

Deuteronomy

Lesson 2

Moses' Summary Mount Sinai to Kadesh-barnea

Time to Leave Horeb – One Year One Month and Twelve Days Out of Egypt

The Fulfillment of a Promise for the New Nation

The Path (1:6-7)

In his story, Moses was looking back to the twelfth day of the second month of the second year when the LORD lifted the cloud from over the Tent of Meeting and instructed the Israelites to break camp and head toward the Promised Land following the cloud by day and the column of fire by night as recorded in Numbers 10:11. The books of Genesis, Exodus and Leviticus were complete and stored in the Ark of the Covenant. All of the Tabernacle complex was complete and consecrated to the LORD. It was time to move. Everyone knew their place in the order of the camp. The order of the caravan was set as follows.

Order of the March of the Camp

First	Judah
Second	Issachar
Third	Zebulun
Fourth	Tabernacle Complex taken down and follows Zebulun – Gershon and Merari <i>The Tabernacle Complex to be completely erected before Holy objects arrive.</i>
Fifth	Reuben
Sixth	Simeon
Seventh	Gad
Eighth	Holy Objects - Kohath
Ninth	Ephraim
Tenth	Manasseh
Eleventh	Benjamin
Twelfth	Dan
Thirteenth	Asher
Fourteenth	Naphtali

Then Moses reminded the people of what the LORD said on the twelfth day of the second month of the second year out of Egypt. Verse 6. *“The LORD our God spoke to us at Horeb, saying, ‘You have stayed long enough at this mountain.’ 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” (1:6-7).*

It was time for the Nation of Israel to take their Promises Land by storm. The first destination was to be the *hill country of the Amorite and all their neighbors in the Arabah*. By the time of the first departure from Mount Sinai to take the Promised Land, the Amorites, who were descendants of Canaan and therefore a Canaanite tribe, controlled two areas of the land promised by the LORD to the nation of Israel. However, hundreds of years before, the family of Amore first established its tribal home on the mountain range west of the Dead Sea. From north to south the boundary was about as long as the Dead Sea and its widest point was about fifteen miles. Abraham’s home of Hebron was in the territory controlled by the Amorites. Directly west of the Amorite land was the tribal area of Hitte, another descendant of Canaan. That area was not as large as the Amorite land



but it was not as hilly either. North of the Amorite and Hittite land was an area where the Jebusite tribe lived. Jebu, a descendant of Canaan, had a father who was a Amorite and a mother who was a Hittite. Jebu established his family in the beautiful hill country and established his main village and called it Jebu. The hill would come to be known as Zion and Jebu fortified his village and for hundreds of years, his family and descendants were safe from all attacks. His village grew into a city and it became known as the Jebusite Citadel, the impenetrable fortress. About three-hundred and sixty years after this moment in the story of Deuteronomy, King David, who had made his capital in Hebron in the old Amorite area, would capture the Jebusite Citadel, a seemingly impossible task, move his capital to the city of Jebu and change its name to Jerusalem. The LORD told us all this history and more in Ezekiel 16. My point in giving this explanation is that Jerusalem was a Jebusite city with a Jebusite name at the time of the departure from Mount Sinai and would continue to be so after the complete takeover of the Promised Land by Joshua. The tribe of Judah took the Jebusite land but did not control mount Zion until the seventh year of David's reign as King of Israel.

The *Negev* mentioned by Moses was all the area south of the Amorite land. It included the Wilderness of Zin and the Wilderness of Paran, all the land down to the Sea of Aqaba, the eastern finger of the Red Sea.

Lebanon was the land located far to the northwest of the Sea of Galilee, more than a hundred miles from the Amorite land and much farther from the Negev. The instruction from the LORD for the Nation of Israel was for the march to take the Promised Land to begin in the Negev and completely take the land to the land of Lebanon and its great cedar forest all the way to the *Euphrates River*. Almost five hundred years before this move of the Nation of Israel, Abraham's father had died in the village of Haran on the Euphrates River where the whole family lived. Upon that death, the LORD told Abraham, then seventy-five years of age, to leave Haran and the Euphrates River and walk into the land that would one day be given to his descendants. Everywhere that Abraham walked would become part of his inheritance to his descendants.

But Abraham had also walked to the Nile River in Egypt too. So, too, the land from the Negev, with in theory touched the land located next to the east side of the Nile River would be included in the ultimate Promised Land. So from the Negev to the Euphrates River, the Nation of Israel was to make a due north march to capture the Promised Land from the Canaanites.

The Promise (1:8)

With the instruction given to Moses, the LORD gave His promise in verse 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"* (1:8). The land belonged to the same people who had departed Egypt just a year and a month before. All they had to do was follow the LORD's instructions.

