

DEUTERONOMY 1-4

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Deuteronomy chapter 1 as we continue our study through the Word of God, and we begin this last book of the Pentateuch or the first five books that Moses wrote.

One writer said this about the book of Deuteronomy. He wrote, *“Deuteronomy is one of the greatest books of the Old Testament. Its influence on the domestic and personal religion of all ages has not been surpassed by any other book in the Bible. It is quoted over eighty times in the New Testament and thus it belongs to a small group of four Old Testament books [the others being Genesis, Psalms, and Isaiah] to which the early Christians made frequent reference.”* (J. A. Thompson)

This is the fifth book of Moses or the Pentateuch, the others being Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers.

The Hebrew title of this book means *“these are the words.”*

We get our title, Deuteronomy from the Septuagint translation that calls it *“The Second Law.”*

In saying that, let me ask you this question.

What does *“The Andy Griffith Show”*, *“I Love Lucy”*, *“Batman”*, and *“The Law of Moses”* have in common?

I realize that there can be many answers but the one I want to focus on is - *“Holy Rerun, Batman.”*

In other words, they’ve all been re-released!

And that is what the book of Deuteronomy is – it’s a holy rerun.

As I have said, the word “*Deuteronomy*” literally means “*second law.*”

The Greeks used the word to mean “*copy or duplicate.*”

Thus, Deuteronomy was a refresher course on the Law of Moses for the younger generation that was about to enter the Promise Land!

In saying that I want you to also understand that this is not just a repeat of the Law we have covered already but Moses is going to expound on what he has already given on Mount Sinai as he prepares this next generation to enter into the Promise Land, as I have said.

Much of the Law that we covered was related to the priests, but now Moses is going to speak to the people in general, to give them the information that they will need to know as they walk with God into the Promise Land.

And folks, if God felt this book to be that important to the children of Israel and to include it in His Word, He must have some valuable lessons for us to learn and He has many as we will see as we go through the book of Deuteronomy!

To summarize this book, I believe Deuteronomy 5:1 does that for us. We read, “**And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: ‘Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them.’**”

You see, Moses is telling this generation, as they waited on the boarder of the Promise Land, and I believe that God is also speaking to us, that we need to **HEAR, LEARN, KEEP AND DO** the things of God because as we do, we will be blessed! It is not just head knowledge, it is not just information, but it is application!

Philosopher George Santayana wrote, “*Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.*”

Thus, the first thing Moses did in his farewell discourse was to review Israel's past and he is reminding this new generation who they were and how they got there. That basically covers Deuteronomy chapters 1-5.

You see, knowing their past, the new generation in Israel could avoid repeating the sins of their fathers. At least they had the information and now it was up to them if they would obey!

Thus, this is Moses' farewell address to the nation you might say, as Joshua will be leading the children of Israel into the Promise Land. And Moses wants to give them the tools to be successful in their journeys!

With that said, let's begin reading in Deuteronomy chapter 1, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

DEUTERONOMY 1

VERSE 1

The nation is camped in the plains of Moab; on the east side of the Jordan River and Moses is preparing this generation to enter into the Promise Land, as I have said.

It is a land that God had promised to them well over 400 years before and now it was coming to pass.

And Moses, instead of being angry because he could not enter in because of his misrepresentation of God to the people at the waters of Meribah, he shows his love for God and for the people as he speaks to them the things they need to know and do as they enter the land.

Now keep this in mind. That after receiving the Law of God at Mount Sinai the first generation was just eleven days from the Promised Land and we will see that as we read on.

Think about it. They could almost taste the milk and honey.

Let's read on and see what happens to that first generation.

VERSES 2-4

An eleven-day journey from Mount Sinai to Kadesh Barnea, on the boarder of the Promise Land ended up taking them 40 years because of unbelief. It was there at Kadesh Barnea that spies were sent into the land and when they returned, 10 out of the 12 came back with a bad report causing the entire nation to fall into unbelief and not enter in.

Think about this for a minute. It was unbelief in the promises of God that turned an 11-day trip into a 40-year death march!

