

# Deuteronomy 01 - Prophetic Overview; Wilderness Travels; Failure at Kadesh-Barnea

## I. First sermon: What God has done for Israel (Deut 1:1—4:40)

(1) (Introduction to the covenant setting (1:1-5))

(2) Review of Israel's past (Deut 1:6—3:29)

(A) From Sinai to Kadesh (1:6-18)

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## Deuteronomy 1

### I. First sermon: What God has done for Israel (Deut 1:1—4:40)

(1) (Introduction to the covenant setting (1:1-5))

**1** These are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel across the Jordan in the wilderness, in the Arabah opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab.

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**1** These are the words that Moses spoke to the assembly of Israel east of the Jordan River, in the Arabah desert, opposite Suph between Paran, Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab.

**1** These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red sea, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab.

- The Hebrew title of the book is *'elleh haddebarim* ("these are the words") in keeping with the Hebrew custom of often titling a work by its first word(s)

- The English title Deuteronomy stems from the Septuagint's mistranslation of Deut 17:18, "this repetition of the Law"

— The Septuagint translated those words *deuteronomion* (*deutero* means "two" or "second," and *nomion* is "law"; lit., "second Law"), which were rendered *Deuteronomium* in

the Vulgate, Jerome's fourth-century Latin translation of the Bible

- The place names in v1 are not known with any certainty

— Israel was not yet in the Promised Land, but was perched at its entrance (Cf. v5) as they received Moses' final instructions

"Words of Moses": Moses was eminently qualified to speak for God. He was more than Israel's human Lawgiver, he was the founder of Israel's religion and mediator of the covenant at Sinai (reviewed in Deut 5). He was Israel's first prophet (34:10). (Though God called Abraham a prophet (Gen 20:7), Israel did not then exist as a nation.) Through Moses, God set such a high standard for the people that all subsequent prophets lived under his shadow, never attaining to it, until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not surprisingly, the New Testament authors mentioned Moses more frequently than any other Old Testament person. So Deuteronomy is essentially a series of sermons by the greatest Old Testament prophet.

Moses' words were addressed to all Israel, an expression used at least 12x in the book. Its frequent occurrence emphasizes the unity of Israel which was brought about by God's mighty deliverance of the nation from Egypt, and by her acceptance of His covenant at Sinai. They were uniquely God's people, the only nation on earth that had as its "constitution" the Word of God.

Moses' death was probably added by Joshua, whose book was added to the "Hexateuch."

2 It is eleven days' *journey* from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh-barnea.

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2 It takes eleven days to travel from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea via Mount Seir.

2 (There are eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadesh Barnea.)

- From Horeb to Kadesh Barnea was only about 200 miles

- The Israelites turned an 11-day journey—from Horeb (another word for Mount Sinai; Cf. Ex 34:2,27 with Deut 5:2) to Kadesh Barnea, the first site for entering into the Promised Land from the south—into a 40-year wandering in the wilderness before they came to a second potential site for entering the land

— It took only three days to get Israel out of Egypt; but it took 40 years to get "Egypt" out of Israel!

— As Stephen pointed out centuries later (Acts 7:39,51), the Israelites had always been slow to believe God

3 In the fortieth year, on the first *day* of the eleventh month, Moses spoke to the sons of Israel, in accordance with everything that the **LORD** had commanded him *to declare* to

them,

3 In the fortieth year, on the first *day* of the eleventh month, Moses spoke to the children of Israel, according to all that the LORD had commanded him *to give* to them,

3 On the first day of the eleventh month, in the fortieth year, Moses spoke to the Israelis about everything that the LORD had commanded him concerning them.

3 And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that the LORD had given him in commandment unto them;

- "...LORD" - YHWH, *Yahveh*, *Jehovah*, or *YeHoVaH*: In the OT, God was addressed as Yahveh when the writers wanted to stress the personal nature of the One who entered into a covenant with people (Cf. Ex 3:13-14)

— Sometime after the close of the OT canon (the end of the 5th century BC) the Jews developed a superstition about pronouncing the name "Yahveh" (or YeHoVah)

— This was an unfortunate loss for the saints

- Christians today no longer address God as Yahveh in their prayers because God's personal revelation of Himself is fully realized in Jesus Christ (Heb 1:1-2)

— Now Christians know God even more personally as their Father (John 14:6; 20:17; Rom 1:17; 8:15; 1 Cor 1:3) a designation rarely used of God in the OT

- The authority behind Moses' first speech (Deut 1:5—4:43) was Yahveh, Israel's personal God

4 after he had defeated Sihon the king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth and in Edrei.

4 after he had defeated Sihon the king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth and Edrei.

4 This took place after he defeated Sihon, king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon and Og, king of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth at Edrei.

4 After he had slain Sihon the king of the Amorites, which dwelt in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, which dwelt at Astaroth in Edrei:

- The historical background to Moses' first speech is made complete with the note about the defeat of two kings, Sihon and Og (Cf. Num 21:21-35; Deut 2:26—3:11)

5 Across the Jordan in the land of Moab, Moses began to explain this Law, saying,

5 Across the Jordan in the land of Moab, Moses undertook to expound this law, saying,

5 East of the Jordan River, in the land of Moab, Moses began to expound this Law:

5 On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare this law, saying,

(2) Review of Israel's past (Deut 1:6—3:29)

(A) From Sinai to Kadesh (1:6-18)

(a) Command to leave Horeb (1:6-8)

6 "The LORD our God spoke to us at Horeb, saying, 'You have stayed long enough at this mountain.

6 "The LORD our God spoke to us at Horeb, saying, 'You have stayed long enough at this mountain.

6 "The LORD our God spoke to us in Horeb. He said, 'You have been at this mountain long enough.

6 The LORD our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount:

### **First Attempt to Enter the Promised Land (v5-46)**

The word *ba'ar*, to make plain, distinct; to make clear; to declare. Declare, expound, is significant for it means that Moses did all he could to make God's Word clear to the Israelites. The word *ba'er* is used only here and in 27:8 (where it is rendered by the adverbs "very clearly") and in Hab 2:2 ("make it plain"). Basically, the verb means "to dig" (e.g., to dig a well; "well" is *be'er*; as in BeerSheba, etc). The word translated Law, *Torah*, actually means "instruction," not merely a body of laws in the modern sense. It is instruction in how to walk with God. Paul referred to it as our "schoolmaster" (Gal 3:24-25). The new generation, now grown to adulthood, needed to have the Law interpreted for them in the light of 38 years' experience in the wilderness. When Moses expounded these words, Israel was east of the Jordan in Moab.

7 Turn and set out on your journey, and go to the hill country of the Amorites, and to all their neighbors in the Arabah, in the hill country, in the lowland, in the Negev, by the seacoast, the land of the Canaanites, and Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.

7 Turn and set your journey, and go to the hill country of the Amorites, and to all their neighbors in the Arabah, in the hill country and in the lowland and in the Negev and by the seacoast, the land of the Canaanites, and Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.

7 Break camp, get going, and proceed to the hill country of the Amorites and all the nearby places in the Arabah desert, the highlands, the foothills, the Negev, the coastal plains, all of the land of the Canaanites, and Lebanon as far as the great river, the Euphrates.

7 Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates.

- The first words of the speech, the LORD (*Yehovah*) our God, set a particular emphasis in the Hebrew sentence and set the tone for the entire speech
- In Deuteronomy the words "the LORD our God" occur almost 50x; *Yehovah* is the sovereign Leader of Israel's history
- When the covenant was ratified and the revelation at Sinai (Horeb; cf. v2) completed, He directed the nation to Canaan
- The boundaries (v7; Cf. 11:24; Ex 23:31) go beyond the territory that Israel ever actually possessed

Though David's and Solomon's empires extended to the Euphrates River (Cf. 2 Sam 8:3; 1 Kings 4:21), many of the peoples in that territory were subjects only by paying tribute; they were not conquered by Israelites so the land was not fully possessed by them.

8 See, I have placed the land before you; go in and take possession of the land which the LORD swore to give to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and their descendants after them.'

8 See, I have placed the land before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to give to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to them and their descendants after them.'

8 Look! I've given you the land that lies ahead. Go in and possess the land that I, the LORD, promised to give to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as well as to their descendants.'"

8 Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them.

