

# DEUTERONOMY

## INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY

This book is sometimes called “Elleh hadebarim”, from the words with which it begins; and sometimes by the Jews “Mishneh Torah”, the repetition of the law; and so in the Syriac version, with which agrees the Arabic title of it; and when the Greeks, and we after them, call it “Deuteronomy”, it is not to be understood of a second, a new, or another law, but of the law formerly delivered, but now repeated, and also more largely explained; to which are likewise added several particular laws, instructions, and directions; all which were necessary, on account of the people of Israel, who were now a new generation, that either were not born, or not at an age to hear and understand the law when given on Mount Sinai; the men that heard it there being all dead, excepting a very few; and these people were also now about to enter into the land of Canaan, which they were to enjoy as long as they kept the law of God, and no longer, and therefore it was proper they should be reminded of it; and besides, Moses was now about to leave them, and having an hearty desire after their welfare, spends the little time he had to be with them, by inculcating into them and impressing on them the laws of God, and in opening and explaining them to them, and enforcing them on them, which were to be the rule of their obedience, and on which their civil happiness depended. And sometimes the Jews call this book “the book of reproofs”, because there are in it several sharp reproofs of the people of Israel for their rebellion and disobedience; and so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem begin it by calling it the words of reproof which Moses spake, etc. That this book was written by Moses there can be no doubt, from (~~BOOK~~ Deuteronomy 1:1 31:4,9,24), only the eight last verses, which give an account of his death, and of his character, were wrote by another hand, equally inspired by God, as either Eleazar the priest, as some, or Samuel the prophet, as others; or, as it is the more commonly received opinion of the Jews, Ezra; though it is highly probable they were wrote by Joshua his successor. This book was written and delivered by Moses, at certain times in the last month of his life, and towards the close of the fortieth year of the children of Israel’s coming out of Egypt. And that it is of divine authority

need not be questioned, when the several quotations out of it are observed, as made by the apostles of Christ, in (~~4482~~ Acts 3:22 ~~5129~~ Romans 12:19) (~~5800~~ Hebrews 10:30 ~~8880~~ Galatians 3:10) out of (~~6885~~ Deuteronomy 18:15 32:35,36 27:26) and by our Lord himself, (~~10816~~ Matthew 18:16) from (~~6895~~ Deuteronomy 19:15). Yea, it is remarkable, that all the passages of Scripture produced by Christ, to repel the temptations of Satan, are all taken out of this book, (~~1007~~ Matthew 4:7,10) compared with (~~8888~~ Deuteronomy 8:3 6:10,13), and the voice from heaven, directing the apostles to hearken to him, refers to a prophecy of him in (~~6885~~ Deuteronomy 18:15).

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 1

The time and place when the subject matter of this book was delivered to the Israelites are observed by way of preface, (<sup><FR01></sup>Deuteronomy 1:1-5), and it begins with reminding them of an order to them to depart from Mount Horeb, and pass on to the land of Canaan, which the Lord had given them, (<sup><FR06></sup>Deuteronomy 1:6-8), and with observing the very great increase of their number, which made it necessary for Moses to appoint persons under him to be rulers over them, whom he instructed in the duty of their office, (<sup><FR09></sup>Deuteronomy 1:9-18), and he goes on to observe, that when they were come to the mountain of the Amorites, they were bid to go up and possess the land; but, instead of that, they desired men might be sent to search the land first, which was granted, (<sup><FR19></sup>Deuteronomy 1:19-23), and though these men upon their return brought of the fruits of the land, and a good report of it, particularly two of them; yet being discouraged by the report of the rest, they murmured, distrusted, and were afraid to enter, though encouraged by Moses, (<sup><FR24></sup>Deuteronomy 1:24-33), which caused the Lord to be angry with them, and upon it threatened them that they should die in the wilderness, and only two of them should ever see and enjoy the land, and therefore were bid to turn and take their journey in the wilderness, (<sup><FR34></sup>Deuteronomy 1:34-40), but being convinced of their evil, they proposed to go up the hill, and enter the land, which they attempted against the commandment of the Lord, but being repulsed by the Amorites, they fled with great loss, to their great grief, and abode in Kadesh many days, (<sup><FR41></sup>Deuteronomy 1:41-46).