But now that generation has died in the wilderness and the next generation is prepared to enter in by faith as God has already given them victories on this side of the Jordan River. He was preparing them for what is ahead. They were learning to trust in Him.

The time frame here is the fortieth year of the 11-month on the first day of the month and Moses is speaking to the people.

And during a 1-month period of time, we see Moses give to us the book of Deuteronomy, that is the period of time it covers, except for the 30-day mourning period after Moses has died at the end of the book.

VERSE 5

This is so important for pastors, for teachers, and for any of us to understand.

Moses did not just give them information, he didn't use big fancy words that no one understood, but he **EXPLAINED** these things to the children of Israel.

The Hebrew word for "**explain**" is **BAAR**, (baw-ar') and it means "**to dig deeply**" or "**to mine**" to extract all the nuggets you can from God's Word and present it in such a way that people understand how to walk with God, His truths!

Again, how important that is and that is my heart's desire as I explain to you the things of God, how to walk with God as we journey through the Word of God in this Promise Land or this Spirit-filled life!

VERSES 6-8

Horeb is the same place as Mount Sinai, and it was there that God gave to Moses the Law, spending one year there.

After a year God said it was time to move on. He did not bring them out of Egypt to dwell at Horeb, but to go and enter the land He promised to them.

Would it be easy?

Absolutely not but it was also a done deal. All they needed to do is walk by faith and possess what God has given to them.

The same is true for us. The Spirit filled life is not always easy, God is stretching us, and He is helping us to grow in the faith, but we must walk!

And notice all the land that God had given to them. This area of land includes what is today much of the Middle East. In other words, God gave to them Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, even Iraq and yet, the Jewish people never possessed all that God had given to them!

Why didn't they.

As I have said, that had to walk in and take possession of it, but they never did.

Why is this so important to us?

Because God has promised so much to us, His joy, His peace, the power of God's Spirit working in us and through us, and so much more but we don't always experience these things in our life because of fear, because we get distracted by the things of this world!

May we learn the lesson and walk by faith and take into our lives all that God has for us!

VERSES 9-18

I don't believe this is referring to the appointment of elders or judges in Exodus chapter 18 because that time frame is right after the Exodus and here the context is Mount Sinai, right before their departure.

Thus, I believe it refers to the appointment of elders or judges that are found in Numbers chapter 11.

Can you imagine trying to take care of the problems, the issues of 2 to 3 million people?

Moses was overwhelmed to say the least!

In Numbers 11:14-15 we see how overwhelmed he was, "**I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden is too heavy for me. If You treat me like this, please kill me here and now - if I have found favor in Your sight - and do not let me see my wretchedness!**"

It was so bad Moses wanted to die and thus, God instructed Moses to gather seventy men and make them elders or judges before the people.

Of this we read in Numbers 11:17, **“Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone.”**

If the situation they faced was too tough for them or they didn't know how to deal with it, then they could bring it to Moses, and he would deal with it. It took that burden off of Moses!

As we continue on, we see beginning in Deuteronomy 1:19 a continuation of this history lesson. And the reason being is that Moses wanted this younger generation to learn from their parents the mistakes that they made so that they don't repeat them!

VERSES 19-21

Here they are a little more than a year out of Egypt, and they have seen all that God has done in their lives, and with that, they are to move on and enter the land of Canaan by faith, they are not to be afraid.

Keep in mind that they have seen all that God has done for them.

He brought them out of Egypt.

He brought them through the Red Sea, destroying the Egyptian army that was after them.

He provided water and manna for them in the wilderness.

He brought them through the land of the Amorites to the boarder of the Promise Land.

Thus, how can they not trust God and enter by faith?

The same way we don't, ***UNBELIEF!***

VERSES 22-23

Why did they have to send spies into the land to check it out before they entered the land?

As I have said, ***UNBELIEF!***

God told them to go in and take the land, and they said, ***“Let’s not rush into this. Let’s get a plan, let’s see what we need to do, where we need to go first!”***

Please keep in mind that this was not the plan of God, even though God allowed it. God had given them the Land and all they had to do was walk by faith and not by sight, but they refused. Now they wanted to see what they were in for when they entered the land instead of trusting in the Lord.