- God's command (Deut 1:8) to take possession (by conquest) of so vast an area should not have shocked His hearers

- The promise of that same land had been given in a covenant hundreds of years earlier to Abraham (Gen 15:18-21; 17:7-8), and reiterated to Isaac and Jacob (Gen 26:3-5; 28:13-15; 35:12)

- These three patriarchs are mentioned 7x in Deuteronomy (Deut 1:8; 6:10; 9:5,27; 29:13; 30:20; 34:4)

- Moses left no doubt about the nature of this promise: It was gracious and it was permanent

- When the Lord seals His promise with an oath (swore; Cf. 1:35) He will never change that plan (Cf. Ps 110:4)

- So from Abraham on to the nation at Moses' time, each Israelite was to realize that he stood in the line of God's inviolable promise

- The command to “take possession” (which occurs 18x in Deut: 1:8,21,39; 2:24; etc.)
- This emphasis on the “land” is unusually strong in Deuteronomy, for this word occurs almost 200x

(b) Command to appoint judges (1:9-18)

- 9 “And I spoke to you at that time, saying, ‘I am not able to endure you alone.
- 9 “I spoke to you at that time, saying, ‘I am not able to bear *the burden* of you alone.
- 9 “I also told you at that time that I won’t be able to sustain you on my own.
- 9 And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone:

10 The LORD your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are this day like the stars of heaven in number.

10 The LORD your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are this day like the stars of heaven in number.

10 The LORD your God greatly multiplied your numbers, and today you are like the stars in the sky.

10 The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude.

11 May **the LORD, the God of your fathers** increase you a thousand times more than you are, and bless you, just as He has promised you!

11 May the LORD, the God of your fathers, increase you a thousand-fold more than you are and bless you, just as He has promised you!

11 May the LORD, the God of your ancestors, increase your numbers a thousand times more, and may he bless you, as he promised you.

11 (The LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you, as he hath promised you!)

- If the nation had any doubt about God’s intention or ability to fulfill His ancient covenant with Abraham she had only to look at her present condition

- Israel had become so numerous that they were like the stars in the sky (v10)

— This, of course, was one thing God had promised Abraham and Isaac (Gen 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; Ex 32:13)

— The nation’s growth thus proved both God’s intention and ability to fulfill His original promises to Abraham

— Moses was confident God would continue to increase and bless them, for they had the same Lord as their ancestors

- “...the LORD God of your fathers” - a common title of the LORD in Deuteronomy

— “the LORD your God” occurs over 250x in Deut, no doubt to affirm to Israel that her God is not some abstract pagan concept but is *Yahweh*, the living Lord who made a covenant with her

12 How can I alone endure the burden and weight of you and your strife?

12 How can I alone bear the load and burden of you and your strife?

12 How can I bear the burden of you and your bickering all by myself?

12 How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife?

13 Obtain for yourselves men who are wise, discerning, and informed from your tribes, and I will appoint them as your heads.'

13 Choose wise and discerning and experienced men from your tribes, and I will appoint them as your heads.'

13 Choose for yourselves wise and discerning men, known to your tribes, and appoint them as your leaders.

13 Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you.

14 And you answered me and said, 'The thing which you have said to do is good.'

14 You answered me and said, 'The thing which you have said to do is good.'

14 You answered by saying that this plan is a good thing.

14 And ye answered me, and said, The thing which thou hast spoken is good for us to do.

- The fulfillment of this particular promise, however, had caused a problem

— The nation had become too large for Moses to govern effectively (v9,12; Cf. Ex 18:13-27), so he had to appoint military leaders (commanders), officials (perhaps scribes or administrators), and judges (Deut 1:15-16)

15 So I took the heads of your tribes, wise and informed men, and appointed them as heads over you, commanders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, and officers for your tribes.

15 So I took the heads of your tribes, wise and experienced men, and appointed them heads over you, leaders of thousands and of hundreds, of fifties and of tens, and officers for your tribes.

15 So I chose leaders from your tribes, wise and respected men, and I appointed them over you—commanders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens.

15 So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes.

**16** "Then I ordered your judges at that time, saying, 'Hear *the cases* between your fellow countrymen and judge righteously between a person and his fellow countryman, or the stranger who is with him.

**16** "Then I charged your judges at that time, saying, 'Hear *the cases* between your fellow countrymen, and judge righteously between a man and his fellow countryman, or the alien who is with him.

**16** I charged your judges at that time, 'When you hold a hearing between brothers, judge fairly between a man and his brother or between foreigners.

**16** And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him.

- The recording of these events is not incidental or parenthetical to Moses' discourse
- The concern shown in the choice of wise and respected men (v15; Cf. v13) and the command for fairness (judge fairly, v16) and...

17 You are not to show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike. You are not to be afraid of any person, for the judgment is God's. The case that is too difficult for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.'

