



Deut. 1:19-46

Learning from the Sins of Our Fathers

19 " So we departed from Horeb, and went through all that great and terrible wilderness which you saw on the way to the mountains of the Amorites, as the LORD our God had commanded us. Then we came to Kadesh Barnea.

20 "And I said to you, 'You have come to the mountains of the Amorites, which the LORD our God is giving us.

21 'Look, the LORD your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the LORD God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged.'

22 "And everyone of you came near to me and said, 'Let us send men before us, and let them search out the land for us, and bring back word to us of the way by which we should go up, and of the cities into which we shall come.'

23 "The plan pleased me well; so I took twelve of your men, one man from each tribe.

24 "And they departed and went up into the mountains, and came to the Valley of Eshcol, and spied it out.

25 "They also took some of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down to us; and they brought back word to us, saying, 'It is a good land which the LORD our God is giving us.'

26 " Nevertheless you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God;

27 "and you complained 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.

28 'Where can we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our hearts, saying, "The people are greater and taller than we; the cities are great and fortified up to heaven; moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there." '

29 "Then I said to you, 'Do not be terrified, or afraid of them.

30 'The LORD your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes,

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

32 "Yet, for all that, you did not believe the LORD your God,

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

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

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

36 'except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and his children I am giving the land on which he walked, because he wholly followed the LORD.'

37 "The LORD was also angry with me for your sakes, saying, 'Even you shall not go in there;

38 'Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there. Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.

39 'Moreover your little ones and your children, who you say will be victims, who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there; to them I will give it, and they shall possess it.

40 'But as for you, turn and take your journey into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea.'

41 " Then you answered and said to me, 'We have sinned against the LORD; we will go up and fight, just as the LORD our God commanded us.' And when everyone of you had girded on his weapons of war, you were ready to go up into the mountain.

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

43 "So I spoke to you; yet you would not listen, but rebelled against the command of the LORD, and presumptuously went up into the mountain.

44 "And the Amorites who dwelt in that mountain came out against you and chased you as bees do, and drove you back from Seir to Hormah.

45 "Then you returned and wept before the LORD, but the LORD would not listen to your voice nor give ear to you.

46 "So you remained in Kadesh many days, according to the days that you spent there.

On of the things that I often say to parents is that they need to tell their children about their own sins and failures, that their children might learn from them. Now that is admittedly a hard thing to do, we are so used to presenting an outward appearance of infallibility before our children, and it requires a humbling of ourselves before the very people we want to look up to us. But we need to do it, if only because we do not want our children to fall prey to the same snares and traps that wounded us. Certainly George Santayana's oft quoted maxim ***"Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it."*** is true for the Christian faith, and if our children don't know about our history, then they cannot learn from it. We want them to learn, we want them to be wary, and we need them to know that there never has only ever been one man who was not liable to sin and temptation and His name is not ***"Dad"*** it is Jesus Christ.

Certainly here at the edge of the promised land Moses doesn't want the children of Israel to repeat the sins of their Fathers who had come so close to possessing the promised land and then failed through rebellion and lack of faith. For forty years they tramped through the terrible desert of Sinai leaving a long trail of graves in the wilderness. Moses knows one lost generation is enough, so he tells in essence. You were here before. It doesn't take 40 years to go from Mt. Sinai to this oasis called Kadesh Barnea on the outskirts of southern Judah, is only 11 days journey. But it has taken you almost 40 years to get back here and here is why.

You were poised to enter and possess the land, (and notice that although the it was actually their parents Moses continually says **you**, to show they are one Covenant people, the bible certainly knows nothing of the hyper-individualism of modern Christianity) and you suggested 12 spies be sent in to reconnoiter the land, which as we know from the account in numbers was the will of God in the matter. This was a good idea. And the spies confirmed what God had promised, that it really was a good land flowing with Milk and Honey, the Lord had kept His promise.

But they chose not to dwell on that good report, instead the only thing they thought about were the reports of the fearsomeness of the inhabitants, how there were giants in the land, and how the cities had walls that seemed to go all the way up to the heavens. And at this point, you almost wonder what they were expecting – ***a land of midgets living in houses of straw?*** If there is one thing that people who know not the Lord nor his word spend their time doing it is fighting and killing, and so the fact that the kings had built strong walls to their cities and had invited the giant sons of Anak to come and live in their country and intimidate their enemies shouldn't have been the surprise it was.

