

## LESSON ONE 1:1-46

### I. THE FIRST DISCOURSE

Review of the Journeys (1:1—4:43)

#### INTRODUCTION 1:1-5

1:1 These are the words which Moses spake unto all Israel beyond the Jordan in the wilderness, in the Arabah over against Suph, between Paran and Tophel, and Paban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab. 2 It is eleven days *journey*\* from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadesh-barnea. 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 Jehovah had given him in commandment unto them; 4 after he had smitten Sihon the King of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, who dwelt in Ashtaroth, at Edrei. 5 Beyond the Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare this law, saying,

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 1:1-5

1. Why was it necessary for Moses to speak to all Israel at this particular time?
2. Locate on a map the particular place from which this speech was given.
3. What possible purpose could be served in indicating the distance of "eleven days journey"?
4. How could Moses remember "all that Jehovah had given him in commandment unto them"?
5. Read Numbers 21:21-35 for an understanding of verse 4.
6. What is the meaning of the term "beyond the Jordan" in verse 5 and verse 1?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 1:1-5

These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel, [still] on the [east] side of the Jordan [River] in the wilderness, in the Arabah [that is, the deep valley running north and south from the eastern arm of the Red Sea to beyond the Dead Sea] over near Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab.

\*In the American Standard Version, used throughout this volume unless otherwise indicated, italicized words in the scripture text are meant to convey thoughts which seem necessary for a clear translation but not actually in the original.

2 It is [only] eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of Mount Seir to Kadesh-barnea [on Canaan's border; yet Israel took forty years to get beyond it].

3 And in the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses spoke to the Israelites according to all that the Lord had given him in commandment to them,

4 After he had defeated Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth *and* Endrei.

5 Beyond [east of] the Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses began to explain this law, saying,

### COMMENT 1:1-5

Israel, now virtually on the eastern banks of the Jordan after forty years in the wilderness, is to receive final exhortations and solemn injunctions before crossing the river under Joshua's leadership. Moses, their leader up to this hour, is soon to pass from the scene. Thus the exhortations he is about to give constitute his farewell address—and a touching scene it must have been!

The location of Israel is precisely given:

BEYOND THE JORDAN—a phrase understood only by the context. Verse 5 specifies that in this case it is "in the land of Moab"—i.e., on the *east* side of the Jordan. More often than not, this is the meaning of the phrase—Gen. 50:10, 11; Josh. 9:10; Num. 22:1—"eastward, toward the sunrising" (Num. 34:15). But at other times the phrase has reference to the west side—["Mounts Gerizim and Ebal] are they not beyond the Jordan, behind the way of the going down of the sun?" (Deut. 11:30). At first it might seem that the standpoint of the writer or speaker would be the chief factor in determining whether "beyond" refers to the east or west side. But this assumption (while normally true) also has its difficulties, for sometimes "beyond the Jordan" refers to the *same side* as the speaker: Deut. 3:8; Josh. 5:1, 9:1. The solution to this varied use of "beyond" apparently lies in the correct understanding of the Hebrew preposition (*eber*), and the flexibility of its translation. After showing that *eber* may refer to either the same side of the river as the speaker, or the other side, J. W. McGarvey points out: "These examples demonstrate that the Hebrew preposition (*eber*) translated 'beyond' does not, by its own force, locate its object on the opposite side from him who uses it. They demonstrate that the opening words of Deuteronomy, 'These be the words which Moses

spake to all Israel beyond the Jordan in the wilderness,' may have been written by Moses as certainly as by any other writer . . ." Again, "It is impossible that a Hebrew preposition whose object is sometimes located on the same side of the river with the person who uses it, can be uniformly translated 'beyond.' Yet this is what the revisers of our English version have attempted. For example, they make Moses say in Deut. 3:8, 'We took at that time out of the hands of the two kings of the Amorites the land that was beyond Jordan from the river Arnon to Mount Hermon,' though the land mentioned was not beyond Jordan, but on the same side with Moses. They make Joshua say to the two and a half tribes before they crossed the river, 'Your wives, your little ones and your cattle shall remain in the land which Moses gave you beyond Jordan,' [Josh. 1:14] when it was not beyond, but on the same side of the river with themselves; and they make the author of the Book of Joshua, who unquestionably wrote in the country west of the river, speak of 'all the kings which were *beyond* the Jordan westward" [Josh. 12:7]. They were not beyond Jordan, but on the same side with himself.

King James' translators recognized the ambiguity of this Hebrew preposition, and wisely attempted no uniformity in rendering. They ascertained as best they could from the context, the only source of information in case of ambiguous words, on which side of the river the speaker or writer stood, and translated accordingly. They render it *on this side*, *on the other side*, or *beyond*, as the context requires, and in no instance have they made their renderings contradict the facts . . .

This translation has the opening sentence of Deuteronomy rendered, 'These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness' (verse 1), and 'on this side Jordan in the land of Moab' (verse 5 [see also 3:29]); and thus it locates the writer of the book on the same side of the river with Moses. This is certainly correct if either Moses or one of his contemporaries wrote this preface.\* The question of "editing" is taken up later in this volume. For the present, let it be seen that the word "beyond" (*eber*) does not, in and of itself, determine the location of the writer or speaker or even the object spoken of.

Here, the context absolutely demands that the writer and speaker be located on the east side of the Jordan. The above understanding of the use of "*beyond*" will help unravel several "contradictory" passages as we progress in our study of Deuteronomy.

\*The Authorship of Deuteronomy, p. 106-111.

IN THE WILDERNESS, IN THE ARABAH—The Arabah is the valley or hollow that includes the Jordan valley and the Dead Sea, and sometimes the depression that extends southward to the Gulf of Aqaba, an arm of the Red Sea. The Jordan valley is sometimes referred to as the *Ghor*, an Arab name meaning "hollow." Its width varies, but at the "plains of the Jordan" where the river flows into the Salt Sea, it is approximately fourteen miles wide. This wide area is also called "the plains of Moab" (34:1) and "the Plain of the valley of Jericho" (34:3). Our words Arab and Arabian are related to "Arabah"—all being from a root word meaning arid, sterile, dry (*Gesenius*).

