

Exegetical Notes, Deuteronomy 1:9-18

“Shared Leadership”

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen, Pastor, Cornerstone Fellowship

101 Kyllies Road, Coatesville, PA 19320

610-384-1375

charleshjensen@aol.com

Deuteronomy 1:9-18

Verses 9-14

At that time I said to you, “You are too heavy a burden for me to carry alone.

¹⁰ The LORD your God has increased your numbers so that today you are as numerous as the stars in the sky. ¹¹ May the LORD, the God of your ancestors, increase you a thousand times and bless you as he has promised! ¹² But how can I bear your problems and your burdens and your disputes all by myself?

¹³ Choose some wise, understanding and respected men from each of your tribes, and I will set them over you.”

¹⁴ You answered me, “What you propose to do is good.”

- The phrase. “at that time,” refers to the first time that Israel came to Kadesh Barnea. The story is found in Exodus 18:13-26. God had commanded Israel to move forward and take the land which he had promised, but before they could move forward issues needed to be resolved.
- The issue is that Israel has been blessed by God and increased in size. The task of governing the nation is now too large for Moses to manage alone. Should Israel attempt to move into the future without resolving the “leadership problem,” she will fail. So, there needs to be an organizational change to facilitate the future.
- Under the guidance of God and the advice of his father-in-law, Moses decided that it was time to appoint elders, the word used here is judges, to assist him in guiding God’s people.
- This suggestion seemed wise to the people of Israel.

Verses 15-18

¹⁵ So I took the leading men of your tribes, wise and respected men, and appointed them to have authority over you—as commanders of thousands, of

hundreds, of fifties and of tens and as tribal officials. ¹⁶ And I charged your judges at that time, “Hear the disputes between your people and judge fairly, whether the case is between two Israelites or between an Israelite and a foreigner residing among you. ¹⁷ Do not show partiality in judging; hear both small and great alike. Do not be afraid of anyone, for judgment belongs to God. Bring me any case too hard for you, and I will hear it.” ¹⁸ And at that time I told you everything you were to do.

- Since everyone agreed with the solution Moses proposed, Moses chose elders from each and all of Israel’s tribes and gave them authority to judge matters related to the law among God’s people.
- The qualification for these judges was that they be “wise and respected men.” These were to be men who were already respected by the community. They were those men the community already looked to for leadership.
- While Moses was charged to tell the people what God expected of them, these men were to make judgments on the basis of God’s law resolving matters between the people. Their judgment was to be fair according to what the law said. There was to be no regard for persons before the law. Everyone was to stand equal before the law.
- Cases that the elders found too difficult to resolve were to be referred to Moses as the expert in understanding the law.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *Shared Leadership*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Dr. Jensen and *Cornerstone Fellowship*.)