The Selection of the Leaders for the New Nation

The Multitude (1:9-11)

Four decades before, the camp had left Mount Sinai and troubles evolved. They had already arrive in the Wilderness of Paran and were staying at a place they named Taberah. There the people were tired of eating manna. They wanted meat. There they remembered all the good food in Egypt and it angered the LORD. So the LORD gave them quail to eat, for thirty days they would have quail. Numbers 11:20 tells us that LORD would feed them quail for thirty days until it came out their nostrils and became loathsome. Before moving on from Taberah, Moses realized that he could not continue to regulate all the trouble among the people under his leadership. He reminded them saying, *"I spoke to you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear the burden of you alone. ¹⁰ The LORD your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are this day like the stars of heaven in number. 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!"* (1:9-11).

Moses reminded the people that their parents and grand-parents who have followed him out of Egypt forty years before were a muddled mess of grumbling complainers.

The Muddle (1:12)

We can see in Moses' words just how muddled of a mess the people were. Moses felt hopeless and alone as he prayed to the LORD. Verse 12. *"How can I alone bear the load and burden of you and your strife?"* (1:12). But the LORD was quick to answer Moses' plea.

The Magistrates (1:13-15)

Moses needed helpers, magistrates to give leadership with the people. The LORD said to Moses, *"Choose wise and discerning and experienced men from your tribes, and I will appoint them as your heads."*¹⁴ *You answered me and said, 'The thing which you have said to do is good.'*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."* (1:13-15). In Numbers 11:23-25 we find that the LORD instructed Moses to select seventy men to be these magistrates. Moses selected the men.

The Instruction for the Leaders of the New Nation

Hear All Cases (1:16-17a)

After selecting the men from the elders of the different tribes of Israel, Moses reminded this new generation how he had charged and delegated authority to hear all the cases that the people brought to the elders thirty-nine years before. He said, *"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.'*^{17a} *You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike."* (1:16-17a).

Fear No Cases (1:17b)

But elders in those days were the older men who were the natural leaders of the people. They had not been selected by the people, they had just become the natural leaders by virtue of their personality, character and wisdom. As such, popularity would have been involved even in those ancient days just as it is today. No one want to be unpopular. So the LORD, knowing human nature as He had created every man might fear hearing a case, the LORD said through Moses in verse 17b, *"You shall not fear man, for the judgment is God's"* (1:17b).

Refer Hard Cases (1:17c-18)

In reality, all cases are hard because all cases involve people and people are complicated. It is not often that cases between people can be settled where both sides feel justified. Yet, every once in a while, a case will come with a strange twist that has never been seen before and someone higher in the organization needs to make the decision. Moses made that provision too as we see in verse 17b. *"The case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it."*¹⁸ *I commanded you at that time all the things that you should do"* (1:17b-18).

The Departure from Horeb of the New Nation

The Terrible Wilderness of the Amorites (1:19a)

In Moses' remembrance of the past, he tells the people that the camp left Horeb, a specific site at the foot of Mount Sinai where Moses had met the LORD in the burning bush, and they journeyed as instructed to the hill country of the Amorites. Verse 19 says, *"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; ..."* (1:19). It is here that we must realize that the order of events recorded in this presentation by Moses is not in the same order as they were in the record of Numbers. In Numbers the selection of the seventy elders was after the departure from Horeb, in this record the selection of the seventy is before the selection of the seventy. In Numbers, the grumbling of the people as they traveled through the terrible wilderness of the Amorites caused Moses to cry out to the LORD. We also find that in Numbers, the people were thrilled and ready to move into the Promise Land. They had just completed building the Tabernacle complex and made

their offerings to consecrate it as well as their new High Priest, Aaron. Thirty-nine years later, when Moses is recounting this memory, it is unclear why he moved the order of events around.

The Terrific Hill Country of the Amorites (1:19b-21)

The Amorites controlled the Negev and they did so with a vengeance. The area that will become known as Kadesh-barnea was on the border of the Wilderness of Zin and the Wilderness of Paran in the Negev area. Because Kadesh was on the border of the two wilderness areas, it is often supposed that there are two Kadesh villages, one in Zin and one in Paran. That is not the case. It is one village that rests in both areas. The trip through the terrific hill country of the Amorites would stop the camp at Kadesh-barnea. Moses says in verse 19b, *^{a9b} and we came to Kadesh-barnea. 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. 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'* (1:19b-21).

It was the LORD's intent that the camp would rest at Kadesh-barnea and then the LORD would lead the camp through the Promised Land with the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. That is how they had arrived at Kadesh-barnea and that was how the LORD would continue to lead His nation until they possessed all the Promised Land even to the Euphrates River. But the people made another decision.

The Sending of the Spies from the New Nation

The Request to Send Spies (1:22-23)

In this summary in Deuteronomy, Moses left out a whole host of tragic events in the life of the nation from Horeb to Kadesh. Nevertheless, Moses skipped to Kadesh where the people came up with the idea of sending spies from the new nation to search out the Promised Land before they followed the LORD into the Promise Land. Verse 22 explains. *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.' ²³ The thing pleased me and I took twelve of your men, one man for each tribe"* (1:22-23).

Notice that the idea to send twelve men pleased Moses and he allowed it to be organized. Moses does not say that it pleased the LORD.

The Journey of the Sent Spies (1:24)

Be that as it may, the spies were selected and verse 24 states, *²⁴ They turned and went up into the hill country, and came to the valley of Eshcol and spied it out"* (1:24).

The valley of Eshcol had the Eshcol River running through it and the river was the water source for the village of Hebron. This valley is located about twenty miles southeast of the Jebusite Citadel that will one day be captured and called Jerusalem. A spring, called the *Ain Eshkali*, is located about two miles north of Hebron and it feeds the river.

The Return of the Sent Spies (1:25)

The name *Eshcol* means *clusters*. There the spies cut and brought back to the camp the huge cluster of grapes carried on a pole between two men. They also brought pomegranates and figs as recorded in Numbers 13:12-24. Here Moses remembers in verse 25, *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.'"* (1:25).

One would think that all was well and the people would follow the cloud, but instead a rebellion broke out.

The Rebellion of the Leaders of the New Nation

Outright Rebellion (1:26)

The outright rebellion of the leaders broke out. The LORD had said, "Go" the leaders said, "No." Verse 26. *²⁶ Yet you were not willing to go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God;"* (1:26).

Outright Refusal (1:27-28a)

Not only was it an outright rebellion, it was an outright refusal. Verse 27 says, “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.’” ^{28a} *Where can we go up?*” (1:27-28a).

The LORD Who had saved them just a year before from the slavery of Egypt, provided every need for them, and was about to lead them to the takeover of the entire Canaanite land from the Negev to the Euphrates River could not be trusted to deliver them from the hand of the Amorite? How ludicrous! They even asked the question “Where can we go up?” The Israelites had outright refused to follow their LORD Who did not hate them, but loved them and wanted to keep His promise.

Outright Resentment (1:28b)

Their outright rebellion turned into outright refusal and ended in an outright resentment. Verse 28b. “*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.’*” (1:28b).

Now it is a fact that taller people tend to be bigger people. And, bigger and taller people tend to build bigger and taller and stronger things that smaller people. Who were these big and tall people? They were the sons of Anakim.

In Hebron, the descendants of Anak lived. Who was Anak? Anak and the three sons mentioned in the Numbers passage were known for being tall and having long necks. The name “Anak” means tall and long necked. In Joshua 11:22, they are called “Anakim.” These tall people were known throughout the region. Joshua would kill the immediate descendants of these men, but their relatives would move into the Gaza area and live among the Philistines. In the book of Joshua, they are called “Nephilim” which means renown or known about. Everyone in the region knew about these tall people. It does not mean that they were giants. If they had been giants, the Hebrew would have called them raphah, not nephilim. Goliath was from a group of giants (raphah) but he was not a descendant of Anak. Be that as it may, the Israelites were afraid of the Anakim.

The Reply of the Leader of the New Nation

Moses’ Encouragement (1:29-31)

Moses replied to the leaders of the new nation and tried to encourage them. Verse 29. “²⁹ Then I said to you, ‘Do not be shocked, nor fear them.’” 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,* 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.*” (1:29-31).

Moses’ Discouragement (1:32-33)

But Moses’ encouragement turned to discouragement. It is recorded in his words in verse 32. “³² But for all this, you did not trust the LORD your God, 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” (1:32-33).

The people had turned on the LORD and did not trust Him. The cloud and the fire of the LORD could not be penetrated or defeated by the Egyptians and it could surely not be penetrated or defeated by the Amorites. The LORD would fight, the Israelites would not have to do anything but follow the cloud by day and the fire by night.

The Anger of the LORD Against the New Nation

The Lord’s Promise (1:34-35)

And so, the LORD heard the words of the people as they rebelled against Him. Moses remembered and said this in verse 34. “³⁴ Then the LORD heard the sound of your words, and He was angry and took an oath, saying, ³⁵ ‘Not one of these men, this evil generation, shall see the good land which I swore to give your fathers, ...’” (1:34-35).

The new promise from the LORD postponed the old promise give it Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Everyone who had rebelled against the LORD would never see the Promised Land save for a few exceptions.

The Lord's Pardon (1:36)

The LORD would pardon a few. Here is the mention of the first in verse 36. All would die “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.*” (1:36).

Caleb was one of the twelve spies. His report to the nation upon his return was "We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it." (Numbers 13:30). Then the LORD also said about Caleb, "But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it." (Numbers 14:24). He surely followed the LORD fully!

The Lord's Punishment (1:37)

The Moses admitted that he would not go into the Promised Land because the LORD would punish him too for an unfaithful act on his part. Moses remembered and said, “³⁷ *The LORD was angry with me also on your account, saying, 'Not even you shall enter there.'*” (1:37).

According to Numbers chapter 20, just a month or so before the delivery of this last message in Deuteronomy to the people, the people were grumbling because of the lack of water at Kadesh-barnea. The people were afraid they would die of thirst. The LORD told Moses to speak to the rock and water would come forth, but Moses struck the rock instead. The LORD still provided the water but He was angry with Moses. At that time, the LORD said to Moses, "Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." (Numbers 20:12). Forty years of faithful service brought to an end by one disobedient act. Moses would not be the leader to take them into the Promised Land. Thirty-nine years before he would have been, but not now.

The Lord's Patriarch (1:38)

Returning back in his memory to the first visit to Kadesh-barnea, Moses speaks of another faithful spy. Verse 38. “³⁸ *Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall enter there; encourage him, for he will cause Israel to inherit it.*” (1:38).

Upon his return from investigating the Promised Land, Joshua said, "The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them." (Numbers 14:7b-9).

Joshua had won his spot in the Promised Land adventure because he was faithful to the LORD and wanted to follow the cloud by day and the fire by night to victory.

The Lord's Provision (1:39)

But then Moses remember the little ones, those under twenty years of age. About them the people had said in verse 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." (1:39). The little ones were not the grownups standing before Moses, ready to enter the Promised Land once and for all. We might pause here to see what the LORD is saying about those twenty years of age and younger. He says they "have no knowledge of good or evil." Is the LORD saying that at below the age of twenty, people do not understand the concepts of good and evil? Some of us may be dealing with our pre-twenty year old children and agree that they just do not understand that right is right and wrong is wrong, but that is not what the LORD is saying here. In this passage the LORD is saying, the children, under the age of twenty, in the camp that rebelled against the LORD did not have a say in that decision and most of them did not have an understanding of the

total ramification of rejecting the instructions of the LORD for the entire nation. Therefore, they would be exempt from the punishment of never being able to take part in the taking of the Promised Land.

The Lord's Pronouncement (1:40)

The LORD had made up His mind and He had given the new instruction. *“⁴⁰ But as for you, turn around and set out for the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea.”* (1:40). In other words, pack up and head back to Mount Sinai.

The Rebellion Against the LORD of the New Nation

The People's Repentance and Plan (1:41)

With that instruction from the LORD, the people realized their rebellion against the LORD and quickly repented and made their own plan. Verse 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.”* (1:41).

The Lord's Rejection and Promise (1:42)

The LORD did not make that plan for the nation and He did not like that plan. Verse 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.’”* (1:42).

The LORD will not participate in things that are against His will, and it was not His will for the nation of Israel to head into the Promised Land after the He had told them to go back to Mount Sinai. He warned them, but they did not listen

The Amorite's Reaction and Plunder (1:43-44)

Moses delivered the message but the people did not listen. Is a short summary of the event the Moses says in verse 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.”* 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.”* (1:43-44).

Without the protection of the cloud and the fire and all the power of the LORD in front of the nation, Israel was pulverized by the Amorites. As Israel ran, the Amorites followed from the Seir Mountain range to Hormah, a village just a short distance from Kadesh-barnea.

The Rejected Repentance of the New Nation

The Silence of the Lord (1:45)

After the defeat, the warriors returned to Kadesh-barnea rejected and repentant. They did not hear the LORD when they cried to Him. Verse 45. *“Then you returned and wept before the LORD; but the LORD did not listen to your voice nor give ear to you.”* (1:45).

The LORD had told the nation what to do and it did not follow His instruction. The warriors of the nation had attempted to fight a battle that was impossible for them to win without the LORD but it was a disastrous failure. The nation should have pack the bags and headed back to Mount Sinai. Instead they were burying their dead.

The Stillness of the People (1:46)

Verse 46 speaks of the stillness of the people in the day. *“So you remained in Kadesh many days, the days that you spent there.”* (1:46). The nation stayed at Kadesh-barnea at least thirty days past the time they should have been on the way to Mount Sinai. The stillness of the waiting time was the traditional time of mourning the dead. Had they followed the LORD, all would have returned to Mount Sinai alive. The LORD has put in place from the very beginning the fact that there are always consequences for sin and He will hold to those promise consequences.

More of this story will develop in Chapter 2.