OVER AGAINST SUPH, BETWEEN PARAN, AND TOPHEL, AND LABAN, AND HAZEROTH, AND DIZAHAB—4:46 adds, "in the valley over against Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites." Thus the *general* area of all these locations is known. "And they [Israel] journeyed from the mountains of Abarim, and encamped in the Plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho." (Num. 33:48)

It is questionable as to whether Paran should be identified with "the wilderness of Paran" (Num. 13:26), "mount Paran" (Deut. 33:2), or considered a town by the same name. "Some place named Paran would seem to be referred to in Deut. 1:1; but no trace of such a city has yet been found."—*I.S.B.E.* See also I Kings 11:18.

The travelling time from Horeb (Sinai) to Kadesh-barnea, at the southern edge of the promised land, was only eleven days (verse 2).

OVER AGAINST SUPH—the Authorized Version's reading "over against the Red Sea," is regrettable. The word "sea" is not in the original at all (it occurs later in the Septuagint and Vulgate versions), and they were now farther from the Red Sea than they ever had been! The Hebrew word SUPH should have been left untranslated (as in the American Standard and Revised Standard versions), as it undoubtedly is a city or town in the vicinity of Israel's camp. Ptolemy mentions a people named *Sophonites* that dwelt in *Arabia Petraea*, and it is possible that they took their name from this city.

IT IS ELEVEN DAYS' JOURNEY FROM HOREB BY THE WAY OF MOUNT SEIR UNTO KADESH-BARNEA—Kadesh is located on the southern edge of the promised land (Num. 13:25, 26; 34:4), but it took Israel thirty-eight years to get far beyond it! The Decalogue was given about three months after leaving Egypt (Ex. 19:1) at Sinai. At the foot

of this mountain, the tabernacle was reared up in the first month of the second year (Ex. 40:17). When Israel was first numbered in the wilderness (Num. 1:1) they were thirteen months out of Egypt. On the twentieth day of that month, they set forth from the Mount (Num. 10:11, 12). But it obviously took them longer than the standard journey-time from Sinai to Kadesh via the Mount Seir road (Num. 10:33; 11:3, 19, 20, 35; 12:16; 13:25, 26). It must have taken several months, for in Deut. 2:14 we are told, "And the days in which we came from Kadesh-barnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, were thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were consumed from the midst of the camp, as Jehovah sware unto them." We have, then, approximately a two year period between Egypt and Kadesh. This, added to the thirty-eight between the first visit at Kadesh and the crossing of the Zered river (which flows into the southeastern shore of the Dead Sea) gives us forty years. When we add the time it took Israel to proceed up the east side and conquer the kingdoms of Sihon and Og, we have "The fortieth year in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month" as the time Moses began our present discourse.

The curse given at Kadesh for Israel's failure to obey God's injunction to lay hold of his promise was, in a sense, retroactive. "After the number of days in which ye spied out the land, even forty days, for every day a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my alienation" (Num. 14:34).

But we cannot leave this passage without asking another question: Why does the sacred writer insert this matter of distances and traveling time? It seems obvious, that it is to show how simply and easily God's chosen people *could* have entered into the land God had assured them *if* they would have marched forth with courage and confidence at Kadesh! It was only "eleven days from Horeb, by way of Mount Seir,—as far as Kadesh-barnea" (*Rotherdam*)—but there the discouraging report of the spies (except Joshua and Caleb) caused the congregation to cower and "made the heart of the people melt" (John. 14:8), causing them to cry, "wherefore doth Jehovah bring us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will be a prey: were it not better for us to return to Egypt?" (Num. 14:3). Failure to capitalize upon the promises, opportunities, and privileges God grants to us cannot but have harmful and regrettable results—both to us and our children. The comment of *C. H. Mackintosh* here is excellent: "It

is only too like ourselves. How slowly we get over the ground! What windings and turnings! How often we have to go back and travel over the same ground again and again! We are slow travelers, because we are slow learners . . . We, like them, are kept back by our unbelief and slowness of heart; but there is far less excuse for us than for them, inasmuch as our privileges are so very much higher. Our God is a faithful and wise as well as a gracious and patient Teacher. He will not permit us to pass cursorily over our lessons. Sometimes, perhaps, we think we have mastered a lesson, and we attempt to move on to another; but our wise Teacher knows better, and He sees the need of deeper ploughing. He will not have us mere theorists or smatterers: He will keep us, if need be, year after year at our scales until we learn to sing."

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 JEHOVAH HAD GIVEN HIM IN COMMANDMENT UNTO THEM—Thus the faithful servant of God communicated exactly what God had *given him* to communicate! Not his own theories or whims, nor his own speculations or fancies. See I Pet. 1:19-21, Jn. 5:19. He gives it *all*—"all that Jehovah had given him." The responsibility of the true servant of God today has not basically changed. God's word—all of it—*must* be communicated to his people if they are to be guided and directed aright. ". . . the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever" (29:29)—and we must *know* them and be *reminded* of them if we are to "do all the words of this law."

AFTER HE HAD SMITTEN SIHON THE KING OF THE AMORITES, WHO DWELT IN HESHBON, AND OG THE KING OF BASHAN, WHO DWELT IN ASHTAROTH, AT EDREI (v. 4)—The two main conquests of Israel on the east of the Dead Sea. We'll read more about Sihon's defeat in 2:26-37 and a detailed account is also found in Num. 21:21-31. His kingdom's borders were the Arnon river on the south and the Jabbok river on the north. We'll read more about Og of Bashan, just north of Sihon's kingdom, in 3:1-17. An account of his defeat is also found in Num. 21:33-35. These kings both dwelt in their capital cities, Heshbon and Ashtaroth, respectively. Ashtaroth is the plural form of Ashtareth, the Canaanite goddess and counterpart of Baal. Thus the place was probably early associated with her worship.

They combined to battle Israel but were defeated at Erdei—one of the cities of Og (3:10) and not far from Ashtaroth.

## A. THE EVENTS FROM SINAI TO THE PRESENT

(1:6—3:29)

1. COMMAND TO LEAVE HOREB FOR THE  
PROMISED LAND (1:6-8)

1:6 Jehovah our God spake unto us in Horeb saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mountain: 7 turn you, and take your journey, and go to the hill-country of the Amorites, and unto all *the places* nigh there-unto, in the Arabah, in the hill-country, and in the lowland, and in the South, and by the sea-shore, the land of the Canaanites, and Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates. 8 Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which Jehovah sware unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 1:6-8

7. Where is "Horeb"? Are we to understand that God asked them to conquer Canaan even before they left Sinai?
8. Just what is involved in the act of faith i.e., what is God's part and what is man's part?
9. Please locate on the map the following places: (1) Arabah, (2) the land of the Canaanites and Lebanon, (3) the great river.
10. Read Numbers 34:1-29.

## AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 1:6-8

6 The Lord our God said to us in Horeb, You have dwelt long enough on this mountain;

7 Turn and take up 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 South [the Negeb], and on the coast, the land of the Canaanites, and Lebanon, as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.

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

## COMMENT 1:6-8

Here we have the command to conquer given before Israel ever arrives at Kadesh. All they had to do was to *believe and obey*—to launch out in total faith and confidence in the promise and assurance

of God. He had given a similar faith-demanding command some months before. When the Israelites attempted to cross the Red Sea, God had said to Moses "speak unto the children of Israel, **THAT THEY GO FORWARD.**" (Ex. 14:15) The command of God was heeded, "and the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea" (that took some faith, too) "upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left." (Ex. 14:22) Israel's whole journey, whether crossing the Red Sea or the Jordan, whether fighting with fierce Canaanites or depending on Providence for food and water, was an operation of *faith!* Implicitly trusting God *always* meant eventual success; disbelief meant failure every single time. "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were swallowed up. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about for seven days." (Heb. 11:29, 30) How many times has God told *us*, "Go in and possess the land" and we have *not!* Opportunities to learn his will, to witness, to help, to encourage, to inspire, to strengthen, to serve, all too often go begging because we are content to wander in the deserts of doubt, distrust, hesitancy, and indecision. After Israel had received God's commands and instructions at Sinai, it was time to "get going!" "Ye have dwelt long enough in this mountain"—You have my law now; you know what to do; your tabernacle is now ready. Its time now to *proceed*, to do, to act, to obey. Once a man *understands* his Lord's commands, (and he needs to bend every effort toward that end) it becomes a matter of character, morality, and faithfulness that he now place himself in the hands of God and *act* on what he knows! "But the righteous [note, the *righteous*] shall live by faith." (Rom. 1:17)

## 2. CIVIL ORGANIZATION UNDER MOSES (1:9-18)

1:9 And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone: 10 Jehovah your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. 11 Jehovah, the God of your fathers, make you a thousand times as many as ye are, and bless you, as he hath promised you! 12 How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife? 13 Take you wise men, and understanding, and known, according to your tribes, and I will make them heads over you. 14 And ye answered me, and said, The thing which thou hast spoken is good *for us* to do. 15 So I took the heads of your tribes, wise men and known, and made them heads over you, captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, and



captains of fifties, and captains of tens and officers, according to your tribes. 16 And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear *the causes* between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother, and the sojourner that is with him. 17 Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; ye shall hear the small and the great alike; 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 ye shall bring unto me, and I will hear it. 18 And I commanded you at that time all the things which ye should do.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 1:9-18

11. At what time did Moses say "I am not able to bear you myself alone:"? Cf. Ex. 18:13-27.
12. What promise was fulfilled in verse 10? Ff. Genesis 15:5.
13. Has the promise (or benediction) of verse 11 been fulfilled? How?
14. Please notice carefully the words of verse 13 as an example for the selection of elders and deacons for today. "wise, understanding, known."
15. According to the arrangement described in verse 15, how many judges were there to be in 1,000 Israelites?
16. What is meant by the expression "sojourner"—from where would they come?
17. What are the causes for "respect of persons"? Name two.
18. What makes one man "small" and another man "great"?
19. Try to approximate the circumstance of judgment when the judge would be sorely tempted to "fear the face of man."
20. What is meant by the phrase, "For the judgment is God's." If the judgment is God's how could a case be too hard for the judge?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 1:9-18

9 I said to you at that time, I am not able to bear you alone;

10 The Lord your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are this day as the stars of the heavens for multitude.

11 May the Lord, the God of your fathers make you 1,000 times as many as you are, and bless you, as He has promised you!

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

13 Choose wise, understanding, experienced and respected men, according to your tribes, and I will make them heads over you.

14 And you answered me, The thing which you have spoken is good for us to do.

15 So I took the heads of your tribes, wise, experienced *and* respected men, and made them heads over you, commanders of thousands, and hundreds, and fifties and tens, and officers according to your tribes.

16 And I charged your judges at that time, Hear the cases between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the stranger or sojourner who is with him.

17 You shall not be partial in judgment; but you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment is God's; and the case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.

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

### COMMENT 1:9-18

See also the original record of this event in Ex. 18:13-27. The procedure here described was adopted at the suggestion of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law. The Exodus account portrays him as a God-fearing man, though he did not join Israel.

Moses here invokes an astounding blessing upon God's people: "God . . . make you a thousand times as many as ye are . . ." But has it not come to pass? There were nearly six hundred and two thousand *numbered* Israelites at that time (Num. 26:51). This number would probably be *at least* two or three million when the unnumbered children, priests, etc. were included (See the *Introduction*, II footnote). What is their number now, throughout the world? Will the goodness of God ever lead them to repentance? The Jews have wandered far from God, and his Son who came to save them. Yet, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." (Ecc. 8:11)

(The very fact that such a great horde of people, wandering about that barren wasteland, *kept alive*, was miraculous in every way—and the result of God's goodness. And so it has been down through the years with God toward this people. As these words are being penned, Israel has just returned from a devastating victory over Jordan [in the face of *overwhelming* odds!], regaining much of their former land. How long will these people whom God has blessed beyond all measure refuse His grace and goodness?)

No one can justly challenge the wisdom and prudence involved in this decision and the procedure here described. It meant a much more efficient and effective judicial system for Israel—a system not entirely unlike that presently existing in democratic countries throughout the world.

Exodus 18:23 would appear to indicate that God endorsed and blessed this plan. The more difficult cases were still brought to Moses, who brought them before God, v. 17. (See also Ex. 18:19, 20. Compare Numbers 9:8, 27:5, etc.) With God's blessing upon the entire arrangement, and the final cases coming before him through Moses, the law-giver could rightly say, "the judgement is God's" (v. 17).

