

## Deuteronomy 1:19-46

Dr. Steven R. Cook

“Then we set out from Horeb [forty years earlier], 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.<sup>20</sup> “I said to you, ‘You have come to the hill country of the Amorites which the LORD our God is about to give us [theirs by divine right; cf. Gen 15:18; 17:7-8; 26:3-4; 28:13-14; Ex 3:8, 17; 13:5; 33:2].’<sup>21</sup> ‘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 [i.e. look to God, not the problems associated with taking the land; cf. Deut 31:8].’<sup>22</sup> “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 [i.e. spy out the land first].’<sup>23</sup> “The thing pleased me and I took twelve of your men, one man for each tribe [cf. Num 13:1-17].<sup>24</sup> “They turned and went up into the hill country, and came to the valley of Eshcol and spied it out.<sup>25</sup> “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.’<sup>26</sup> “Yet you were not willing to go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God [see Num 13:25—14:10];<sup>27</sup> and you grumbled in your tents and said [in fear], ‘Because the LORD hates us [i.e. has rejected us], He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us [they had a history of thinking this way; cf. Ex 14:11-12; 16:3; 17:3].’<sup>28</sup> ‘Where can we go up? Our brethren have made our hearts melt [infecting them with irrational fear], saying, “The people are bigger and taller than we; the cities are large and fortified to heaven [sinful fear exaggerates perception]. And besides, we saw the sons of the Anakim there [see Num 13:25-33].”’<sup>29</sup> “Then I said to you [challenging their human viewpoint], ‘Do not be shocked, nor fear them.’<sup>30</sup> ‘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,<sup>31</sup> 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.’ [Moses tried to dislodge their irrational fear by thinking from a historical-theological perspective]<sup>32</sup> “But for all this [i.e. his efforts], you did not trust the LORD your God,<sup>33</sup> 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 [they forgot about God’s past deliverance and negative volition prevailed; cf. Psa 78:11, 42].<sup>34</sup> “Then the LORD heard the sound of your words, and He was angry and took an oath, saying,<sup>35</sup> ‘Not one of these men, this evil generation [of saved Israelites], shall see the good land which I swore to give your fathers,<sup>36</sup> except Caleb the son of Jephunneh [who gave a good report; see Num 13:30]; 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.’<sup>37</sup> “The LORD was angry with me also on your account, saying, ‘Not even you shall enter there [see Num 20:10-13; Deut 32:49-52].’<sup>38</sup>

‘Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall enter there; encourage him, for he will cause Israel to inherit it [see Num 14:6-8, 30].<sup>39</sup> ‘Moreover, your little ones who you said would become a prey [i.e. those who were young and weak], and your sons, who this day have no knowledge of good or evil [i.e. too young to be held accountable for their choices], shall enter there, and I will give it to them and they shall possess it.<sup>40</sup> ‘But as for you, turn around and set out for the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea.’<sup>41</sup> ‘Then you said to me, ‘We have sinned against the LORD [true]; we will indeed go up and fight, just as the LORD our God commanded us [that command had be rescinded].’ And every man of you girded on his weapons of war, and regarded it as easy to go up into the hill country [false confidence].<sup>42</sup> ‘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.’” [the Lord’s new command]<sup>43</sup> ‘So I spoke to you [communicating divine revelation], but you would not listen [displaying negative volition]. Instead you rebelled against the [new] command of the LORD, and acted presumptuously and went up into the hill country.<sup>44</sup> ‘The Amorites who lived in that hill country came out against you and chased you as bees do [because God was not with them], and crushed you from Seir to Hormah.<sup>45</sup> ‘Then you returned and wept before the LORD [remorse too late]; but the LORD did not listen to your voice nor give ear to you [because the weeping was based on self-induced suffering which resulted because of their rebellion].<sup>46</sup> ‘So you remained in Kadesh many days, the days that you spent there [thirty-eight years].

## Summary:

The main point of this pericope is that the exodus generation of Israelites failed to obey God’s command to take possession of the land, and because of their unbelief, God withheld the blessing. Originally, God called His people to have faith and take possession of the land (Deut 1:19-21). The Israelites wanted to spy out the land (Ex 3:8; Lev 20:24), which was not wrong in itself; however, God had already done that, even describing the evil residents and the land itself (Lev 18:1-30; 20:1-27). Where God leads, His grace and power will sustain. However, negative volition, irrational fear, and grumbling caused them to distrust the Lord and perceive His love as hatred, even accusing God of desiring their destruction (Deut 1:26-27). The human-viewpoint report from ten of the spies spread among the people and the result was that they saw the land as unconquerable (Deut 1:28). Moses had the same facts as the Israelites, yet he interpreted them from faith, and this gave him strength in his soul. From a position of strength, Moses sought to dislodge their irrational fear by getting them to think historically and theologically, considering God’s past deliverances (Deut 1:29-31). But the Israelites did not trust the Lord, and their sin blinded them to the obvious provisions of God all around them (Deut 1:32-33), and the Lord became angry at their unbelief (Deut 1:34). Collective and self-induced amnesia dominated the people, as they forgot about God’s past acts of deliverance by means of plagues on Egypt, as well as the parting of the Red Sea (Psa 78:11, 42), and they ignored

the current evidences of the cloud of smoke and fire, as well the daily provision of manna. They welcomed God's gifts, but failed to recognize, praise, and serve the Giver. The result was a generation of believers who developed a sinful mindset and were called an "evil generation" (Deut 1:35). The two exceptions were Caleb and Joshua, who maintained their faith in God (Deut 1:36, 38). Moses' act of unbelief meant he too would not enter the land (Deut 1:37); however, God promised to bring the second generation into the land (Deut 1:39). By their unbelief, the Israelites had forfeited the land, and God commanded them to turn around and head back into the wilderness (Deut 1:40). Though God's decision was fixed, the people rebelled against Him again, presuming they could take the land (Deut 1:41). God warned them, saying, "Do not go up nor fight, for I am not among you; otherwise you will be defeated before your enemies" (Deut 1:42). But they "would not listen" (Deut 1:43a), and "rebelled against the command of the LORD, and acted presumptuously and went up into the hill country" (Deut 1:43). Their disobedience resulted in military defeat (Deut 1:44). Because they would not listen to the Lord, He would not listen to them (Deut 1:45; cf. Psa 66:18; Pro 28:9; Mic 3:4). God was not sympathetic to their self-induced pain which was caused by unbelief and rebellion against His commands. The result was that they remained in Kadesh for thirty-eight years, until that generation died off (Deut 1:46).

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