

**Message #4****Deuteronomy 1:19-46**

In 1985, Roy Orbison trusted Jesus Christ as his Savior. On December 3, 1988, he gave his last interview three days before he died. In that interview he said, "I've been developing a personal relationship with myself and with Jesus Christ and it just kind of smooths everything. If you have faith, then your whole life is put in a new perspective. You get to work, but enjoy the work at the same time. If you grow spiritually, you do what's in front of you and let the results speak for themselves." Three days later he was with the Lord.

Twenty six years earlier, back in the year 1962, Roy Orbison came out with his song "Crying." It is a pretty song. It is a song that describes the fact that he saw someone he once loved and when he saw them again, it prompted him to cry. He started crying but he realized it was too late. The relationship was gone so all he could do was cry. Some of the lyrics are: "Then you said so long, left me standing all alone, alone and crying."

That song fits this story right here in Deuteronomy because that is exactly what God did to His own people. God left His people standing all alone and they were crying. It was too late for them to fix the relationship.

Here is the simple truth, if God's people don't obey the word of God, they will miss out on the blessings of God.

**WHEN GOD'S PEOPLE HAVE SEEN GOD DO SO MUCH FOR THEM, THEY NEED TO TRUST GOD AND OBEY HIS WORD AND NOT SPEAK NEGATIVELY AGAINST GOD, BECAUSE IF THEY ANGER GOD, HE WILL STOP PROTECTING THEM AND BLESSING THEM.**

We may recall that last time Moses said Israel received a direct message from God in that it was time to leave Horeb (Sinai) and head to the Promised Land. He gave them the actual route they were to take. But as they were going, the people so stressed out Moses, he had to appoint other leaders to help take over some of the responsibilities. So now he picks up the narrative as to what happened. There are ten parts to this story:

**STORY PART #1** – God brought us to the Promised Land and told us not to fear. **1:19-21**

The original goal of God was to have His people enter the Promised Land from the south. They were to leave Mt. Sinai (Horeb), travel through the wilderness and come to Kadesh-barnea.

This was located on the border of the hill country of the Amorites. This was the central part of the Promised Land. So there they were. After the 11 day trip they finally arrived.

As they got there, **verse 20** says Moses told them we are finally here. This is the land that God is going to give to us.

Moses told them we have nothing to fear or be dismayed about and all we need to do is go take the land. This is our land; this is the land the LORD is giving to us. Don't let fear rob you of what God wants to give you.

The certainty of whether or not they can take this land is given to them in **verse 21**. It was theirs for the taking. This charge to take possession of the land is given over 50 times in the book of Deuteronomy. This was God's specific word and will.

God was with them and they could get every inch of this land. Moses reminds them that this was land God promised to their fathers. Nearly 500 years earlier, God promised Abraham that He would bring his seed to a land and give it to them and now they were there.

God says you have nothing to fear, I am there with you. God does not expect His people to go it alone. He does not demand we do things on our own without Him.

Moses says we have nothing to fear. See, here is where the problem starts; people don't believe God's word and look at things that appear intimidating and they become afraid.

There are different words used for fear in the Old Testament and the New Testament, but according to my calculations there are at least 516 references to the subject of fear in the Bible. Some of the references exhort us to fear God. Many references exhort us to not be afraid. **So if there are over 500 references to the subject of fear, then this must be a real threat for the people of God.** In fact, it has been calculated that 365 verses in the Bible tell God's people "do not be afraid."

Fear is a real threat to the people of God. It will slow down their progress. It will keep them from going forward. It will make them anxious and depressed. Fear can really wreak havoc with a believer.

Moses saw fear as a real threat when the people initially saw the Promised Land. The threat was they would be so afraid that they would not believe God and take the land. Well God's people were afraid. Moses said we are here, don't be afraid.

**STORY PART #2** – You wanted me to send spies into the land to look it over. **1:22-25**

Well the word of God wasn't good enough for the people so they decided that before they invaded it, they wanted to send in some men to look the Promised Land over. There was no need to do this but they thought they could go into the land and scout it out and determine which cities to attack first.

