

Deuteronomy Chapter 1 Continued

Deuteronomy 1:21 "Behold, the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up [and] possess [it], as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged."

"Go up and possess it" is the characteristic phrase relating to the Hebrew entry into the Promised Land.

Israel's enemies will not be able to resist the invasion (7:2).

The verb possess means "to subdue", "take possession of", "dispossess", and occurs 52 times in Deuteronomy.

We see the beginning of the account of their father's failure to possess the land.

The commandment from the beginning had been for them to go in and possess the land.

They were to have faith in the LORD enough that they would not fear.

Verses 22-46

see notes on Num. chapters 13 and 14 for the background.

Deuteronomy 1:22 "And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come."

"We will send men before us":

When challenged by Moses to take the Land (verses 20-21), the people requested that spies be sent first.

Moses, it seems, took their request to the LORD, who also approved their plan and commanded Moses to appoint the spies (Num. 13:1-2).

Thus, Moses selected 12 men who went to see what the Land was like (Num. 13:17-20).

They had influenced Moses into allowing them to go and search out the land, to make sure they could take it.

This is a sin, because the LORD had told them to take the land.

This showed lack of faith in the Word of the LORD.

It is as if they were questioning the wisdom of God.

Deuteronomy 1:23 "And the saying pleased me well: and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe:"

Taking it to be a rational and prudent scheme, not imagining it was the effect of fear and distrust.

And I took twelve men of you out of a tribe":

Whose names are given in (Num. 13:4).

Twelve is a representative number of the whole.

These twelve represented the twelve tribes of Israel.

Moses agreed to this plan, even though it was not the LORD's commandment.

Deuteronomy 1:24 "And they turned and went up into the mountain, and came unto the valley of Eshcol, and searched it out."

As they were ordered and directed by Moses (Num. 13:17).

"And came unto the valley of Eshcol":

So called from the cluster of grapes they cut down there, as they returned.

"And searched it out".

The whole land, and so were capable of giving a particular account of it.

The spies went by this route.

Deuteronomy 1:25 "And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought [it] down unto us, and brought us word again, and said, [It is] a good land which the LORD our God doth give us."

Besides the cluster of grapes, which was carried between two men on a staff; even pomegranates and figs (Num. 13:23).

"And brought it down unto us":

Who lay encamped at the bottom of the mountain.

"And brought us word again; what sort of a land it was.

"And said, it is a good land which the LORD our God doth give us":

That is, Caleb and Joshua, two of the spies, said this, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it, and so Jarchi.

Yea, all of them agreed in this, and said at first that it was a land flowing with milk and honey (Num. 13:27).

The land was fertile, as the grapes they brought back proved.

He had promised them it would be a land of milk and honey.

It was even more than He had promised.

It already had vineyards.

Verses 26-27

This passage recounts the events described in (Num. chapters 13 and 14).

In failing to go into the Promised Land, the Israelites "rebelled against the commandment of the LORD" (Psalm 106:24-25).

Since God has given His people everything they need to walk in faith, fear is nothing other than disobedience to Him and His principles.

To dwell in fear is to live in sin, and it distorts God's purposes in individual lives.

Deuteronomy 1:26 "Notwithstanding ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God:"

"But rebelled":

Israel, at Kadesh-barnea, deliberately and defiantly refused to respond to God's command to take the Land (Num. 14:1-9).

Even though this land was everything God had promised, they became fearful and would not obey the LORD's command to go in.

They feared people more than they feared the LORD.

Deuteronomy 1:27 "And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the LORD hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us."

“Ye murmured”:

Israel complained in their tents that the LORD hated them.

They assumed the LORD brought them from Egypt to have them destroyed by the Amorites.

The murmuring was a continuous problem.

This is the same as in (Numbers chapter 14 verse 1).

Look at the actual complaint in the next two verses.

Numbers 14:2-3 "And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!" "And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?"

Deuteronomy 1:28 "Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people [is] greater and taller than we; the cities [are] great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there."

“The Anakims”:

Literally “sons of the Anakim”, i.e. the Anakites were early inhabitants of Canaan described as “great and tall” (2:10, 21; 9:2; Num. 13:32-33).