But it seems that like so many people whose hearts are set on rebellion, the people were just looking for an excuse. So they rebelled in two related ways:

1) **The made it seem like they had no chance of taking the land**, despite the evidence of their previous victory against Amalek were the Lord had given them a supernatural victory. You remember that when Moses' hands were lifted up they prevailed. But now it is they have giants and cities walled up to heaven - Anakites – a race of giants like Goliath - ***All we have is God***

2) **And that's no help because God has brought us here not to bless us, but to kill us.** *They wickedly declared that YHWH is not a Good God, he hates us.* So everything is against us.

Now Moses is patient with them, he says don't be afraid, what you say is manifestly untrue. You saw how he took care of you in delivering you from the Egyptians who were far more mighty than all the Canaanites put together. You also saw how he cared for you in the wilderness. You think he wants to kill you, are you crazy, he treated you like a man treats a beloved son:

God had said as much in Exodus 4:22 "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: 'Israel is My son, My firstborn.

23 "So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn." ' ' "

This God you say hates you carried you to this point. This was no leap of faith Moses was asking for – they had the evidence of God's love piled up around them, they went out every morning to collect the BREAD he provided, all he had to do to kill them was cut it off. And yet they would not believe it.

So the Lord was angry and swore that generation would *not* go in, All except Caleb and Joshua – the spies who had counseled them to enter. Moses points out that even he shared in the curse of not going into the Promised land. Admittedly, the Lord says it was because of his disobedience to his command at Meribah to talk to the rock, but why was Moses furious? Because of their rebellion. There we have a graphic relation of the principle in Psalm 4:4 ***“Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. Selah”*** Moses allowed their rebellion to sting him to fury, and his anger and his wounded pride had become his undoing.

Now the thing about rebellion is it produces the most perverse reactions. God says – ***go up*** – they say no! Then when God commands ***Don't go up*** – they answer *now we'll go up!* Parents you will have seen this phenomenon yourself, I sometimes wonder if nap time wouldn't go more smoothly if I simply commanded YOU WILL NOT GO TO SLEEP. But I fear they'd figure out the reverse psychology – wait a minute, he really wants me to go to sleep...

God at this point tells them “I will not go with you” and that was the key not only to their victory but to their survival at Sinai Moses had been more prepared to die in the wilderness than to continue on without God.

Now they are going to be defeated, “We have sinned” should be “we are continuing to sin” They won't even listen to the commands of the Lord – tell them not to go, *you think he's lying to you?*

They weep, but these are the bitter and angry tears of the chastened but not truly contrite. Both Peter and Judas wept after they betrayed Christ, but only Peter's tears were the godly kind that lead to true

repentance – as Paul put it in 2 Cr. 7:10 “For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.”

Application: It is not possible to force God into going along with what we want him to. A disobedient people cannot expect him to bless their efforts. And if he is not with you in the endeavor, it will fail. Example of the Ark (1 Sam. 4)

Now we may shake our heads and say what dummies, I can't believe they thought that the Canaanites were too great for God.

My Kids are Too Much for God's promises

My Marriage is too impossible to fix

Now again and again, the children of Israel kill these feared giants, under Joshua they will get to the point where they wipe them in the land of Israel (Josh 11:22 – “None of the Anakim were left in the land of the children of Israel; they remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod.”

There is no people, power or army too great for God

In Rev. 19: 19 *And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.*

20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Finally the heart of our failure, is far too often that we forget the love of God, we assume his chastening or the challenges ahead of us are signs he hates us. Too many members of God's covenant people come to the very edge of the promised land, and there give up hope. We forget that God has already done all that is necessary for our salvation through the death of Christ, it is finished. Go in and occupy.

I'm not a big fan of the footprints in the sand poem, but too often we forget that when it comes to salvation, as Moses said, he does carry us.

NKJ Hebrews 12:1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

4 You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.

5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;

6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives."