God of your fathers, increase you a thousand-fold more than you are and bless you [Moses desired their best], just as He has promised you!’<sup>12</sup> ‘How can I alone bear the load and burden of you and your strife?’<sup>13</sup> ‘Choose wise and discerning and experienced men from your tribes, and I will appoint them as your heads.’<sup>14</sup> “You answered me and said, ‘The thing which you have said to do is good.’<sup>15</sup> “So I took the heads of your tribes, wise and experienced men, and appointed them heads over you, [administrative] leaders of thousands and of hundreds, of fifties and of tens, and officers [i.e. military leaders] for your tribes.<sup>16</sup> “Then I charged your judges [i.e. judicial leaders] at that time, saying, ‘Hear the cases between your fellow countrymen, and judge righteously between a man and his fellow countryman, or the alien who is with him [alien = non-Israelite resident; cf. Ex 23:9; Lev 19:34].’<sup>17</sup> ‘You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not fear man [who may complain], for the judgment is God’s [i.e. according to God’s laws]. The case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it [as the supreme court].’<sup>18</sup> “I commanded you at that time [shortly after the exodus] all the things that you should do.

## Summary:

In Deuteronomy 1:1-18 Moses addressed the second generation of Israelites who were camping east of the Jordan River (Deut 1:1-5), recounting the events forty years earlier when God entered into a contract relationship with their parents at Mount Horeb/Sinai (Deut 1:6-8), after which Moses appointed military and judicial leaders to help bear the burden of leadership (Deut 1:9-18). After the exodus, God had offered the chosen land to His chosen people, Israel, which was theirs by divine right (Deut 1:1-8), for the Owner of the land promised it to them as part of the Abrahamic contract (Gen 12:1-3; 15:18; 17:7-8; 26:3-4; 28:13-14). Moses also mentions how he could not bear the responsibility of leadership alone (Deut 1:9; cf. Ex 18:13-26). If the exodus generation had walked by faith and obeyed the Lord, they would have entered the land forty years earlier; however, they forfeited their inheritance through disobedience (See Num 14:1-12; 20-24; 14:34). Now, Moses speaks to the second generation and offers them the land of Canaan which their parents had forfeited; thus, what he expounded was a covenant renewal. Moses saw how the Lord had blessed His people by making them numerous (Deut 1:10-11), and twice recognized his human inability to lead them by himself (Deut 1:9, 12). Realizing he needed the help of others, Moses said, “Choose wise and discerning and experienced men from your tribes, and I will appoint them as your heads” (Deut 1:13). The Israelites agreed with his wise request (Deut 1:14), and he took the heads of their tribes, “wise and experienced men, and appointed them heads over” them to rule (Deut 1:15a). The leadership consisted of military commanders (Deut 1:15b) and judges (Deut 1:16a). He charged Israel’s judges, saying, “Hear the cases between your fellow countrymen, and judge righteously between a man and his fellow countryman, or the alien who is with him. You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not fear man, for the judgment is God’s”. (Deu 1:16b-17a). The judges were to hear each case on its own merits and not be influenced to partiality by the social standing of those who stood before them, whether small or great. Recognizing “the judgment is God’s” meant each judge was himself being judged by “the Judge of all the earth” (Gen 18:25). This shows that judgment among God’s people is both a legal and theological matter. God is the ultimate Judge of all matters, and the judges in Israel were accountable to Him. The legal cases that were too difficult, Moses would personally handle (Deut 1:17b). Moses wanted them to be involved in the outcome of their future, so he “commanded” concerning all they “should do” (Deut 1:18). This recounting of historical events revealed, in part, God’s leading His chosen people to the chosen land He’d promised to their fathers. After the exodus from Egypt and the covenant at Mount Horeb, God worked through Moses to establish leadership among the people who would help guide them into the land.

# DEUTERONOMY MAP

1446 BC	Israel's exodus from Egypt
1446 - 1406 BC	Israel wanders in the wilderness for 40 years
1406 BC	Moses dies and Joshua is appointed leader Israel enters Canaan