And the plan did please Moses but now, as he looks back, I think he regrets that decision. You see, they would have been better off entering into the land by faith than try to figure out how God is going to do this, if this would really work and the same is true for each of us!

Trust the Lord and walk by faith!

VERSES 24-25

They all said the land is great and Moses doesn’t mention what the 10 spies also reported.

What else did they say?

They said that the cities were fortified, there were giants in the land, we are doomed!

And listen to what transpired after this bad report by 10 of the 12 spies was given to the people.

VERSES 26-33

What a tragic word, “**Nevertheless.**”

After all God did for them, protecting them, providing for them, they refused to believe His promise to them. And Moses tried to encourage them to go in by faith, to trust in the Lord who has never failed them, but they refused to enter in by faith and looked at the situation by sight.

God did not hate them like they thought, but He loved them, He wanted to bless them, but they rejected Him!

How true that is in our walk with the Lord. We have seen the faithfulness of God in our lives. We have seen His Word is true. And yet, as He calls us to walk by faith, *nevertheless* we don't!

When we do that, we miss out on the blessings that God has for us.

May we learn to walk by faith no matter how difficult the situation is before us because God is more than able to see us through! You see, no matter what we are going through, God loves us, He doesn't hate us. Please don't forget that.

Now let me show you why these spies did not have to go in and check out the land that God had given to them. In Deuteronomy 1:32-33 we are told, “**Yet, for all that, you did not believe the Lord your God, who went in the way before you to search out a place for you to pitch your tents, to show you the way you should go, in the fire by night and in the cloud by day.**”

God already went in, in a sense, He searched out the land and now, because they did not trust Him, they wanted to go in. Do you see how foolish that was. God knows what is best for us. And all we need to do is follow Him. If we do, we will not be disappointed!

VERSES 34-40

Because of their unbelief, this generation, over 603,548 men who were able to go to war will die in the wilderness, except for Joshua and Caleb because they trusted in the Lord and were willing to walk by faith. The rest of the people refused to enter in and died in the wilderness.

In fact, we are told in Numbers 14:1-3, **“So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, ‘If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?’”**

Now the Lord tells them that the generation of unbelief all died in the wilderness and their children, the ones they said would die, are going to enter into the Promise Land. Even Moses would not enter in as I have said, Joshua would now lead the people!

In regard to this, Spurgeon wrote, ***“Anything, in fact, will serve as an excuse, when the heart is bent on compromise.”***

God sees through our excuses of why we don’t walk by faith. Yes, we may fool others with spiritual jargon, but they are nothing more than excuses and God sees through them.

What an important lesson for us to learn, that as God calls, we need to walk by faith and not make excuses why we are not walking!

As we finish up this chapter the focus is on what the Israelites did when they realized they’d missed their opportunity.

As we will see, they will take up weapons and go out to fight - but the Lord was not with them. They went in their own strength and were routed. All this was a warning not to repeat their parents' mistakes.

Let's read on and see how this plays out.

VERSES 41-46

Now they changed their minds and decided that they would go in. They didn't like what God just said.

Here's the problem. This was not a godly sorrow that lead to repentance and thus, God saw through it and warned them not to go in.

But they refused to listen, and that is never a good thing, to turn a deaf ear to what God has said. They walked in the flesh now, in arrogance and their enemies defeated them because you can't win apart from God!

And after their defeat they wept, not over their sin but because they were defeated by the Amorites. And we are told that God refused to listen to their cries.

Thus, they would wander in the wilderness for forty years until this older generation died out and the next generation was ready to enter in!

DEUTERONOMY 2

VERSES 1-7

Moses is remembering their wilderness wanderings, and they basically went in circles around Mount Sier. But, when you are in rebellion against God, you do what they did, they just went around in circles as I have said.