17 You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not fear man, for the judgment is God's. The case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.'

17 When you hold a hearing, don't be partial in judgment toward the least important or toward the great. Never fear men, because judgment belongs to God. If the matter is difficult for you, bring it to me for a hearing.'

17 Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it.

- Absolute impartiality in judgment (v17; Cf. 16:19; Prov 18:5; 24:23)

18 At that time I commanded you all the things that you were to do.

18 I commanded you at that time all the things that you should do.

18 I charged you at that time that you must do all of these things."

18 And I commanded you at that time all the things which ye should do.

- The point of the Conquest was for Israel to establish righteousness and holiness in the Promised Land and ultimately in the entire world (Cf. Deut 28:1,9-10,13)

- It took faith for Israel to conquer the land, but it also took faith for them to administer justice in the land, for here too they would encounter opposition

(B) At Kadesh (1:19-46)

(a) Dispatching the spies (1:19-25; Cf. Num 13:1-15)

**19** "Then we set out from Horeb, and went *through* all that great and terrible wilderness that you saw on the way to the hill country of the Amorites, just as the LORD our God had commanded us; and we came to Kadesh-barnea.

**19** "Then we set out from Horeb, and went through all that great and terrible wilderness which you saw on the way to the hill country of the Amorites, just as the LORD our God had commanded us; and we came to Kadesh-barnea.

**19** "Then we set out from Horeb and walked through that vast and dreadful desert, where you observed the road to the Amorite hill country. Just as the LORD our God ordained for us, we finally arrived at Kadesh-barnea.

**19** And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the LORD our God commanded us; and we came to Kadesh Barnea.

### **The Failure at Kadesh Barnea**

As the first step toward conquering the land the Israelites had to travel through the vast and dreadful desert (Cf. 8:15; 32:10), a journey from Horeb to Kadesh Barnea of more than 100 miles over an essentially waterless wilderness. This first step would create a hunger in their hearts for the fruitfulness and beauty of the Promised Land and it also gave God the opportunity to demonstrate His fatherly love for them and His ability to protect them in a hostile environment (Cf. 1:31). Both—the hunger for the land and confidence in God's love and power—were necessary if they were to accomplish the goal ahead of them. Moses' command to the people not to be afraid (another emphasis in Deut: v21,29; 3:2,22; 7:18; 20:1,3; 31:6,8; Cf. Josh 1:9; 8:1) shows that he realized the enormity of the task to take possession (Cf. Deut 1:8) of the land of the Amorites, but he was also aware of the sufficiency of their God for that task.

20 And I said to you, 'You have come to the hill country of the Amorites, which the LORD our God is about to give us.

20 I said to you, 'You have come to the hill country of the Amorites which the LORD our God is about to give us.

20 I told you at that time, 'You have reached the hill country of the Amorites, which the LORD our God is about to give us.

20 And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the LORD our God doth give unto us.

21 See, the LORD your God has placed the land before you; go up, take possession, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has spoken to you. Do not fear or be dismayed.'

21 See, the LORD your God has placed the land before you; go up, take possession, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has spoken to you. Do not fear or be dismayed.'

21 Look! The LORD your God has given the land that lies before you. Go and possess it, just as the LORD God of your ancestors commanded you. Don't be afraid or discouraged.'

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.

**22** "Then all of you approached me and said, 'Let us send men ahead of us, so that they may spy out the land for us, and bring back to us word of the way by which we should go up, and the cities which we should enter.'

**22** "Then all of you approached me and said, 'Let us send men before us, that they may search out the land for us, and bring back to us word of the way by which we should go up and the cities which we shall enter.'

**22** "Then all of you approached me and said: 'Let's send out men in advance of us so they can survey the land and bring back a report to us on how we'll go up to their cities.'

**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.

23 The plan pleased me, and I took twelve of your men, one man for each tribe.

23 The thing pleased me and I took twelve of your men, one man for each tribe.

23 Because this suggestion seemed good to me, I chose twelve men from among you, one from each tribe.

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

24 Then they turned and went up into the hill country, and came to the Valley of Eshcol, and spied it out.

24 They turned and went up into the hill country, and came to the valley of Eshcol and spied it out.

24 Then these men set out, went up to the hill county, reached the Eshcol Valley, and surveyed it.

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

- The second step involved sending out 12 men, one from each tribe, as spies into the land

— Though the people initiated this plan (v22-23), the Lord agreed to it (Num 13:1-2)