They were larger than the Israelites and were especially feared because of their military power.

Fear is the opposite of faith.

Their fear of the people was greater than their faith in the LORD.

It is difficult for me to believe that the LORD, who opened the Red sea and destroyed Pharaoh's army, would be so under-rated here.

They are looking with their physical eyes at a flesh people, and are afraid.

God is the Almighty One.

Why do they not trust Him?

Verses 29-33

The point of the “wilderness” experience was for the Israelites to bond with their Father.

After generations of slavery under their tyrannical masters in Egypt, God wanted His children to learn what wondrous things transpire when His people follow Him.

Instead, their fear caused them to disbelieve His promises (Heb. 3:9-10).

Deuteronomy 1:29 "Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them."

With such like words he had exhorted and encouraged them before the spies were sent, and he still uses the same, or stronger terms, notwithstanding the report that had been made of the gigantic stature and walled cities of the Canaanites.

This speech of Moses, which is continued in the two following verses, is not recorded in (Numbers 14:5).

It is only there said, that Moses and Aaron fell on their faces, but no account is given of what was said by either of them.

Moses had tried to reassure them that they had nothing to fear, when the LORD was with them.

Deuteronomy 1:30 "The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes;"

In a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night.

"He shall fight for you":

Wherefore, though their enemies were greater and taller than they, yet their God was higher than the highest.

And cities walled up to heaven would signify nothing to Him, whose throne is in the heavens.

"According to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes":

Which is observed to encourage their faith in God.

For He that wrought such wonders in Egypt for them, which their eyes, at least some of them, and their fathers, however, had seen, what is it He cannot do?

The LORD had brought ten plagues on the Egyptians and their false gods to get them released.

The LORD, without any loss of people at all, had defeated one of the largest and strongest armies of that day.

The LORD had been present with them in the cloud by day, and the fire by night.

They knew God was with them.

Their fear was lack of faith.

Deuteronomy 1:31 "And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place."

God had “bare” Israel “as a man doth bear his son”.

Leading their steps, providing food, offering protection, and doing everything possible to nurture a trusting, loving relationship.

The LORD had not only delivered them from Egypt and led them through the wilderness, but had miraculously cared for their well-being.

Their shoes did not wear out.

God fed them with Manna from heaven, and gave them water from the Rock.

He had cared for them personally.

They were His people, and He wanted them to decide on their own to make Him their God.

Deuteronomy 1:32 "Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God,"

“Ye did not believe the LORD your God”:

The failure of the people to take the land at the beginning of their time in the wilderness was explained here in the same way as in (Num. 14:11).

Israel did not take the LORD at His Word and, therefore, did not obey His command.

The Israelites’ lack of obedience is explained as the outcome of their lack of faith in the LORD.

Doubt and fear of the things they saw with their physical eyes, caused them to not have faith in the LORD in their hearts.

Deuteronomy 1:33 "Who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents [in], in fire by night, to show you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day."

“In fire ... a cloud”:

The cloud by day and the fire by night were the means of God’s direction for Israel in the wilderness (Exodus 13:21; Num. 9:15-23).

The LORD who guided Israel through the wandering journey was the same LORD who had already searched out a place for Israel in the Land.

As He had directed them in the past, He would direct them also in the future.

The LORD was with them on a daily basis.

He led them miraculously with His fire and smoke.

It would have been a monumental task for them to travel with the near three million people in their company, if the LORD had not led them to each camping place.

This desert had very little water.

God knew where every drop was.

This same fire stood between Pharaoh's army and the Israelites, until they could all cross the Red sea.

Their lack of faith astonishes me.

It is like miracles we see today, and just take them for granted.

The LORD is all powerful now, as He was then.

It takes faith to please the LORD.

Deuteronomy 1:34 "And the LORD heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying,"

Of their murmurings against Moses and Aaron.

And of their threatening's to them, Joshua and Caleb.

And of their impious charge of hatred of them to God for bringing them out of Egypt.

And of their rash wishes that they had died there or in the wilderness.

And of their wicked scheme and proposal to make them a captain, and return to Egypt again.

Their murmuring rose to the ears of the LORD.

He was disappointed that His people did not trust Him.