Certain critics\* have found a contradiction in the two accounts in trying to maintain that Moses here asserts that the plan originated with himself, while the Exodus account has the proposal originating with Jethro. But it is not said here that the plan *originated* with Moses. If this *had* been said, it would have been a contradiction. McGarvey comments pointedly, "Does this conflict with the statement in Exodus that Jethro had just suggested the plan to Moses before he submitted it to the people? If it does, then, should the President of the United States submit a measure to Congress, and should it afterward be discovered that it was suggested to him by one of his secretaries, our modern scientific critics would find here an irreconcilable inconsistency! The President, as everybody knows, is not bound to tell whether the measure which he proposes originated with himself or with some of his advisors; neither was Moses obliged to tell the people that his judiciary scheme originated with Jethro. As Jethro was not an Israelite, there may have been prudence in withholding from them this information until they themselves expressed approval of the measure."\*\*

The delegating of responsibility has always been a necessity for the smooth functioning of God's work—in whatever age (Acts 6:1-6, Eph. 4:11). Moses, like Christ (see 18:15-19 and notes) was God's chosen law-giver and leader—but he needed help!

It is significant that the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram against Moses and Aaron on the very issue of delegated authority was *after* this appointment of judges. "Ye take too much upon you . . .

\*Driver, *Commentary on Deuteronomy*, p. XXV (1895). Wellhausen completely confuses matters by denying that Moses stayed at Mount Sinai as described in Exodus, and declares that Jethro's advice was given, not at Mount Sinai, but "at the well of Kadesh." (Article, "Israel," *Encyclopedia Britannica*.) He gives no reason for falsifying the Biblical history.

\*\*Authorship of Deuteronomy, pp. 83, 84.

wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the assembly of Jehovah?" (Num. 16:1-3). Thus any leader among God's people, who stands on the authority of his sacred Word, runs the risk of such accusations as Moses received—though he be ever so careful to avoid such.

Note the charge of impartiality given to the judges. "Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; ye shall hear the small and great alike; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man . . ." (v. 17) Cf. 16:18-20, 24:17. Impartiality is a characteristic of God (10:17, II Pet. 2:4, etc.) and thus salvation and all its blessings are available to all people, Acts 10:28, 34, 35. "To have respect of persons in judgement is not good" (Prov. 24:23)—so in the Old Testament, so in all ages. Paul told Timothy, "I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without prejudice (Margin, *preference*), doing nothing by partiality." (I Tim. 5:21). See also Ex. 23:1-3, Lev. 19:15-18.

God judges us individually and impartially (Rom. 2:5-11, II Cor. 5:10). "And if ye call on him as father, who without respect of persons judgeth each man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear" (I Pet. 1:17). Is he not our perfect example? Will not he, through Christ, be our judge on the last day (Jn. 5:22, Acts 10:40-42, 17:31)?

There is a great moral and spiritual lesson for all of us to learn here in the exhortation God through Moses gave to the judges. Partiality and preference is condemned everywhere in the Word of God—Old Testament and New. "Ye shall not be afraid of the face of man"—*that* is the great and constant danger! Fear of men is the greatest enemy of impartiality, and "the fear of man worketh a snare" (Prov. 29:25). "Ye shall not be afraid of the face of man"—though that face be ever so threatening, disapproving, and fierce in its look. "A wicked man hardeneth his face; But as for the upright, he establisheth his ways." (Prov. 21:29) Let us remember that God, whose face is to be respected far above man's, is ever watching and observing, and "If God is for us who is [successfully] against us?" (Rom. 8:31). Let us be Godlike! Let our judgments toward others be impartial, fair, and just.

### 3. TWO FAILURES AT KADESH-BARNEA (1:19-46)

#### a. BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF (1:19-40)

1:19 And we journeyed from Horeb, and went through all that great and terrible wilderness which ye saw, by the way to the hill-country of the Amorites, as Jehovah our God commanded us; and we

came to Kadesh-barnea. 20 And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the hill-country of the Amorites, which Jehovah our God giveth unto us. 21 Behold Jehovah thy God hath set the land before thee: go up, take possession, as Jehovah the God of thy fathers, hath spoken unto thee; fear not, neither be dismayed. 22 And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, Let us send men before us, that they may search the land for us, and bring us word again of the way by which we must go up, and the cities unto which we shall come. 23 And the thing pleased me well; and I took twelve men of you, one man for every tribe: 24 and they turned and went up into the hill-country, and came unto the valley of Eshcol, and spied it out. 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 Jehovah our God giveth unto us.

26 Yet ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of Jehovah your God: 27 and ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because Jehovah 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 Whither are we going up? Our brethren have made our heart to melt, saying, The people are greater and taller than we; the cities are great and fortified up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there. 29 Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them. 30 Jehovah your God who goeth before you, he will fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes, 31 and in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that Jehovah thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came unto this place. 32 Yet in this thing ye did not believe Jehovah your God, 33 who went before you in the way, to seek you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to show you by what way we should go, and in the cloud by day.

34 And Jehovah heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying, 35 Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see the good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers, 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 Jehovah. 37 Also Jehovah was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither: 38 Joshua the son of Nun, who standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage thou him; for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. 39 Moreover your little ones, that ye said should be a prey, and your

children, that this day have no knowledge of good or evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.  
40 But as for you, turn you, and take your Journey into the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 1:19-40

21. Locate Kadesh-barnea on the map.
22. Was it wrong to send out the twelve spies?
23. Was God punishing the Amorites at the same time He gave possession to the Israelites? Discuss.
24. Try to share in the feelings of the faithless Israelites; what capacity in their faith was lacking? Was it courage? Memory? Love? Obedience?
25. Caleb and Joshua believed. What made them different? Isn't there encouragement for all in the fact that out of the same background God raised up two grand leaders? Discuss.
26. There is irony in verse 39, what is it?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 1:19-40

19 And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which you saw on the way to the hill country of the Amorites, as the Lord our God commanded us; and we came to Kadesh-barnea.

20 And I said to you, You have come to the hill country of the Amorites, which the Lord our God gives us.

21 Behold, the Lord your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the Lord God of your fathers has said to you; fear not, neither be dismayed.

22 Then you all came near to me and said, Let us send men before us, that they may search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we should go up, and the cities into which we shall come.

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

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

25 And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down to us, and brought us word again, and said, It is a good land which the Lord our God gives us.

26 Yet you would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God;

27 You were peevish *and* discontented in your tents, and said, Because the Lord hated us He brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.

28 To what are we going up? Our brethren have made our hearts melt, saying, The people are bigger and taller than we are; the cities are great and fortified to the heavens; and moreover we have seen the [giant-like] sons of the Anakim there.