- It was therefore not an act of unbelief initially but rather a wise step in the necessary preparations for battle
- When the spies returned, part of their report was encouraging
- The land was unusually fruitful (Deut 1:25; Num 13:23-27)
- The Valley of Eschol (lit., "cluster of grapes") was located near Hebron (Cf. Num 13:22-23) and even today that area is famous for its grapes

For this reason it was called a good land, a phrase used 10x in Deut (1:25,35; 3:25; 4:21-22; 6:18; 8:7,10; 9:6; 11:17) to encourage Israel to undertake the Conquest. Moses did not explicitly mention the second half of the spies' report here, but their description of the land's inhabitants was so terrifying that almost all the people were discouraged (Num 13:28-33—the very word *Nephilim* is used there).

25 And they took *some* of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down to us. They also brought us back a report and said, 'The land that the LORD our God is about to give us is good.'

25 Then they took *some* of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down to us; and they brought us back a report and said, 'It is a good land which the LORD our God is about to give us.'

25 They hand-picked some of the fruit of the land, brought it down to us, and gave a report that said, 'The land which the LORD is about to give us is good.'"

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.

(b) Israel's rebellion (1:26-46)

**26** "Yet you were unwilling to go up; instead you rebelled against the command of the LORD your God;

**26** "Yet you were not willing to go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God;

**26** "However, your ancestors didn't go up. Instead, they rebelled against the command of the LORD your God.

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

27 and you grumbled in your tents and said, 'Because the LORD hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt, to hand us over to the Amorites to destroy us.

27 and you grumbled in your tents and said, 'Because the LORD hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us.

27 You murmured in your tents, 'The LORD hates us. He brought us out of the land of Egypt in order to deliver us to the Amorites so he could destroy us.

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.

28 Where can we go up? Our brothers have made our hearts melt, *by saying*, "The people are bigger and taller than we; the cities are large and fortified *up* to heaven. And besides, we saw the sons of the Anakim there."

28 Where can we go up? Our brethren have made our hearts melt, saying, "The people are bigger and taller than we; the cities are large and fortified to heaven. And besides, we saw the sons of the Anakim there."

28 Where can we go? Our brothers discouraged us when they said that the people are bigger and taller than we are. Their cities are tall and fortified to the sky, and we also saw the Anakim there.'

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.

- In their fear the Israelites exaggerated about the size of the cities in Canaan, saying they were walled up to the sky

- The most terrifying feature of the spies' report was the mention of the presence of the Anakim (v28) in Canaan (Num 13:32-33)

Out of cowardice the people rebelled and grumbled against the Lord (Cf. Ex 15:24; 16:2; 17:3). The people claimed that the Lord hates them, and said He delivered them from Egypt only to destroy them by the hands of the Amorites. Israel had reasoned in a similar way in the wilderness (Ex 16:3; 17:3). Their description of the people revealed that they thought their task was impossible for both themselves and God.

29 But I said to you, 'Do not be terrified, nor fear them.

29 Then I said to you, 'Do not be shocked, nor fear them.

29 "Then I told you, 'Don't be terrified or afraid of them.

**29** Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them.

30 The LORD your God, who goes before you, will Himself fight for you, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes,

30 The LORD your God who goes before you will Himself fight on your behalf, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes,

30 The LORD your God is the One who will be going ahead of you. He'll fight for you just as he did in Egypt before your eyes.

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;

31 and in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, just as a man carries his son, on all of the road which you have walked until you came to this place.'

31 and in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, just as a man carries his son, in all the way which you have walked until you came to this place.'

31 In the desert you saw that the LORD carried you like a man carries his son, on every road you traveled until you reached this place.'

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.

- Moses, on the other hand, who was not in rebellion against the Lord, had the same set of facts as the people but interpreted those facts differently

- God did not hate His people; He loved them with the tender love a father has for his helpless little son (Deut 1:31)

— All the people needed to do was to look back into their recent past when God miraculously delivered and sustained them in their desert journey

— Furthermore, the people need not be afraid (v29; Cf. v21) because the Lord did not intend to destroy them but to fight for them (v30; Cf. 3:22; 20:4)

— Ironically, Moses reminded the people that God, by means of the pillar of fire by night and cloud by day (Cf. Ex 13:21) had even acted as a spy for them

— The Hebrew word *tur* ("search out," Deut 1:33), is the same word used in Num 13:2-25 of the spies' activity!

