



Introduction to Deuteronomy Sermon Notes

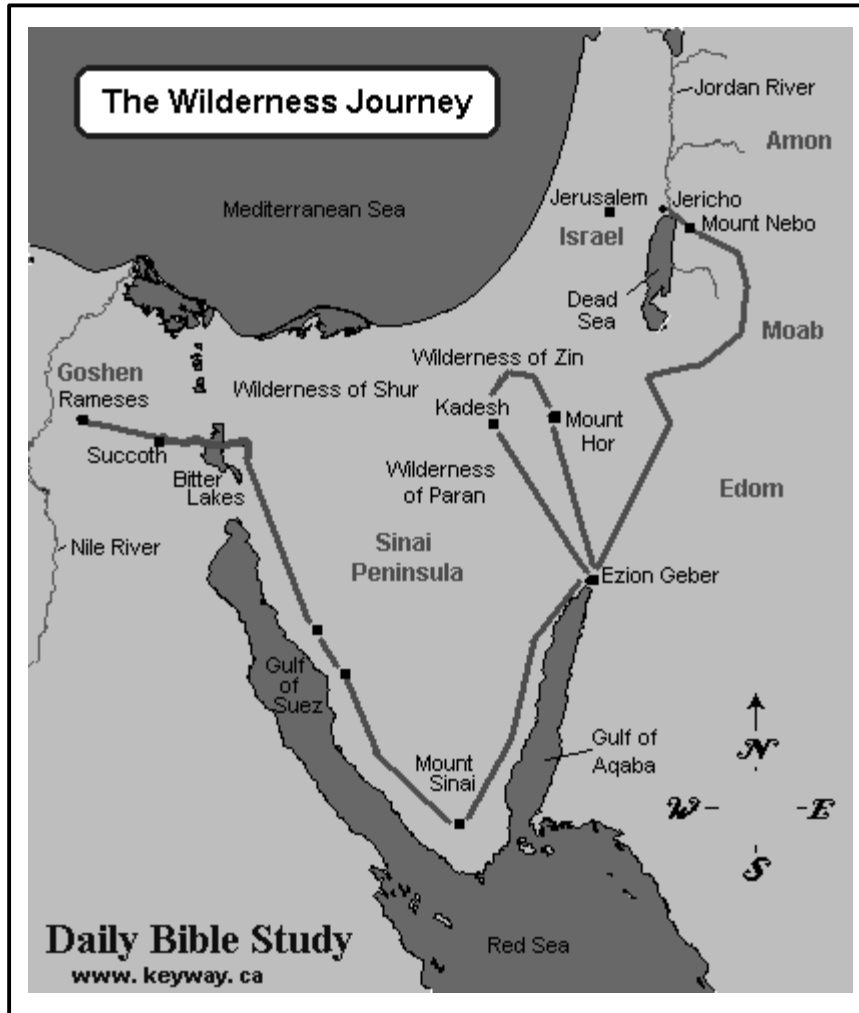
"Deuteronomy is a book about a community being prepared for a new life. Hardship and the wilderness lie behind; the promised land lies ahead. But in the present moment, there is a call for a new commitment to God and afresh understanding of the nature of the community of God's people. Though the scene is set more than three thousand years in the past, Deuteronomy is still a book of considerable contemporary relevance. Then, as now, the surrounding world was experiencing a time of change, of political tension and military engagement. But in the midst of world events, a relatively small community was being urged by Moses, the man of God, to commit itself wholeheartedly to the Lord, before engaging in the struggle for the promised land. The kingdom of God's chosen people was coming of age, unnoticed by the great powers of the time, and struggling against what were, by human standards, impossible circumstances. The book provides a paradigm for the kingdom of God in the modern world; it is a time for renewing commitment within the New Covenant and turning to the future with a view to possessing the promise of God." Peter Craigie, The Book of Deuteronomy, p7

What is Deuteronomy? It is a sermon(s) preached by Moses to the Israelites as they prepared to enter and conquer the promised land of Canaan.

What does "Deuteronomy" mean? "Deuteronomy" means "second law" (Deutero = two, nomos = law). This title could be misleading, because Moses is not literally giving a second (i.e. different) law. Rather, Moses repeats the law that was originally given by God at Mt. Sinai. Deuteronomy is a second giving of the same law.

When was Deuteronomy preached/written? The Israelites made their exodus from Egypt in the mid-fifteenth century BC (approx 1440 BC). From there they went to Mt. Sinai to make their covenant with God, and then they traveled to the promised land. However, at border of the promised land the people rebelled against Moses and the Lord and would not enter. God punished Israel, sending them to live in the desert wilderness for 40 years until the generation that rebelled had died off. After 40 years, Moses led the new generation back to the promised land. Therefore Deuteronomy takes place somewhere around 1400 BC, on the plains of Moab just east of the promised land. Moses is about 120 years and about to die. And so in Deuteronomy Moses reminds the new generation, on the verge of entering Canaan, what it means to be God's faithful covenant people.

Map 1



Map 2