His wrath came up in His face.

Deuteronomy 1:35 "Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers,"

Disobedience is costly.

The adults of the Promised Land era were sentenced to a restless, nomadic life in the desert for nearly 40 years, waiting for the last of the forsaken Exodus “generation” to die (Num. 14:29; Heb. 3:16-19).

When the final body was set at rest, the nation could finally claim its true home.

Their lack of faith in the LORD caused them to wander 38 more years in this wilderness, until the generation of doubters died.

He would keep His Word that this land would be their Promised Land, but their children would be the ones to receive it.

“Caleb ... Joshua”:

They were excluded from this judgment because of exemplary faith and obedience (compare Num. chapter 24; Joshua 14:8-9).

Deuteronomy 1:36 "Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD."

Enter into it, and enjoy it.

"And Joshua also":

Who was the other spy with him, that brought a good report of the land (see Deut. 1:38).

"And to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children":

Not the whole land of Canaan, but that part of it which he particularly came to and searched.

And where the giants were, and he saw them, and notwithstanding was not intimidated by them, but encouraged the people to go up and possess it.

And the part he came to particularly, and trod on, was Hebron (Num. 13:22).

And which the Targum of Jonathan, Jarchi, and Aben Ezra, interpret of that; and this was what was given to him and his at the division of the land (Joshua 14:13).

Because he hath wholly followed the LORD (see Num. 14:24).

As we discussed in the book of Numbers, Joshua and Caleb were the only two of the twelve spies who brought back a good report.

God would allow them to live, and Caleb would receive of the land with his children.

Joshua would not receive land, because he was of the Levitical tribe, but he would live and take Moses' place.

The LORD always blesses the obedient.

Verses 37-38:

The aged Moses preached a final series of sermons to the generation that was entering the Promised Land, poignantly recounting his 40 years of hard service.

The Israelites had often discouraged him, so as he introduced his successor, Joshua.

Moses said, Encourage him”.

One of the most helpful things a retiring minister or leader can do is appeal to the people to support his or her successor.

Deuteronomy 1:37 Also the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither.

“The LORD was angry with me”:

Although his disobedience occurred almost 39 years after the failure of Israel at Kadesh (Num. 20:1-13), Moses included it here with Israel’s disobedience to the LORD because his disobedience was of the same kind.

Moses, like Israel, failed to honor the Word of the LORD and thus, in rebellion for self-glory, disobeyed God’s clear command and struck the rock rather than speaking to it.

Thus, he suffered the same result of God’s anger and like Israel, was not allowed to go into the Land (Num. 20:12).

This is speaking of the anger of Moses at these people causing him to strike the Rock (symbolic of Jesus), the second time.

God told Moses to speak to the Rock for water.

Moses struck the Rock in anger at the people.

The LORD did not let Moses enter the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 1:38 "[But] Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it."

His servant and minister, which this phrase is expressive of.

"He shall go in thither":

Into the good land, instead of Moses, and as his successor, and who was to go before the children of Israel, and introduce them into it, as a type of Christ, who brings many sons to glory.

"Encourage him":

With the promise of the divine Presence with him, and of success in subduing the Canaanites, and settling the people of Israel in their land.

And so, we read that Moses did encourage him (Deut. 31:7).

"For he shall cause Israel to inherit it":

Go before them as their captain, and lead them into it.

Fight their battles for them, conquer their enemies, and divide the land by lot for an inheritance unto them.

So the heavenly inheritance is not by the law of Moses, and the works of it, but by Joshua, or Jesus, the Savior, by His achievements, victories, and conquests.

Just as Moses led the children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt, Joshua will lead them into the Promised Land.

The anointing of Moses has been transferred to Joshua at that time.

The people must accept him and follow him.

Joshua is the leader God has chosen for this task.

Deuteronomy 1:39 "Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it."

To the Amorites, into whose hands they expected to be delivered (Deut. 1:27; see Num. 14:3).

"And your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil":

Not being at years of understanding, and which is a common description of children.

It is particularly expressed "in that day", for now they were the very persons Moses was directing his speech unto.

And relating this history, it being thirty eight years ago when this affair was, so that now they were grown up to years of discretion.