And God is telling them, *“You’ve been going around in circles long enough. It’s time to believe what I have promised you and lay hold of your blessings.”*

In other words, that second generation begins their march to the Promised Land, and they pass through the boundaries of three nations. Those three nations are *Edom, Moab, and Ammon.*

We are dealing with Edom here in these verses.

As they began their journey they passed through the land of Edom or Seir. And God tells them that they were not to take anything from them, they could buy it from them, but the land was not theirs, it was the people of Edom who were to live there.

You see, the descendants of Esau were distant relatives to the children of Israel; he was the brother of Jacob.

VERSES 8-15

The Moabites were also distant relatives to the children of Israel. They were descendants of Lot, the nephew of Abraham.

And God once again tells them not to take this land because it belongs to them.

Keep in mind that the Moabites were a strong people for they defeated the Emim, a Canaanite people and these people were large, they were giants you might say.

The Hebrew word is **REPHAIM**, which also means “*fearsome ones.*” Tough dudes you might say!

In Deuteronomy 2:20 we will see the Amorites call them Zamzummin. That is a great name.

Moses, in just a few verses gives us thirty-eight years of their wanderings. Obviously not a detailed look, but just focusing on some of their travels.

VERSES 16-23

Once again they were not to take the land of the Amorites, also descendants of Lot and a distant relative to the children of Israel.

VERSES 24-37

Keep in mind that the Arnon was a river that ran from the mountains of Moab into the Dead Sea – but to the Israelites it was a turning point.

What do I mean by that?

I mean that when they crossed the Arnon they were no longer wanderers, but possessors - occupiers.

I think that is a great lesson for us. To stop wandering and drifting, spiritually speaking, stop going in circles and cross over into the Promise Land or the Spirit-filled life. Don't settle for less but possess all that God has given to you.

Now some of you may be thinking, “*Didn't we just read that God told the children of Israel not to take the land of the Amorites and yet, here we see God tell them to destroy King Sihon and the Amorites, to take their land.*”

Yes, we did.

So the question now is, "*Why the change?*"

I believe it is because this land originally belonged to the Moabites and King Sihon drove them out and took over this land.

Thus, as Israel tried to pass through, King Sihon would not let them and thus, Israel destroyed them and took back this land. God gave them this victory!

DEUTERONOMY 3

VERSES 1-2

As they continue their move towards the Promise Land, they now have to go through the land of Bashan, whose King was Og.

And the Lord is encouraging them not to be afraid. Their faith had to grow as they defeated Sihon King of the Amorites and thus, here was another step of faith for them to take.

And God does that with us. He stretches our faith. Biblical faith is not stagnant, but it continues to move forward and grow, at least it should!

VERSES 3-11

What the previous generation was afraid of, this next generation was not. This next generation walked by faith and defeated the land of Bashan and King Og. This would once again help their faith to grow and prepare them for the many battles they would face in the Promise Land.

We are also told that on the east side of the Jordan River, Og was the only Rephaim left, and he was a big dude!

Either his bed or more likely his burial sarcophagus measured 14 feet long by 6 feet wide!

Man, you could put a whole family in that thing!

VERSES 12-17

Once again we see the land divided up between the 2½ tribes who refused to enter into the Promise Land: Rueben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh. They would remain on the east side of the Jordan River.

God would allow this, although it was not His perfect will for them, but first they would have to fulfill some obligations that we will read of next.

VERSES 18-20

These Trans-Jordan tribes had to go and help their brethren in the conquest of Canaan, but only those who could go to war, the rest were to remain in the Trans-Jordan area.

Once they fulfilled their obligation, then they could go back to their families on the east side of the Jordan River.

VERSES 21-22

Moses encourages Joshua to stand strong in the Lord, not to be discouraged because God will see them through the coming battles just as He saw them through these recent ones.

They will be victorious; they just need to walk by faith!

Even for us, as we look back on the past victories that God has given to us, it gives us strength in the present situations we face. May we learn the lesson and use the past victories to help us to walk by faith today!