**Ver. 1.** *These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel*, etc.] Not what are related in the latter part of the preceding book, but what follow in this; and which were spoken by him, not to the whole body of the people gathered together to hear him, which they could not do without a miracle; but to the heads of the people, the representatives of them, who were convened to hear what he had to say, in order to communicate it to the people; unless we can suppose that Moses at different times to several parties of them delivered the same things, until they had all heard them:

*on this side Jordan*; before the passage of the Israelites over it to the land of Canaan; for Moses never went in thither, and therefore it must be the tract which the Greeks call Persea, and which with respect to the Israelites when in the land of Canaan is called “beyond Jordan”, for here now Moses was; and the children of Israel had been here with him a considerable time in the wilderness, the vast wilderness of Arabia, which reached hither:

*in the plain*; the plains of Moab, between Bethjeshimoth and. Abelshittim, where the Israelites had lain encamped for some time, and had not as yet removed; (see <sup>(-0439)</sup>Numbers 33:49)

*over against the Red [sea]*: the word “sea” is not in the text, nor is there anything in it which answers to “Red”; it should be rendered “opposite Suph”, which seems to be the name of a place in Moab, not far from the plains of it, and perhaps is the same with Suphah in (<sup>(-0214)</sup>Numbers 21:14 \*marg) for from the Red sea they were at a considerable distance:

*between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab*; these are names of places which were the boundaries and limits of the plains of Moab, or lay very near them; for Paran cannot be understood of the Wilderness of Paran, which was too remote, but a city or town of that name. Tophel and Laban we read of nowhere else; a learned man <sup>f1</sup> conjectures Tophel is the name of the station where the Israelites loathed the manna as light bread, because of the insipidness of it, which he observes this word signifies; but that station was either Zalmonah, or Punon, or this station must be omitted in the account of their journeys, and besides was too remote. Jarchi helps this conjecture a little, who puts Tophel and Laban together, and thinks they signify their murmuring because of the manna, which was white, as Laban signifies; but the above writer takes Laban to be a distinct station, the same with Libnah, (<sup>(-0630)</sup>Numbers 33:20), and Hazeroth to be the station between Mount Sinai and Kadesh, (<sup>(-0426)</sup>Numbers 12:16). But both seem to be too remote from the plains of Moab; and Dizahab he would have to be the same with Eziongaber, (<sup>(-0635)</sup>Numbers 33:35), which he says the Arabs now call Dsahab, or Meenah el Dsahab, that is, “the port of gold”; and certain it is that Dizahab has the signification of gold, and, is by Hillerus <sup>f2</sup> rendered “sufficiency of gold”, there being large quantities of it here; perhaps either through the riches of the port by trade, or by reason of a mine of gold at it, or near it; so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “where there is much gold”, and the Septuagint version “golden mines”, Catachrysea; and Jerom

<sup>f3</sup> makes mention of a place of this name, and says they are mountains abounding with gold in the wilderness, eleven miles from Horeb, where Moses is said to write Deuteronomy; elsewhere <sup>f4</sup> he calls it Dysmemoab, i.e. the west of Moab, near Jordan, opposite Jericho.

**Ver. 2.** *There are eleven days' journey from Horeb, by the way of Mount Seir, to Kadeshbarnea.*] Not that the Israelites came thither in eleven days from Horeb, for they stayed by the way at Kibrothhattaavah, a whole month at least, and seven days at Hazeroth; but the sense is, that this was the computed distance between the two places; it was what was reckoned a man might walk in eleven days; and if we reckon a day's journey twenty miles, of which (See Gill on "Jon 3:3"), the distance must be two hundred and twenty miles. But Dr. Shaw <sup>f5</sup> allows but ten miles for a day's journey, and then it was no more than one hundred and ten, and indeed a camp cannot be thought to move faster; but not the day's journey of a camp, but of a man, seems to be intended, who may very well walk twenty miles a day for eleven days running; but it seems more strange that another learned traveller <sup>f6</sup> should place Kadeshbarnea at eight hours, or ninety miles distance only from Mount Sinai. Moses computes not the time that elapsed between those two places, including their stations, but only the time of travelling; and yet Jarchi says, though it was eleven days' journey according to common computation, the Israelites performed it in three days; for he observes that they set out from Horeb on the twentieth of Ijar, and on the twenty ninth of Sivan the spies were sent out from Kadeshbarnea; and if you take from hence the whole month they were at one place, and the seven days at another, there will be but three days left for them to travel in. And he adds, that the Shechinah, or divine Majesty, pushed them forward, to hasten their going into the land; but they corrupting themselves, he turned them about Mount Seir forty years. It is not easy to say for what reason these words are expressed, unless it be to show in how short a time the Israelites might have been in the land of Canaan, in a few days' journey from Horeb, had it not been for their murmurings and unbelief, for which they were turned into the wilderness again, and travelled about for the space of thirty eight years afterwards. Aben Ezra is of opinion, that the eleven days, for the word "journey" is not in the text, are to be connected with the preceding words; and that the sense is, that Moses spake these words in the above places, in the eleven days they went from Horeb to Kadesh.