— Moses, in contrast with the people, relied on the Word of God and his experience of God in history, allowing these two realities to interpret his circumstances and control his response to the news of the Nephilim (Rephaim)

The people's obstinate refusal to be encouraged by God's working for them in the past makes this passage an eloquent testimony to the fickleness of human hearts. A few "experts" (10 of the 12 spies) were able to overturn the facts of God's unmistakable providential care. [The perverse vacillation displayed here is not uniquely Israelite.

James needed to warn his Christian readers—who after the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord Jesus never had cause to doubt God's love or power—not to approach their God with a vacillating spirit (James 1:5-8)]

32 Yet in spite of all this, you did not trust the LORD your God,

32 But for all this, you did not trust the LORD your God,  
32 But despite this, you didn't trust in the LORD your God,  
32 Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God,

33 who goes before you on *your* way, to seek out a place for you to make camp, in the fire by night to show you the way by which you should go, and in the cloud by day.

33 who goes before you on *your* way, to seek out a place for you to encamp, in fire by night and cloud by day, to show you the way in which you should go.

33 who walked ahead of you along the way to scout a place for you to pitch camp—by fire at night and cloud by day—to lead you on the way you should go."

33 Who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to shew you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day.

**34** "Then the LORD heard the sound of your words, and He was angry and swore an oath, saying,

**34** "Then the LORD heard the sound of your words, and He was angry and took an oath, saying,

**34** "When the LORD heard your complaints, he became angry and declared,

**34** And the LORD heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying,

35 'Not one of these men, this evil generation, shall see the good land which I swore to give your fathers,

35 'Not one of these men, this evil generation, shall see the good land which I swore to give your fathers,

35 'I swear that not one man of this evil generation will see the good land that I promised to give to your ancestors,

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,

- The introduction of God's judgment by the phrase "when the Lord heard what you said" suggests God's omniscience (the people actually grumbled secretly in their tents, v27)

- Also the declaration of His devastating judgment on that generation (v35) clearly presupposes His omnipotence

— He had sworn (affirmed by oath; Cf. 4:31) to Israel's forefathers to fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant (1:8)

— The word "forefathers" occurs 21x in Deut to stress Israel's relationship to the covenant promises through the three major patriarchs

36 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him I will give the land on which he has set foot, and to his sons, because he has followed the LORD fully!

36 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and to his sons I will give the land on which he has set foot, because he has followed the LORD fully.'

36 except Jephunneh's son Caleb. He will see it and I will give to him and to his descendants the land on which he has walked because he wholeheartedly followed the LORD.'

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.

37 The LORD was angry with me also on your account, saying, 'Not even you shall enter there.

37 The LORD was angry with me also on your account, saying, 'Not even you shall enter there.

37 "The LORD was also furious with me because of you. He said: 'You will not enter the land.

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

38 Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, shall himself enter there; encourage him, for he will give it to Israel as an inheritance.

38 Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall enter there; encourage him, for he will cause Israel to inherit it.

38 However, Nun's son Joshua, your assistant, will go there. Encourage him, for he will cause Israel to take possession of it.

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.

- God also swore to exclude every warrior (Cf. 2:14) of the rebellious generation from the Promised Land, with only Caleb (1:36) and Joshua (v38) excepted (Num 14:36-38)

- The covenantal promises to Abraham were not invalidated by this act of judgment

— The descendants of Abraham would still be given the good land, but it would be given to a more obedient generation

— The covenant belongs to Israel, but only an obedient Israel will enjoy the covenant

— The exemption of Joshua and Caleb from judgment clearly illustrated this point

— Caleb, for example, followed the Lord wholeheartedly (Cf. Josh 14:8-9,14)

God's judgment even extended to Moses: God was indignant with and disappointed in Moses (as revealed in the words "with me also," emphatic in Heb; Cf. 3:26; 4:21). When Moses said that he was forbidden to enter the Promised Land because of you he was not laying the ultimate blame for his judgment on the people. Rather the people's grumbling

led him to sin, too.) So his assistant Joshua (Cf. Ex 24:13; 33:11) would lead the people into the land.

39 Moreover, your little ones who, you said, would become plunder, and your sons, who this day have no knowledge of good and evil, shall enter there, and I will give it to them and they shall take possession of it.

39 Moreover, your little ones who you said would become a prey, and your sons, who this day have no knowledge of good or evil, shall enter there, and I will give it to them and they shall possess it.