According to **verse 23**, Moses said he thought that was a good idea so he selected 12 men, one from each tribe to go into the Promised Land and scout it. Moses apparently consulted the Lord (Num. 13:1) and God said go ahead and let them send in their spies.

**But the real issue here is that the people want some additional data and proof other than the word of God and that can get you into serious trouble.**

It seems to me Moses should have said, we don't need to send any spies to do anything. God has said we are to take the land and that is the end of the discussion. We don't need to pray about this, we don't need to send in spies to look the land over; we just need to obey God. But by the time they got to the land, Moses was tired of dealing with these people so he gave in to their request. In fact, the request pleased Moses, he said fine, let's take 12 spies and send them in.

According to **verses 24-25**, the men went into the land and saw it and spied it out and brought back some fruit and said this is good land the LORD our God is about to give us. They went in and saw the Valley of Eschol, which is the fertile valley in the Hebron area.

Even to this day it is known for its choice vineyards. The grapes grown there are phenomenal. If you want to see how plush that land is, just Google grapes in the Valley of Eschol and look at them.

Now what is interesting is that Moses does not mention the report of the unfaithful spies in **verse 25**. He simply says they came back and said, "It is good land which the LORD our God is about to give us." This should have been all the info they needed.

**STORY PART #3** – You were not willing to obey God and take the land. **1:26-28**

But when the men got back and told them the land is lush and showed them the fruit, ten of the spies also said but there are some strong opponents in the land. So instead of them believing God, they believed those ten spies. They were "unwilling" to obey God. This is, as Raymond Brown said, "stark rebellion" (*The Message of Deuteronomy*, p. 40).

They rebelled against what God commanded them to do. They went into their tents and grumbled and actually said against God that God hates His people and purposely brought them to this place to be destroyed by the Amorites.

The word "grumble" (ragan) is one that does not mean they were just in their tents discussing things and asking honest questions. They were in those tents and were verbally and maliciously murmuring and slandering God (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 757; Brown Driver Briggs, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 920).

They listened to the spies who said the people are bigger and taller and the cities are big and fortified and there are giants in the land and we are no match for them. These people listened to those ten duds and turned their backs on the God who had made a covenant with them to give them this land and according to **verse 27**, they went into their tents and were grumbling and saying crazy things, such as God hates us and has brought us here to kill us.

Now, according to **verse 28**, they blamed the spies for what they believed in their own hearts. They said, “Our brothers have made our hearts melt.” Their talk about big people and big cities and big giants is the reason we are in our tents saying bad things about God.

Well God was listening to these people in their tents. God heard the horrible things they were saying about Him. God listens to our conversations in our homes and when we open our mouths and shoot off our mouths in negative ways against Him, He hears every bit of it and it does not make Him happy.

**STORY PART #4** – Moses reminded the people that God Himself would fight for them.  
**1:29-31**

God’s people make a major mistake when they think God doesn’t listen to their conversation and they make a major mistake when they think winning the war depends on them. Israel apparently forgot this is not just our war, this is God’s war. God is a sovereign soldier who fights in behalf of His people.

Moses said I tried to convince the people they should not listen to their grumbling nonsense:

- 1) Moses said don’t let their size or cities shock you. **29a**
- 2) Moses said don’t fear them. **29b**
- 3) Moses said the LORD your God goes before you and will fight for you. **30**  
God will do the same kind of thing you saw Him do to the Egyptians. It is His fight.  
He will go before you before you even enter the land.
- 4) Moses said the LORD your God took care of you in the wilderness. **31a**
- 5) Moses said the LORD your God directed you to this very place. **31b**

Moses said look, God has taken care of you and provided for you every step of the way. Like Eugene Merrill said in his commentary, Israel was “only along for the ride” (*Deuteronomy*, p. 79).

A. C. Gaebelein made a significant observation when he said Satan wants to get God’s people to forget what they should remember (victories, provisions, protection, blessings) and remember what they should forget (past failures and sins). These people should have been remembering the great victories and provisions due to the great blessings of God.

**STORY PART #5** – You did not believe or trust the LORD your God. **1:32-33**

**It was not some blatant sin that kept Israel from experiencing the ultimate blessings of God, it was her unbelief.** These people, who actually saw God direct them by a fire at night and a cloud in the day, did not trust Him when He said go take this land. He literally directed these people every day and they did not trust Him.

