

Bible Study Guide

Deuteronomy 1 — “Looking Back to Move Forward: At the Edge of the Promised Land”

New Testament Connections

Acts 10:34 • James 2:9 • Romans 2:11 • Romans 8:31–37 • Hebrews 3:7–19

Chapter Overview

Standing on the plains of Moab, with the Jordan River and the Promised Land stretched out before them, Moses gathered Israel and began to speak. What followed was not a military briefing but a sermon of remembrance — a heartfelt retelling of forty years of wandering, failure, faithfulness, and grace.

In Deuteronomy 1:1–46, Moses recounts God’s unwavering faithfulness alongside Israel’s painful failures, especially their refusal to trust God at Kadesh-barnea. His purpose is pastoral and urgent: a new generation stands at the threshold of promise, and they must understand what brought them here — and what nearly kept their parents from ever arriving.

Section 1 — Where, When, and Why Moses Speaks

(Read Deuteronomy 1:1–5)

1. Why does Moses choose this moment — standing on the edge of the Promised Land — to rehearse Israel’s history?
2. What does the phrase “**beyond the Jordan**” suggest about perspective? How does where you stand shape what you see?
3. Moses waited until the fortieth year to speak these words. What might God be teaching us about timing and preparation?

4. In what ways is retelling our story an act of faith? How have you seen “remembering” strengthen someone’s walk with God?
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Section 2 — God’s Command to Move

(Read Deuteronomy 1:6–18)

5. God said, “**You have stayed long enough at this mountain.**” Is there a place, habit, or season in your life where God may be saying the same?
6. What does God’s promise — “**I am giving you this land**” — reveal about the relationship between divine promise and human action?
7. Moses delegated leadership to capable, trustworthy people. What qualities does he emphasize, and how do those apply today?
8. Moses instructed judges to hear small and great cases alike. What does equal treatment under leadership reveal about God’s character?
9. The command “**Do not be intimidated by anyone**” was given to those administering justice. Where do you feel pressured to compromise fairness or truth?
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Section 3 — The Spy Mission & Israel’s Failure of Faith

(Read Deuteronomy 1:19–33)

10. Israel called their journey “**that great and terrifying wilderness.**” How do fear and perspective shape the stories we tell about our challenges?

11. The spies brought back a good report, yet the people refused to go up. What made the difference between the minority and majority reports?
 12. Moses said God carried them “**as a father carries his son.**” How does this image shape your understanding of God’s care?
 13. What is the difference between asking for more information and using information as an excuse to avoid obedience?
 14. The people grumbled, “**Because the LORD hated us...**” How can suffering distort our view of God’s character?
 15. Moses described God going before them like fire by night and cloud by day. What signs of God’s presence have you overlooked during difficult times?
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Section 4 — Consequences, Grief, and a Lesson in Humility

(Read Deuteronomy 1:34–46)

16. God declared that none of the rebellious generation — except Caleb — would see the Promised Land. How do you reconcile God’s love with serious consequences?
17. Moses himself was barred from entering because of the people’s sin. How does this reflect the weight of leadership and the interconnectedness of community?

18. When the people later tried to fight “**on their own initiative,**” they were defeated. What is the difference between repentance and self-correction without God?

19. Moses said, “**You wept before the LORD, but the LORD did not listen.**” What does this teach about emotional regret versus genuine repentance?

20. Looking at the full chapter, what truth does God most want this new generation — and you — to carry into the next season?

Personal Reflection

- What part of Israel’s story in this chapter feels most familiar to your own journey right now?
 - Where have you seen God’s faithfulness in a season when you doubted His presence?
 - What is one step of obedience or trust God may be inviting you to take this week?
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Key Verse — Deuteronomy 1:30

“The Lord your God who goes before you will Himself fight on your behalf, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes.”

God does not merely point the way — **He goes before you**, clearing the path and fighting on your behalf. Whatever you are stepping into this week, you do not go ahead of Him; **He goes ahead of you.**