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

30 The Lord your God Who goes before you, He will fight for you just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes,

31 And in the wilderness, where you have seen how the Lord your God bore you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.

32 Yet in spite of this word you did not believe [trust, rely on and remain steadfast to] the Lord your God;

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

34 And the Lord heard your words, and was angered, and He swore,

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

36 Except [Joshua, of course; and] Caleb son of Jephunneh, he shall see it, and to him and to his children I will give the land upon which he has walked, because he has wholly followed the Lord.

37 The Lord was angry with me also for your sakes, and said, You also shall not enter Canaan.

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

39 Moreover your little ones, who you said would become a prey, and your children, who at this time cannot discern between good and evil, they shall enter Canaan, and to them I will give it, and they shall possess it.

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

### COMMENT 1:19-40

The parallel account is in Numbers 13:1—14:25. We have said this was a failure because of *unbelief*, for this was the underlying cause of their disobedience. ". . . ye did not believe in Jehovah your God" (v. 32). "And Jehovah said unto Moses, How long will this

people despise me? and how long<sup>4</sup> will they not believe in me, for all the signs which I have wrought against them?" (Num. 14:11). Faith, on the other hand, was the crowning virtue of Caleb and Joshua, and their confidence in God stood in marked contrast to the doubting fearful response of the other spies and the congregation. "Let us go up at once," Caleb said upon returning from their mission, "and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." (Num. 13:30) And these two men joined in saying, "If Jehovah delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it unto us . . . only rebel not against Jehovah, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us; their defence is removed from over them . . ." (Num. 14:8, 9). Faith in God and his promises always has been and ever shall be a prerequisite for conquering his enemies. There are no limits to his power—or what his people can do when they believe *in* his power!

KADESH-BARNEA (v. 19)—(See also under v. 1 and v. 46). This station was, more than any other one place, "home base" or headquarters" for the Israelites during their wanderings. In Num. 33:36 we are told Israel "encamped in the wilderness of Zin (the same is Kadesh)"—a statement that lends credence to the idea held by many students, that the term included an area much larger than a town. Others, however, would translate that passage, "the wilderness of Zin—namely Kadesh" (Berkeley. The R.S.V., Moffatt, Meek, and the Torah are similar). This latter translation is more in harmony with Num. 20:1: "And the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, came into the wilderness of Zin in the first month [this is their second visit, in the fortieth year]: and the people abode in Kadesh . . ." Kadesh was such a leading oasis of that area that it was *the* encampment in the wilderness of Zin. Thus it was almost a synonym for it. The wilderness of Paran, a much larger area, contained both Kadesh and the wilderness of Zin (Num. 13:26).

THAT GREAT AND TERRIBLE WILDERNESS—Indeed it was, and still is! ". . . *wherein were* fiery serpents and scorpions, and thirsty ground where there was no water" (8:15). "He found him a desert land, And in the waste howling wilderness . . ." (32:10. See also Jer. 2:6. McGarvey, after visiting this area in 1897 could say, "it is still, and it was anciently, 'a waste howling wilderness,' almost totally uninhabited, and seldom traversed even by the Bedawin Arabs."\* And eighty years later a modern writer can say. "In recent times this whole area [of the

\*Lands of the Bible, pp. 494, 495.



wanderings] has not been able to support more than about seven thousand underfed wanderers." What a wilderness it must have been in those ancient days to almost a hundred times that many people, completely inexperienced in the rigors of this arid steppe! As in Bible times, there are still long waterless stretches, with infrequent brackish wells, any one of which may have been Marah. One tempting oasis of palm trees and clear, good water still exists, which is probably biblical Elim."\*

THE HILL-COUNTRY OF THE AMORITES, WHICH JEHOVAH OUR GOD GIVETH UNTO US (v. 20)—a fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, Genesis 15:16. We'll learn more about the Amorites and their conflicts with Israel in chapter three.

22 AND YE CAME NEAR UNTO ME EVERY ONE OF YOU AND SAID, LET US SEND MEN BEFORE US, THAT THEY MAY SEARCH THE LAND FOR US, AND BRING US WORD AGAIN OF THE WAY BY WHICH WE MUST GO UP, AND THE CITIES UNTO WHICH WE SHALL COME. 23 AND THE THING PLEASSED ME WELL; AND I TOOK TWELVE MEN OF YOU, ONE MAN FOR EVERY TRIBE: 24 AND THEY TURNED AND WENT UP INTO THE HILL-COUNTRY, AND CAME UNTO THE VALLEY OF ESHCOL, AND SPIED IT OUT.

The destructive critics have attacked these verses in much the same manner as they have the appointment of the judges (verses 12-14). They find a discrepancy in the fact that while the record here speaks of the *people* recommending the sending forth of spies, in Num. 13:1-3 it is *God* issuing the command and working directly through Moses. And though here the spies are said to have gone as far north as the valley of Eschol (Hebron), v. 24, in Numbers 13:21 they are said to have gone as far north as "the entrance of Hamath"—a much farther distance.

The rebuttal by McGarvey is excellent; "Nothing in the experience of the people addressed by Moses could have been more familiar than this piece of history; for it furnished the reason why, instead of entering the promised land within less than two years after they left Egypt, they had been kept out of it for more than thirty-eight years longer. It explained the deplorable fact that all the fathers and mothers\*\* of the persons addressed, to the number of more than a million, had

\**Story of the Bible World*, by Nelson Beecher Keys, p. 28. The Reader's Digest Association, Pleasantville, N.Y.

\*\*See footnote under number II in the Introduction. Only the numbered Israelites were cursed.

perished in the wilderness. In referring to it, therefore, as a warning, Moses could with perfect propriety mention such parts of the story as suited his horatatory purpose, and omit all others, without the slightest appearance of ignoring them, much less of denying their existence. He accordingly treats the whole subject in the space of *twenty-four verses* (1:24-46), whereas the original account in Numbers contains seventy-eight. He abbreviates by omitting many well-remembered incidents. He omits the names of the twelve spies and those of the tribes which they respectively represented (4-16); he omits the whole of the long list of directions which he gave them (17-20); he omits the season of the year in which they were sent (21); he omits the names of the giants whose people were found at Hebron (21, 22); he omits the number of days that were occupied in the journey (25); he omits the detailed account the spies gave of the location of the different tribes in the land (29); he omits the thrilling incidents of himself and Aaron falling on their faces before the people, of the urgent pleadings by Caleb and Joshua, and the proposal of the people to stone these four men (14:5-10); he omits his own long and earnest pleading with God against the latter's proposal to slay the whole multitude and raise up a people from Moses to "inherit the land" (11-21); he omits the greater part of the final sentence upon the rebels (28-35); and he omits the fact that the ten false spies died of a plague (36, 37). In the midst of such a multitude of omissions, why should it be thought strange that he omitted to state the whole distance that the spies journeyed, and the fact that God directed him to send them? To look all the facts in the face is all that is necessary to see the impertinence and absurdity of the charge of contradiction." The admission of Driver is then cited.