**Ver. 3.** *And it came to pass in the fortieth year*, etc.] That is, of the coming of the children of Israel out of Egypt:

*in the eleventh month*; the month Shebet, as the Targum of Jonathan, which answers to part of January and part of February:

*in the first day of the month, that Moses spoke unto the children of Israel according to all that the Lord had given him in commandment unto them*; repeated to them the several commandments, which the Lord had delivered to him at different times.

**Ver. 4.** *After he had slain Sihon the king of the Amorites, which dwelt in Heshbon*, etc.] Either Moses, speaking of himself in the third person, or rather the Lord, to whom Moses ascribes the victory; of this king, and his palace, and the slaughter of him, (see <sup><0213></sup>Numbers 21:24-26),

*and Og the king of Bashan*, which dwelt at Ashtaroth in Edrei; or near Edrei; for Edrei was not the name of a country, in which Ashtaroth was, but of a city at some distance from it, about six miles, as Jerom says <sup>f7</sup>; hither Og came from Ashtaroth his palace to fight with Israel, and where he was slain, (see <sup><0213></sup>Numbers 21:33). Ashtaroth was an ancient city formerly called Ashtaroth Karnaim, and was the seat of the Rephaim, or giants, from whom Og sprung, (See Gill on “<sup><0145></sup>Genesis 14:5”), see also (<sup><0211></sup>Deuteronomy 3:11). Jerom says <sup>f8</sup> in his time there were two castles in Batanea (or Bashan) called by this name, nine miles distant from one another, between Adara (the same with Edrei) and Abila; and in another place he says <sup>f9</sup> Carnaim Ashtaroth is now a large village in a corner of Batanea, and is called Carnea, beyond the plains of Jordan; and it is a tradition that there was the house of Job.

**Ver. 5.** *On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab*, etc.] On that side of Jordan in which the land of Moab was, and which with respect to the land of Canaan was beyond Jordan; this the Vulgate Latin version joins to the preceding verse:

*began Moses to declare this law*: to explain it, make it clear and manifest; namely, the whole system and body of laws, which had been before given him, which he “willed” <sup>f10</sup>, as some render the word, or willingly took upon him to repeat and explain unto them, which their fathers had heard, and had been delivered unto them; but before he entered upon this, he gave them a short history of events which had befallen them, from the time of their

departure from Horeb unto the present time, which is contained in this and the two next chapters:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 6.** *The Lord our God spoke unto us in Horeb*, etc.] The same with Sinai, as Aben Ezra observes; while the Israelites lay encamped near this mountain, the Lord spoke unto them:

*saying, ye have dwelt long enough in this mount*: or near it; for hither they came on the first day of the third month from their departure out of Egypt, and they did not remove from thence until the twentieth day of the second month in the second year, (<sup><0200></sup>Exodus 19:1 <sup><0400></sup>Numbers 10:11) so that they were here a year wanting ten days; in which space of time the law was given them, the tabernacle and all things appertaining to it were made by them, rulers both ecclesiastical and civil were appointed over them, and they were numbered and marshalled in order under four standards, and so ready to march; and all this being done, they must stay no longer, but set forward for the land of Canaan. It is well for persons that they are not to stay long under the law, and the terrors of it, but are directed to Mount Zion; (<sup><0218></sup>Hebrews 12:18-24).