As one writer put it, ***“Remembering God’s past faithfulness is key to present and future victory.”***

VERSES 23-29

In the Hebrew it speaks of Moses not just asking the Lord once or twice if he can go into the Promise Land, but he kept asking until finally God said, **“Enough of that!”**

You can understand the heart of Moses. He was leading the children of Israel for 40 years and now he can’t enter in. God told Him and he just didn’t want to listen, and God ended any more conversations about this.

For Moses, he was allowed to look from Pisgah into the Promise Land, and he sees all that Israel will occupy.

Keep in mind that Pisgah was probably the mountain range. Mount Nebo was the tallest peak in that mountain range.

The mountain sits 2600 feet above the Dead Sea - opposite where the Jordan River feeds into the Dead Sea.

And from this summit you can have a panoramic view of the interior of Israel. From what I understand, from the top of Mount Pisgah you can see the rooftops of Bethlehem and Jerusalem.

Then how could Moses see all the land that they would occupy?

I believe this is a supernatural experience as God gave to him a view of the entire land all the way from the north to the south and westward to the Mediterranean Sea.

Keep in mind that God is gracious and merciful to Moses. In the New Testament we see Moses in the Promise Land as he is on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus, and I believe he is one of the two witnesses that will be ministering during the Tribulation Period!

Again, it just shows how gracious our God is.

Also keep in mind that this is the place that Moses will die and where the book of Deuteronomy ends.

Of this Thompson makes this remark, ***“In fact, Moses’ death is not recorded until chapter 34, so that the whole book of Deuteronomy is framed between the announcement of Moses’ impending death and the announcement of his actual death. The book is thus, in a sense, the spiritual testament of Moses, Israel’s great Lawgiver.”***

As I have said, it is his farewell address to the nation, his last will and testament you might say!

One more point before we move on.

Like Moses, there are consequences to our sin. Yes, we need to repent, as Moses did, but he faced the consequences of his actions and so do we.

May we grow in the Lord, not fight against Him, and learn to walk by faith representing Him correctly before the unsaved and the saved and that can only be done as we put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh. In other words, we are to walk in the Spirit!

DEUTERONOMY 4**VERSES 1-8**

God has given them instructions and then He tells them not to add to or take away from His Words, just obey them!

In other words, let the Bible speak for itself.

The problem is that our human tendency is to either water down the Word or make it harder than God intended. The liberal waters it down. The legalist adds to it. Both are wrong.

And just in case they think they know better than God, He reminds them of the sin at Baal of Peor and how God judged the people for their sin and spared those who obeyed Him.

The case of Baal Peor was the idolatry provoked by Balaam in Numbers 25. Moabite prostitutes lured the Hebrews into the worship of their false gods. In the judgment that followed 24,000 Hebrews lost their lives.

There are consequences to sin! And the Lord reminds them that He is close to them, no other nation could say that.

Tragically today many are adding to or taking away from God's Word. They have no fear of God; they don't realize the judgment of God.

In Revelation 22:18-19 we see this thought repeated for us, **“For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”**

God still means what He says and says what He means!

May we take heed for what other people are closer to God than those who have come to Him through Jesus Christ! Don't add to or take away from God's Word, believe it by faith and walk accordingly!

What Moses said back then to the Children of Israel is just as important for us today!

VERSES 9-20

They were not only to take the things of God into their lives, but they were to obey them as well as teach them to their children, to pass the things of God on.

We are to do no less! We are to take the Word of God into our lives and apply them, live them and teach them to our children!

He also wants them to remind their children of the things that took place at Mount Sinai, that God is personal, He loves them and has given to them His commandments to live by!

That is interesting to me because in the book of Deuteronomy the word "**remember**" is used some 14 times!

That should just make sense because the first four chapters of Deuteronomy is just retelling the history of the Children of Israel. In other words, "***Remember the past and how I was with you!***"

And, how easily we forget things!

It's every generation's responsibility to remember God, His truths, and the lessons He taught to previous generations. God goes to tremendous lengths to teach human beings lessons they tend to forget overnight.

Also, God has brought them out of their bondage in Egypt and they are not to make any images of Him to worship by.

And today, in the church we see all kinds of things that people are bowing down before to worship God by and God did not accept it then, and He does not accept it today!

VERSES 21-24

Moses uses himself as an example of what not to do, to look at his failure and the consequences of his actions and not to follow his example here.

I try to share with you some of the lessons God has taught me, my victories and my mistakes so that you may learn and be encourage. If I only told you my victories, you might be discouraged. And God does the same with His people, not perfect, not at all.

God tells us in His Word of the victories and defeats of His people so we can learn and be encouraged to keep walking. Remember, we are a work in progress!

VERSES 25-28

Listen to the warning of Moses before they even enter the land.

This prophecy of Moses came to pass as he warns them of the coming idolatry and the subsequent captivity because of it.

And folks, this warning was given several hundred years before the Babylonians invaded Jerusalem and took the Southern Kingdom of Judah into captivity for their idolatry!

God was basically saying to them, ***“If you like idolatry so much, then I will send you to the capital of idolatry, Babylon! Let me know if that is what you want!”***

And they did learn the lesson; they never succumbed to idolatry again, although they did have other problems!

VERSES 29-31

What a promise of God to them. Yes, they will eventually go into captivity for their idolatry, but when they come to their senses and repent of their sin, when they return to God, God will forgive them.

Why?

Because God loves them and is gracious and He has made a covenant with Abraham and He will keep it!

They may forget God, but He will never forget the covenant that He has made with them, He will not forget them!

VERSES 32-40

Moses wants the children of Israel to think about all that God has done for them, something He has never done with any other nation! God has a plan, a purpose for them and they needed to understand this.

Now, in light of all that God has done, is doing and will do, they needed to keep His commandments. Obedience just makes sense; it is just foolish to disobey God who loves them.

What a lesson for us to learn. In all that God has done, is doing and will do in our lives, how God has chosen us to be His people, it is foolish not to obey!

VERSES 41-43

Here we see Moses set up the three cities of refuge that were located on the east side of the Jordan River and once they occupy the Promise Land Joshua will set up the other three cities of refuge.

And you can check out our study in Numbers chapter 35 as we dealt with these cities of refuge, but they were basically places to flee if you accidentally killed someone, it was a place of protection from the avenger of blood! If you murdered someone, there was no place for refuge for you.

VERSES 44-49

Here's the point. They needed to not only hear God's Word but also apply God's Word to their lives. They needed to enter the Promise Land not by a do-it-yourself approach but in obedience to God's Word.

That is still true today folks. We not only need to hear God's Word, but we must also apply it to our lives. We can't do it on our own or our own way, but we need to do it His way!

And I will close with this. We are told,

If they were going to take the Promised Land, they had to be trained in God's Word. They would not take it by a do-it-yourself spirituality, but only by obedience to the eternal word of God.

The same is true for us – we will never walk in the abundant life God has for us unless we do it by His word.

- David Guzik

May we learn the lesson!

Twelve Tribes Joshua 13-22 1400 BC

6 City-State Empires in 1406 BC

Amorite 15 city state Basham empire
King Jabin at Hazor
Hazor, Madon, Shimron, Achshaph, Dor;
Joshua 11:1-3,10; Judges 4:2

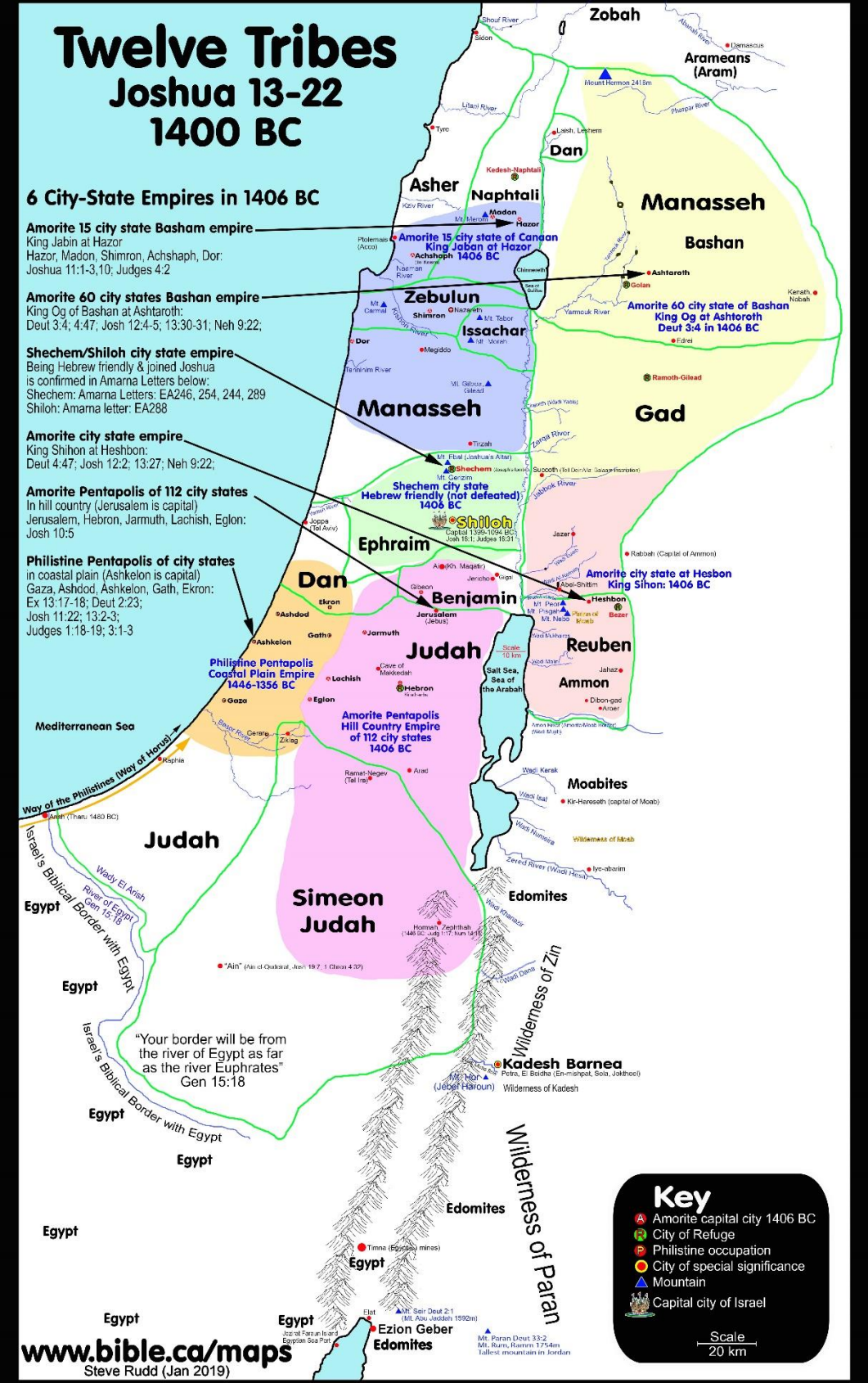
Amorite 60 city states Bashan empire
King Og of Bashan at Ashtoroth;
Deut 3:4, 4:47; Josh 12:4-5; 13:30-31; Neh 9:22;

Shechem/Shiloh city state empire
Being Hebrew friendly & joined Joshua
is confirmed in Amarna Letters below:
Shechem: Amarna Letters: EA246, 254, 244, 289
Shiloh: Amarna letter: EA288

Amorite city state empire
King Shihon at Heshbon;
Deut 4:47; Josh 12:2; 13:27; Neh 9:22;

Amorite Pentapolis of 112 city states
In hill country (Jerusalem is capital)
Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, Eglon;
Josh 10:5

Philistine Pentapolis of city states
in coastal plain (Ashkelon is capital)
Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, Ekron;
Ex 13:17-18; Deut 2:23;
Josh 11:22; 13:2-3;
Judges 1:18-19; 3:1-3



Key

- Amorite capital city 1406 BC
- City of Refuge
- Philistine occupation
- City of special significance
- ▲ Mountain
- Capital city of Israel

Scale
20 km