"No doubt the two representations are capable, in the abstract, of being harmonized: Moses, it might be supposed, approving personally 'of the purpose (Deut. 1:23), desired to know if it had Jehovah's sanction; and the command in Numbers (xiii. 1-3) is really the answer to his inquiry.'

What could be more reasonable than this, especially as Moses was not in the habit of adopting measures that might involve the lives of a dozen eminent men without God's approval?"\*

THE SONS OF THE ANAKIM (v. 28)—See under 9:2.

\*Authorship of Deuteronomy, pp. 88-90.

JEHOVAH YOUR GOD, WHO GOETH BEFORE YOU, HE WILL FIGHT FOR YOU—(v. 30)—cf. 3:22, 20:4. When God is on our side—"the Lord of hosts"—we are unconquerable. If *God* be for us, who can be against us? He who created the world and all it contains; he who made *us*—how can we *insult* him by limiting his power and might? *His* kingdom shall stand forever (Dan. 2:44) and the gates of hades shall *not* prevail against it (Matt. 16:18).

But suppose God is *not* on your side—*not* undergirding you with his strength, not filling you with his Spirit, not directing you by his word. What then? "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (Jas. 4:8). But what of those who draw *away* from him and *reject* his counsels? "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31).

YET IN THIS THING YE DID NOT BELIEVE JEHOVAH YOUR GOD (v. 32)—Their trouble all along, time after time in the wilderness. "Take heed, brethren," the writer of Hebrews exhorts us, "lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God: but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called Today; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin: for we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end: while it is said,

Today if ye shall hear his voice.

Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

For who, when they heard, did provoke? Nay, did not all they that came out of Egypt by Moses? And with whom was he displeased forty years? Was it not with them that sinned, who bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that were disobedient? And we see that they were not able to enter in BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF" (Heb. 3:12-19). That was it exactly, for "the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith with them that heard" (Heb. 4:2). THEY were not able to enter in because of unbelief—WE cannot enter in to the antitype, heaven, with an unbelieving heart, for "without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing *unto him*; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him" (Heb. 11:6). Israel exercised faith at the beginning: "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land; which the Egyptians assaying to do were swallowed up" (Heb. 11:29). That was a fine *beginning*. And the next verse in Hebrews gives us another example

of Israel's faith—forty years later! "*By faith*, the walls of Jerocho fell down . . ." Where was the faith in the interim? The "hall of faith" has no illustration from Israel during this period! The reason is, "with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were over-thrown in the wilderness" (I Cor. 10:5). Will we learn? Will we see the lesson in these things for us? Will we ever recognize that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning . . ." (Rom. 15:4)? Far too often, "A servant will not be corrected by words; For though he understand, he will not give heed" (Prov. 29:19). Must we, like Israel, be chastized with God's rod before we begin to heed his will? Is not his *word* enough? "Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they *were written* for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come." (I Cor. 10:11).

CALEB . . . HATH WHOLLY FOLLOWED JEHOVAH—A wonderful compliment to any child of God! Our Lord demands one hundred percent—will accept nothing less. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service" (Rom. 12:1). This is demanded of every true disciple. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man [note that: *ANY* man!] would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross [Luke adds, "daily"], and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). And if such consecration is needed in all, it is surely a "must" among today's spiritual leaders. What Paul told Timothy he would tell all the servants of Christ: "Be diligent in these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy progress may be manifest unto all" (I Tim. 4:15).

THOU [MOSES] SHALT NOT GO IN THITHER—Moses' exclusion from the promised land was in punishment for his sin of rebellion and unbelief in response to the striving and murmuring of Israel because of the lack of water (See Num. 20:1-13). Aaron was excluded for the same reason. The basic sin is stated in Numbers 20:12: "Because ye believed not in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of Israel . . ." Proper action at that time on Moses' part would have exalted, glorified, and elevated God in the eyes of Israel. This lack of trust—disbelief—caused him to do all sorts of wrong things:

1. Moses *said* the wrong thing: "Hear now, ye rebels, shall *we* bring you forth water out of this rock?" (v. 10). "Possibly Moses was not aware of the significance of what he had been ordered to do, but God held him responsible for not obeying him exactly, nevertheless. Obedience to his will is vitally important, whether we understand his

purpose or not, 'God's will, nothing more; nothing less; nothing else; at any cost,' would have been priceless to Moses and Aaron that day, if they had only followed it."\*

God had said, Speak to the *rock*: Moses spoke to the *people*.

"They angered him also at the waters of Meribah,  
So that it went ill with Moses for their sakes;  
Because they were rebellious against his spirit,  
And he spake unadvisedly [*Rotherham*, rashly] with his lips."  
(Ps. 106:32, 33).

And when he spoke, it was with a question mark: "Shall we bring you forth water. . .?" A question was not involved in God's *command*.

2. In addition, instead of speaking to it, as instructed, he smote it twice! Speaking to it wasn't enough—so he didn't speak to it *at all*, but rather struck it savagely twice! At Rephidim, at the foot of Horeb, Moses was commanded to smite the rock (Ex. 17:6).\*\* He may have *assumed* such a commandment here—but we cannot *assume* God's will to be other than that which he has already spoken! He struck the rock twice, "which certainly in this case indicates a great perturbation of spirit and want of attention to the presence of God" (Clarke).

Through this entire incident, then, Moses failed to sanctify God in the eyes of the people—and this "Because ye believed not in me." Why would Moses and Aaron, God's great chosen leaders, lack faith? One need not go far for the answer. It is found in the pressing and distressing circumstances of the hour—and the fact that they were becoming exasperated, exhausted, and disgusted with the everlasting complaining of the multitudes.