39 Your little ones—whom you said would be taken captive—and your children who do not yet know right from wrong will enter the land. I will give it to them and they themselves will possess it.

**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.

40 But as for you, turn around and set out for the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea.'

40 But as for you, turn around and set out for the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea.'

40 But as for you, prepare to set out for the desert on the way to the Reed Sea.'

40 But as for you, turn you, and take your journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea.

- The children were not held responsible for their parents' cowardice but were assured possession of the land, whereas the parents were sent back to the desert (Cf. 2:1) to die

- The author of Hebrews later pointed to the wilderness strewn with the corpses of this generation as a grim reminder of the consequences of a believer's lack of confidence in God's power (Heb 3:16-19)

### **Age of Accountability**

The age of accountability may be older than we think it is. Some of these folk who entered the land were teenagers at Kadesh-Barnea. We know from Num 14:29 that God set the age at 20, and all from twenty years old and upward died in the wilderness. Something else to note here is that children who die in infancy are saved. How do we know? God did not hold responsible those young folk who had not reached the age of accountability when their elders refused to enter the land. He permitted them to enter the land.

**41** "Then you replied to me, 'We have sinned against the LORD; we ourselves will go up and fight, just as the LORD our God commanded us.' And every man of you strapped on his weapons of war, and you viewed it as easy to go up into the hill country.

**41** "Then you said to me, 'We have sinned against the LORD; we will indeed go up and fight, just as the LORD our God commanded us.' And every man of you girded on his weapons of war, and regarded it as easy to go up into the hill country.

**41** "You responded to me and said, 'We have sinned against the LORD. We will now go up and fight according to what the LORD our God commanded.' So each man put on his weapon for battle and recklessly started out for the hill country."

**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.

**42** But the LORD said to me, 'Say to them, "Do not go up nor fight, for I am not among you; otherwise you will be defeated by your enemies."'

**42** And the LORD said to me, 'Say to them, "Do not go up nor fight, for I am not among you; otherwise you will be defeated before your enemies."'

**42** "Then the LORD told me: 'Tell them not to go up and fight because I will not be in their midst, or else you will be defeated before your enemies.'

**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 devastating judgment was announced to the people they realized the enormity of their sin and responded with an immediate confession and a readiness to go to battle immediately

- But then it was too late, for God had already sworn to judge them

- The insincerity of their confession was made evident in a second act of rebellion; the fickleness of the people is again underscored

They rebelled at first out of cowardice and unbelief in the Lord's ability to fight for them.

They rebelled a second time in arrogance (v43) thinking they could win the battle without His help. Their defeat by the Amorites who chased them like a swarm of bees in the hill country (Cf. v41b), made it plain that they were under the resolute and inescapable judgment of their God (Cf. Num 14:40-45).

**43** So I spoke to you, but you would not listen. Instead, you rebelled against the command of the LORD, and acted presumptuously and went up into the hill country.

**43** So I spoke to you, but you would not listen. Instead you rebelled against the command of the LORD, and acted presumptuously and went up into the hill country.

**43** "I spoke to you but you didn't listen. Instead you rebelled against the command of the LORD and went up to the hill country.

**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.

44 And the Amorites who lived in that hill country came out against you and chased you as bees do, and they scattered you from Seir to Hormah.

44 The Amorites who lived in that hill country came out against you and chased you as bees do, and crushed you from Seir to Hormah.

44 The Amorites who lived in the hill country came out to engage you in battle. They pursued you like bees do and crushed you from Seir to Hormah.

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.

- The exact location of the city of Hormah is not known, but it was in the Negev, the southern portion of Canaan, later assigned to Judah (Josh 15:30) and then to Simeon (Josh 19:4; Cf. Judges 1:17)

- Seir was an early name for Edom (Gen 32:3; Deut 2:4-5,8,12,22,29)

45 Then you returned and wept before the LORD; but the LORD did not listen to your voice, nor pay attention to you.

45 Then you returned and wept before the LORD; but the LORD did not listen to your voice nor give ear to you.

45 You returned and cried out in the LORD's presence, but the LORD didn't hear your voice or listen to you.

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

46 So you remained at Kadesh for many days, the days that you spent *there*.

46 So you remained in Kadesh many days, the days that you spent *there*.

46 You remained in Kadesh for many days. It was a long time, indeed."

**46** So ye abode in Kadesh many days, according unto the days that ye abode there.