"They shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it".

The relation of which now might serve greatly to encourage their faith, as well as it would be a fulfilment of the promise of the land made unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Which was not made of none effect through the unbelief of the Israelites, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, since their posterity was to enjoy it, and did.

Those who were under 20 years of age, when their fathers refused to take the Promised Land, will be the inheritors.

These little ones had not been part of the decision to rebel against the LORD.

They will receive the long awaited Promised Land. They had not chosen evil over good.

Deuteronomy 1:40 "But [as for] you, turn you, and take your journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea."

From the mountain of the Amorites, the border of the land of Canaan.

"And take your journey into the wilderness, by the way of the Red sea" (see Num. 14:25).

Jarchi says this wilderness was by the side of the Red sea, to the south of Mount Seir, and divided between the Red sea and the mount.

So that now they drew to the side of the sea, and compassed Mount Seir, all the south of it, from west to east.

Moses is retelling the outcome of those who failed to obey God's commands to go into the Promised Land.

They were punished by sending them back into the wilderness, until they died off.

Verses 41-45

Israel's further defiance of the LORD's command was shown by their presumption in seeking to go into the land after God said they should not.

This time they rebelled by attempting to go in and conquer the land, only to be chased back by the Amorites.

The LORD showed His displeasure by not helping them or sympathizing with their defeat, and for that generation there was no escape from death in the desert during the next 38 years (compare Num. chapters 15 to 19).

Deuteronomy 1:41 "Then ye answered and said unto me, We have sinned against the LORD, we will go up and fight, according to all that the LORD our God commanded us. And when ye had girded on every man his weapons of war, ye were ready to go up into the hill."

Not being willing to go into the wilderness again, though they wished they had died in it.

Nor to go the way of the Red sea, which was their way back again to Egypt, though they had been for appointing a captain, and returning thither.

But now they repented of what they had said and done.

"We have sinned against the LORD":

By murmuring against His servants, and disobeying His commands.

"We will go up and fight, according to all that the LORD our God commanded us":

Which is more than they were bid to do.

They were only ordered to go up and possess the land, and it was promised them the LORD would fight for them.

"And when ye had girded on every man his weapon":

His sword upon his thigh.

A large number of them, for all of them were not so disposed, though many were.

"Ye were ready to go unto the hill; Rather, perhaps, "ye made light of going up."

I. e. "ye were ready to attempt it as a trifling undertaking."

Deut. 1:43) shows the issue of this spirit in action.

As soon as they had heard that God was angry with them, they repented and decided to go into the Promised Land.

They had rather fight, than be banished back to the wilderness.

It is too late.

God will not help them in battle now.

Deuteronomy 1:42 "And the LORD said unto me, Say unto them, Go not up, neither fight; for I [am] not among you; lest ye be smitten before your enemies."

When the people had armed themselves, and were in motion, or ready to set forward to ascend the hill.

"Say unto them, Go not up, neither fight":

Neither go up the hill, and if they did, contrary to this order, and should meet with enemies, not fight them, but retreat.

"For I am not among you":

The ark of the covenant, the symbol of His presence, was then among them.

But it did not go with them, it continued in the camp (Num. 14:44).

Nor did the LORD exert His power, or show Himself present with them, or to be on their side, but left them to themselves, and to their enemies.

"Lest ye be smitten before your enemies":

God not being with them to fight for them, protect and defend them, and give them victory.

Moses told them, if they went into battle now, they would not be under the protection of God.

The LORD would not be with them, because they had doubted His ability to save them.

They would certainly fail in their endeavor without the blessing of the LORD.

Deuteronomy 1:43 "So I spake unto you; and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD, and went presumptuously up into the hill."

The words, the orders he had received from the LORD to deliver to them.

"And ye would not hear":

So as to obey them, and act according to them.

"But rebelled against the commandment of the LORD":

As before, by not going up when he would have had them gone, and now by attempting it when he forbids them.

"And went presumptuously up into the hill":

That is, of themselves, in their own strength, disregarding the commandment of God, and what they were threatened with.

This they endeavored to do, for they were not able to effect it.