That verb “trust” (aman) is interesting. It means to trust something in the sense that you realize this is what supports you and sustains you. It is that upon which you lean for secure, stable support (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 58-59).

Now in Hebrew there is a preposition “in” attached to the proper noun LORD. What that means is that God wants His people leaning on Him for their security, stability and support. He wants His people specifically trusting in Him.

These people would not do that. They had actually seen God do miraculous things for them and they still did not trust God. These were God’s own people who would not trust in the LORD. **They sat around in their tents at night and talked themselves out of trusting in the Sovereign God who was their God.**

There are key moments in life when God’s people will be faced with an opportunity to trust God or not. If in those moments His people refuse to trust Him, that opportunity will pass them by and they will end up crying.

**STORY PART #6** – God was angry and responded to His people’s disbelief. **1:34-40**

There is much in this book of Deuteronomy about the love and mercy of God for His people, but there is also much about the anger of God against His people.

God heard what they were saying and He was angry. The word “angry” (qatsaph) is a strong Hebrew word that means to be very angry to the point that God will break and destroy something (*Ibid.*, p. 738). This is a very indignant anger that can cut something to shreds. In fact, God was so angry that He, Himself, swore an oath to Himself that they would not enter the land (Ps. 95:11):

- 1) Not one of these men from this evil generation will see the good Promised Land. **1:35**  
Their refusal to obey God and enter the land meant they would forfeit it forever.
- 2) Caleb and his family will see it because he believed Me and followed Me fully. **1:36**
- 3) Moses will not go into the land either because God was angry at him. **1:37**  
Moses was told by God to speak to the rock and he was so mad at the people that he hit the rock twice (Num. 20:10-12).
- 4) Joshua will enter the land and take the nation with him. **1:38**
- 5) The little ones who have no knowledge of good and evil shall enter the land. **1:39**  
They said that if they tried to take the Promised Land, their little ones would become prey. In other words, they are alleging that God brought them there to kill them. God says I have news for you, your little ones will be the only ones who will enter the Promised Land.
- 6) Turn your back on the Promised Land and head into the wilderness back to the Red Sea. **1:40**

You do not want to anger God. You do not want to get God to the point where He is this angry. When God listens into our conversations in our homes, you do not want to be saying things about God that angers Him because He can pull the plug on His blessings.

**STORY PART #7** – You admitted you had sinned. **1:41**

Well after Moses told the people that, they admitted they had sinned against the LORD and they had changed their minds and were now going to fight just as God had commanded them. The problem here is that they are now going to boldly do something God never told them to do. These people are a mess.

Learn a very significant lesson from this—just because someone admits they have sinned does not mean they are in a right relationship with God. Just because someone admits they are a sinner does not mean they have invited Jesus Christ into their lives to be their Savior.

**STORY PART #8** – God told me to tell you not to go fight in the hill country. **1:42**

Moses warned the people that they should not go fight because God would no longer fight for them and they would be defeated by the enemies.

Naturally, since the people would not listen to the word of God, they were not about to obey Moses on this issue, either.

Had they been serious about the word of God, and said we will obey it, perhaps God would have mercifully given them another chance. But they didn't.

**STORY PART #9** – You would not listen to the word of God and were crushed. **1:43-44**

Instead of listening to the warnings Moses gave them from God, they went off in their arrogance and acted presumptuously and went up against the Amorites and were completely defeated.

It is possible to do something that at one time was the will of God, which now is no longer the will of God, and if you decide to do that you will end up totally defeated.

**STORY PART #10** – You finally returned to the LORD but He would not listen to you.  
**1:45-46**

Then the people of God came back before the LORD and wept, but it was too late. Their crying was too late. God decided you would roam around in the wilderness for many years and you were left crying.

If you don't trust God and if you don't obey God, this will be the outcome. You will spend a lot of time fearing, disobeying and crying.

Just because you are a believer does not mean you will accomplish God's will. You can end up not trusting God's word. You can end up angering God. You can end up crying.