

**Matthew Henry's**

## **Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible**

### **Deuteronomy**

#### **Chapter 1**

**This book repeats much of the history and of the laws contained in the three foregoing books: Moses delivered it to Israel a little before his death, both by word of mouth, that it might affect, and by writing, that it might abide. The men of that generation to which the law was first given were all dead, and a new generation was sprung up, to whom God would have it repeated by Moses himself, now they were going to possess the land of Canaan. The wonderful love of God to his church is set forth in this book; how he ever preserved his church for his own mercies sake, and would still have his name called upon among them. Such are the general outlines of this book, the whole of which shows Moses' love for Israel, and marks him an eminent type of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us apply the exhortations and persuasions to our own consciences, to excite our minds to a believing, grateful obedience to the commands of God.**

*The words Moses spake to Israel in the plains of Moab, The promise of Canaan. (1-8) Judges provided for the people. (9-18) Of the sending the spies-God's anger for their unbelief and disobedience. (19-46)*

Verses 1-8 Moses spake to the people all the Lord had given him in commandment. Horeb was but eleven days distant from Kadesh-barnea. This was to remind them that their own bad conduct had occasioned their tedious wanderings; that they might the more readily understand the advantages of obedience. They must now go forward. Though God brings his people into trouble and affliction, he knows when they have been tried long enough. When God commands us to go forward in our Christian course, he sets the heavenly Canaan before us for our encouragement.

Verses 9-18 Moses reminds the people of the happy constitution of their government, which might make them all safe and easy, if it was not their own fault. He owns the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham, and prays for the further accomplishment of it. We are not straitened in the power and goodness of God; why should we be straitened in our own faith and hope? Good laws were given to the Israelites, and good men were to see to the execution of them, which showed God's goodness to them, and the care of Moses.

Verses 19-46 Moses reminds the Israelites of their march from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea, through that great and terrible wilderness. He shows how near they were to a happy settlement in Canaan. It will aggravate the eternal ruin of hypocrites, that they were not far from the kingdom of God. As if it were not enough that they were sure of their God before them, they would send men before them. Never any looked into the Holy Land, but they must own it to be a good land. And was there any cause to distrust this God? An unbelieving heart was at the bottom of all this. All disobedience to God's laws, and distrust of his power and goodness, flow from disbelief of his word, as all true obedience springs from faith. It is profitable for us to divide our past lives into distinct periods; to give thanks to God for the mercies we have received in each, to confess and seek the forgiveness of all the sins we can

remember; and thus to renew our acceptance of God's salvation, and our surrender of ourselves to his service. Our own plans seldom avail to good purpose; while courage in the exercise of faith, and in the path of duty, enables the believer to follow the Lord fully, to disregard all that opposes, to triumph over all opposition, and to take firm hold upon the promised blessings.

## Chapter 2

*The Edomites to be spared. (1-7) The Moabites and Ammonites to be spared. (8-23) The Amorites to be destroyed. (24-37)*

Verses 1-7 Only a short account of the long stay of Israel in the wilderness is given. God not only chastised them for their murmuring and unbelief, but prepared them for Canaan; by humbling them for sin, teaching them to mortify their lusts, to follow God, and to comfort themselves in him. Though Israel may be long kept waiting for deliverance and enlargement, it will come at last. Before God brought Israel to destroy their enemies in Canaan, he taught them to forgive their enemies in Edom. They must not, under pretence of God's covenant and conduct, think to seize all they could lay hands on. Dominion is not founded in grace. God's Israel shall be well placed, but must not expect to be placed alone in the midst of the earth. Religion must never be made a cloak for injustice. Scorn to be beholden to Edomites, when thou hast an all-sufficient God to depend upon. Use what thou hast, use it cheerfully. Thou hast experienced the care of the Divine providence, never use any crooked methods for thy supply. All this is equally to be applied to the experience of the believer.

Verses 8-23 We have the origin of the Moabites, Edomites, and Ammonites. Moses also gives an instance older than any of these; the Caphtorims drove the Avims out of their country. These revolutions show what uncertain things worldly possessions are. It was so of old, and ever will be so. Families decline, and from them estates are transferred to families that increase; so little continuance is there in these things. This is recorded to encourage the children of Israel. If the providence of God has done this for Moabites and Ammonites, much more would his promise do it for Israel, his peculiar people. Cautions are given not to meddle with Moabites and Ammonites. Even wicked men must not be wronged. God gives and preserves outward blessings to wicked men; these are not the best things, he has better in store for his own children.

Verses 24-37 God tried his people, by forbidding them to meddle with the rich countries of Moab and Ammon. He gives them possession of the country of the Amorites. If we keep from what God forbids, we shall not lose by our obedience. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; and he gives it to whom he pleases; but when there is no express direction, none can plead his grant for such proceedings. Though God assured the Israelites that the land should be their own, yet they must contend with the enemy. What God gives we must endeavour to get. What a new world did Israel now come into! Much more joyful will the change be, which holy souls will experience, when they remove out of the wilderness of this world to the better country, that is, the heavenly, to the city that has foundations. Let us, by reflecting upon God's dealings with his people Israel, be led to meditate upon our years spent in vanity, through our transgressions. But happy are those whom Jesus has delivered from the wrath to come. To whom he hath given the earnest of his Spirit in their hearts. Their inheritance cannot be affected by revolutions of kingdoms, or changes in earthly possessions.

## Chapter 3

*The conquest of Og king of Bashan. (1-11) The land of Gilead and Bashan. (12-20) Moses encourages Joshua. (21-29)*