From a purely *human* standpoint, we would *excuse* Moses. We would say, "Surely God will not keep this great man from the promised land just for loosing his temper this one time!" But that is *human* reasoning, not divine. God *despises* sin, and his ways are not our ways. Uzzah was killed for staying the ark with his hand; Nadab and Abihu were killed for offering strange fire; Achan was executed, along with his family, for stealing a few articles of the consecrated booty; Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were swallowed up by the earth for murmuring against God's chosen leadership; Ananias and Saphira were struck dead for lying about their offering to the church—and so on and on could we extend this list. But what is the lesson for us all? That God

\*Amplified Old Testament, comment under Numbers 20:11.

\*\*But never is he instructed to strike it twice.

*despises sin*—hates disobedience to his commands, and abhors the faithless heart!

Moses, the Man of meekest heart,  
 Lost Canaan by Self-Will,—  
 To show where grace has done its part  
 How sin defiles us still.

MOREOVER YOUR LITTLE ONES, THAT YE SAID SHOULD BE A PREY, AND YOUR CHILDREN, THAT THIS DAY HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD OR EVIL, THEY SHALL GO IN THITHER, AND UNTO THEM WILL I GIVE IT, AND THEY SHALL POSSESS IT. (v. 39)—And now, as they were poised on the east of the Jordan, this very prophecy (see Numbers 14:1-3, 26-33) was being fulfilled. The children were not under the curse, as they were not numbered. It is difficult to estimate their number. There were 603,550 *numbered* Israelites after a little over a year in the wilderness (Num. 1:46), and 601,730 as they entered Canaan (Num. 26:51). Between these numberings, the older generation of numbered Israelites died, except Joshua and Caleb. We have already pointed out (see the *Introduction*) that these numberings did not include many people in Israel's camp. Levites (Num. 2:33, 26:62), women, children (all those under twenty years old), strangers, and the physically unfit were not counted, for the counted ones (and therefore the recipients of the curse) were only those "from twenty years old and upward, by their fathers' houses, ALL THAT ARE ABLE TO GO FORTH TO WAR IN ISRAEL" (Num. 26:2). This is why we have the divine record worded as it is in Deut. 2:14 ". . . thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the MEN OF WAR were consumed from the camp, as Jehovah sware unto them."

BUT AS FOR YOU, TURN YOU, AND TAKE YOUR JOURNEY INTO THE WILDERNESS BY THE WAY OF THE RED SEA (v. 40)—This is the "wandering" part of Israel's journeys—roughly thirty-eight years. Kadesh was more or less "home base" at this time (see v. 26, Cf. under v. 19). "Now the Amalekite and the Canaanite dwelt in the valley: tomorrow turn ye, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea" (Num. 14:25).

#### b. BECAUSE OF PRESUMPTION (1:41-46)

1:41 Then ye answered and said unto me, We have sinned against Jehovah, we will go up and fight, according to all that Jehovah our God commanded us. And when ye had girded on every man his weapons

of war, and were forward to go up into the hill-country. 42 and Jehovah said unto me; Say unto them, Go not up, neither fight; for I am not among you; lest ye be smitten before your enemies. 43 So I spake unto you, and ye hearkened not; but ye rebelled against the commandment of Jehovah, and were presumptuous, and went up into the hill-country. 44 And the Amorites, that dwelt in that hill-country, came out against you, and chased you, as bees do, and beat you down in Seir, even unto Hormah, 45 And ye returned and wept before Jehovah; but Jehovah hearkened not to your voice, nor gave ear unto you. 46 So ye abode in Kadesh many days, according unto the days that ye abode *there*.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 1:41-46

27. There is a vast difference between remorse and repentance; discuss that difference as indicated in these verses.
28. What is involved in the sin of presumption?
29. Why didn't the Lord pity these people and forgive them?
30. How could they abide in Kadesh and yet wander for thirty eight years in the wilderness?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 1:41-46

41 Then you said to me, We have sinned against the Lord; we will go up and fight, as the Lord our God commanded us. And you girded on every man his battle weapons and thought it a simple matter to go up into the hill country.

42 And the Lord said to me, Say to them, Do not go up or fight, for I am not among you; lest you be dangerously hurt by your enemies.

43 So I spoke to you; and you would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord, and were presumptuous and went up into the hill country.

44 Then the Amorites who lived in that hill country came out against you and chased you as bees do and struck you down in Seir as far as Hormah,

45 And you returned and wept before the Lord; but the Lord would not heed your voice or listen to you.

46 So you remained in Kadesh; many days you remained there.

### COMMENT 1:41-46

Here we have the second failure of Israel at Kadesh—and in some ways this is more pitiable than the first. Trapped now by the curse of the Lord—he who had before promised to fight *for* and *with* them in

all their battles—they suddenly decided to put on a show of repentance and courage!

THEN YE ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO ME, WE HAVE SINNED AGAINST JEHOVAH, WE WILL GO UP AND FIGHT, ACCORDING TO ALL THAT JEHOVAH OUR GOD COMMANDED US (v. 41)—How useless! God was not with them. "Except Jehovah build the house, They labor in vain that build it: Except Jehovah keep the city, The watchman waketh but in vain" (Ps. 127:1). How can we ever hope to accomplish the Lord's *will* and *purpose* in life, without the Lord's *blessing*? "I can do all things *in him that strengtheneth me*" (Philippians 4:13). And we will find it hard, as Saul did, to kick against the goads—especially the goads of God! No, Israel could not fight the very enemies of God without his blessing and oversight—nor can *we*! "It was quite impossible for Jehovah to accompany them along the path of self-will and rebellion; and, most assuredly, Israel, without the divine presence, could be no match for the Amorites. If God be for us and with us, all must be victory; but we cannot count on God if we are not treading the path of obedience. It is simply the height of folly to imagine that we have God with us if our ways are not right. 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe.' But if we are not walking in practical righteousness, it is wicked presumption to talk of having the Lord as our strong tower."—*Mackintosh*

SAY UNTO THEM, GO NOT UP, NEITHER FIGHT: FOR I AM NOT AMONG YOU; LEST YE BE SMITTEN BEFORE YOUR ENEMIES (v. 42)—Now proud, haughty, and rebellious, the advice was summarily rejected, and matters were taken into their own hands. This *always* means disaster—it cannot be otherwise, in that age or this! To go contrary to the Lord's appointed purpose is, in essence, to be found "fighting against God" (Acts 5:39). No one fights against our Maker and wins!