The Amorites, perceiving them to make up the hill, came pouring down upon them in great numbers.

And stopped them, and obliged them to retreat (see Num. 14:45).

Even the fact that they went up into the battle was in defiance of Himself.

He would have been with them, if they had immediately gone.

Now they are completely upon their own.

Deuteronomy 1:44 "And the Amorites, which dwelt in that mountain, came out against you, and chased you, as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, [even] unto Hormah."

Elsewhere called Canaanites, being one, and a principal one of the seven nations of Canaan, and who were joined and assisted in the attack by the Amalekites (Num. 14:45).

"Came out against you, and chased you, as bees do":

As "bees", which being provoked come out of their hives in great numbers, and with great fury pursue and sting their adversary and disturber (Psalm 118:12).

"and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah":

Pursued them as far as Mount Seir, even to another place on the borders of Edom, which was called Hormah.

Either from the destruction now or afterwards made here (see notes in Num. 14:45).

Though some take it not to be the proper name of a place, but an appellative, and render it, "even unto destruction"; so the Jerusalem Targum.

That is, destroyed them with an utter destruction.

They were defeated, because God was not with them.

The Amorites in this Scripture, are speaking of the Canaanites.

They chased them as bees do.

The Amorites slew many of them.

Numbers 14:45 "Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, [even] unto Hormah."

Deuteronomy 1:45 "And ye returned and wept before the LORD; but the LORD would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you."

Those that remained when the Amorites left pursuing them, returned to the camp at Kadesh, where Moses and the Levites were, and the rest of the people.

And here they wept at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

And hence said to be "before the LORD".

They wept because of the slaughter that had been made among them, and because of their sin in going contrary to the will of God.

And because they were ordered into the wilderness.

And very probably they cried and prayed unto the LORD, that they might not be turned back.

But that He would go with them, and bring them now into the Promised Land.

"But the LORD would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you":

Was inexorable, and would not repeal the order to go into the wilderness again, where He had sworn in His wrath their carcasses should fall.

The sentence was irrevocable.

Moses had remained at Kadesh.

The people came back to Moses for protection.

Their tears were bitter, because of their great loss in the battle.

The LORD had stopped hearing their pleas at this time.

He would not stop the punishment on them because of their unbelief.

Deuteronomy 1:46 "So ye abode in Kadesh many days, according unto the days that ye abode [there]."

"Ye abode in Kadesh many days":

These words suggest that Israel spent a large part of the 38 years in the desert around Kadesh-barnea.

The following Scriptures show that Moses stayed in Kadesh, until God gave orders what they were to do.

Numbers 14:25 "Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwelt in the valley.

To morrow turn you, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea."

Numbers 14:34 "After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, [even] forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, [even] forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise."

We see the severity of the punishment for not believing.

Deuteronomy Chapter 1 Continued

1. What had God told them to do, now that they were at the entrance of the land?
2. What did they do, instead of following the wishes of God?
3. This is a _____.
4. This showed lack of faith in the _____ of the _____.
5. It is as if they are questioning the _____ of God.
6. What reaction did Moses have to this?
7. How many men went to search out the land?
8. Who did they represent?
9. What did they bring back, that proved this was, indeed, a land of plentiful food?
10. They refused to obey God's _____.
11. Where did they murmur?

12. What excuse did they give for not wanting to take the land?
13. Fear is the opposite of _____.
14. Why does the author find it difficult to believe their fear?
15. What did Moses say to these fearful people?
16. Why does their fear not make any sense?
17. What does, the LORD thy God bare thee, mean?
18. They were His people, and He wanted them to make Him _____.
19. What caused them to not have faith in the LORD in their hearts?
20. How had God led them?
21. What did the fire of God do at the Red sea, that showed the LORD's tremendous power?
22. Who of the twelve spies would live to inherit land in the Promised Land?
23. Which other one of the twelve spies had no fear?
24. Why did he not inherit land?
25. Why was Moses not allowed to enter the Promised Land?
26. Who would lead them into the Promised Land?
27. Who would inherit the Promised Land?
28. When they realized they had sinned against God, what did they do?
29. Would God be with them in this battle of their own making?
30. What happened to them?
31. Moses had remained at _____.