YE HEARKENED NOT: BUT YE REBELLED AGAINST THE COMMANDMENT OF JEHOVAH, AND WERE PRESUMPTUOUS, AND WENT UP INTO THE HILL COUNTRY (v. 43)—The Hebrew word for presumptuous (*Zud* or *Zid*) is from a root meaning *to boil, to boil over* (speaking of water). It is onomatopetic, as the English *to seethe*, the Greek *Zeo*, the German *sieden*. Gesenius states, "Like the Gr. *Zeo* and Lat. *ferveo*, it is transferred to the *violence* or *fierceness* of a passionate mind . . . and thus to *insolence* and *wickedness*," giving the meaning here as "*to act insolently, fiercely, wickedly*, especially in speaking of those who sin knowingly and purposely against the precepts of God."



Acting upon such a rebellious impulse, the will of God was cast aside: "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (Jas. 1:20).

AND THE AMORITES, THAT DWELT IN THE HILL-COUNTRY, CAME OUT AGAINST YOU, AS BEES DO, AND BEAT YOU DOWN IN SEIR, EVEN UNTO HORMAH (v. 44)—the inevitable result of their rebellion and presumption. See Numbers 14:40-45. The Ark of God, the symbol of his presence, did not leave the camp. These men were strictly on their own—without the endorsement, encouragement, or blessing of God. All such enterprises must fail! Israel was God's chosen nation and his beloved people, but they could not accomplish his grand purpose for them without resting their all upon his divine authority. And though they confessed their guilt in their first rebellion ("we have sinned," v. 41, cf. Num. 14:40), they only sinned *again* by supposing they could assault the Amorites without divine direction. Mere confession of guilt does not relieve one of his responsibilities toward God! Even when they "wept before Jehovah" (v. 45) their curse was not retracted. Again and again God had endured their murmurings and rebellion. But though he was longsuffering, Israel continued to disobey. ". . . all those men that have seen my glory, and my signs, which I wrought in the wilderness, yet have tempted me these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice" (Num. 14:22). Besides, their confession and weeping seems to be much more of an emotional outburst from those who were totally unqualified to carry out God's purposes, than true repentance. "Such people are rejected not because God is unmoved by pity but because they can never successfully fight his battles."—*Francisco*

SO YE ABODE IN KADESH MANY DAYS (v. 46)—See also our comments under v. 19. If we understand "and we came to Kadesh-barnea" (v. 19) to refer to Israel's *first* arrival at that place, and the present statement to be a *general* one (including the many days spent there after the return from the approximate thirty-eight years in the wilderness, we have no trouble taking up in chapter two in the *fortieth* year after Israel's exodus from Egypt, (Note carefully our comments and the quote from McGarvey under 2:1 of the next lesson, where the problem of harmonizing the chronology of Numbers and Deuteronomy is more fully discussed).

From Numbers 20:1 we learn that Israel did not begin its circuit of Mt. Seir until after their second visit to that place. They "came into the wilderness of Zin in the first month: [of the fortieth year, as the

consequent context will show] and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there." Before Israel leaves Kadesh he requests and is refused passage through Edom (Num. 20:20). Then, "they journeyed from Kadesh" (Num. 20:22). The vast period of time between being repulsed by the Amorites (Deut. 1:44, 45) and the journey around Edom (2:1) is not surprising when we remember two things: (1) Very little is said about this nearly thirty-eight year period between visits at Kadesh in *any* of the accounts; and (2) it simply was not important to Moses' present purposes of exhortation. We know that from the first visit to Kadesh until their arrival at the brook Zered at the southeast corner of the Dead Sea, was thirty-eight years (2:14).

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER ONE

*Introduction to the book, 1, 2. Moses addresses the people in the fortieth year after the exodus from Egypt, 3-5; and shows how God had spoken to them in Horeb, and the directions he gave them, 6-8. How, at the commandment of the Lord, he had appointed officers, judges, &c., to share the government with him, 9-18. Of their travels in the terrible wilderness, 19-21. The people's request to have spies sent to search out the land, 22-25. Of their murmuring and rebellion when they heard the report of the spies, 26-28. How Moses encouraged them, 29-33. The displeasure of the Lord against them because of their murmurings, and his purpose to exclude them from the good land, and give it to their children only, 34-40. How they repented, and yet, without the authority of God, went against the Amorites, by whom they were defeated, 41-44. Their return to Kadesh, where they abode many days, 45, 46.*

## QUESTIONS, LESSON ONE (1:1-46)

### ON THE INTRODUCTION . . .

1. Have you read Deuteronomy completely through before beginning this study?
2. Explain the meaning of "Deuteronomy."
3. Explain why the concept of a book that simply duplicates certain laws of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers is so erroneous?
4. Deuteronomy is a part of what was at first a single book or scroll. Give a *Bible* name for this entire book.
5. Explain how the situation in Israel now justified the words and unique message of Deuteronomy.

6. Specifically, upon whom did the curse (of exclusion from the promised land) rest? Among those who left Egypt, who entered Canaan?
7. Does Deuteronomy claim to be from the hand of Moses? Where?
8. Show that Jesus believed Moses to be the writer of Deuteronomy.
9. Chronologically, where are we in Israel's history as the book begins? About how much time is covered in the book itself?
10. Summarize the *basic* outline of the book, including the scripture limitations for the four main divisions.

OVER CHAPTER ONE . . .

11. How can we know the meaning of "beyond the Jordan" in Chapter 1? What is the basic rule for understanding this phrase?
12. What is the Arabah?
13. Be as exact as you can in giving these times:
  - (a) From Egypt to Kadesh-barnea;
  - (b) From Kadesh-barnea to the Brook Zered;
  - (c) From the Brook Zered to the Plains of Moab.
14. What basic trait of a Godly life was shown to be lacking when the eleven spies and the multitude failed to go up and take the promised land as directed? Explain.
15. The breakdown of authority among the judges involved captains over \_\_\_\_ (highest number), \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_ (lowest number).
16. With what moral responsibility were the judges charged?
17. How did Moses fit into this new judiciary system?
18. In what way was Kadesh-barnea so important in Israel's wilderness history?
19. Who would fight for Israel (v. 20)?
20. Finish: "Yet in this thing ye did not \_\_\_\_\_ Jehovah your God" (v. 33).
21. What reason is given here (v. 36) for Caleb entering the promised land with Israel?
22. Why did not God go with Israel in battle, after they said, "we have sinned against Jehovah" (v. 41)?