**Ver. 7.** *Turn you and take your journey*, etc.] That is, remove from Horeb, where they were, and proceed on in their journey, in which they had been stopped almost a year:

*and go to the mount of the Amorites*; where they and the Amalekites dwelt, in the south part of the land of Canaan, and which was the way the spies were sent, (<sup><0437></sup>Numbers 13:17,29 14:40,43),

*and unto all the places nigh thereunto*; nigh to the mountain. The Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi interpret them of Moab, Ammon, Gebal, or Mount Seir: “in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale”; such was the country near this mountain, consisting of champaign land, hills, and valleys:

*and in the south*; the southern border of the land of Canaan, as what follows describes the other borders of it:

*and by the sea side*: the Mediterranean sea, the western border of the land, which Jarchi out of Siphri explains of Ashkelon, Gaza, and Caesarea, and so the Targum of Jonathan:

*into the land of the Canaanites*; which was then possessed by them, the boundaries of which to the south and west are before given, and next follow those to the north and east:

*and unto Lebanon*; which was on the north of the land of Canaan:

*unto the great river, the river Euphrates*; which was the utmost extent of the land eastward, and was either promised, as it was to Abraham, (<sup><0158></sup>Genesis 15:18) or enjoyed, as it was by Solomon, (<sup><1021></sup>1 Kings 4:21).

**Ver. 8.** *Behold, I have set the land before you*, etc.] Described it to them, and set its bounds, as well as had given them a grant of it:

*go in and possess the land, which the Lord sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and their seed after them*: and which being thus made sure unto them, they had nothing more to do than to go and take possession of it.

**Ver. 9.** *And I spake unto you at that time*, etc.] About that time; for it was after the rock in Horeb was smitten, and before they encamped at Mount Sinai, that Jethro gave the advice which Moses took, and proceeded on it, as here related; (see <sup><0281></sup>Exodus 18:1-27)

*saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone*; to rule and govern them, judge and determine matters between them. Jethro suggested this to Moses, and he took the hint, and was conscious to himself that it was too much for him, and so declared it to the people, though it is not before recorded; (see <sup><0283></sup>Exodus 18:18).

**Ver. 10.** *The Lord your God hath multiplied you*, etc.] Which was the reason why he could not bear them, or the government of them was too heavy for him, because they were so numerous, and the cases brought before him to decide were so many:

*and, behold, you are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude*; whereby it appeared that the promise to Abraham was fulfilled, (<sup><0155></sup>Genesis 15:5), they were now 600,000 men fit for war, besides women and children, and those under age, which must make the number of them very large.

**Ver. 11.** *The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are*, etc.] This prayer he made, or this blessing he pronounced on them, to show that he did not envy their increase, nor was



any ways uneasy at it, but rejoiced in it, though he gave it as a reason of his not being able to govern them alone:

*and bless you, as he hath promised you:* with all kind of blessings, as he had often promised their fathers.

**Ver. 12.** *How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife?*] His meaning is, that he could not hear and try all their causes, and determine all their law suits, and decide the strifes and controversies which arose between them; it was too heavy for him, and brought too much trouble and incumbrance upon him.

**Ver. 13.** *Take ye wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes,* etc.] Not only whose persons were well known, but their characters and qualifications, for their probity and integrity, for their wisdom and prudence in the management of affairs, for their skill and knowledge in things divine and human, civil and religious, and for their capacity in judging and determining matters in difference; (see <sup><D1821></sup>Exodus 18:21)

*and I will make them rulers over you;* the people were allowed to choose their own officers, whom they were to bring to Moses, and present before him, to be invested with their office. A like method was taken in the choice and constitution of deacons in the Christian church, when the secular affairs of it lay too heavy upon the apostles, (<sup><411B></sup>Acts 6:3).

**Ver. 14.** *And ye answered me and said,* etc.] As the speech of Moses to the people is not expressed before, so neither this answer of theirs to him:

*the thing which thou hast spoken is good for us to do;* to look out for and present persons to him as before described; this they saw was for their own good and profit, as well as for the ease of Moses, and therefore readily agreed to it.

**Ver. 15.** *So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known,* etc.] The principal persons among them, that were remarkable and well known for their wisdom and understanding, whom the people presented to him:

*and made them heads over you;* rulers of them, as follows:

*captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens;* (see <sup><D1821></sup>Exodus 18:21-25)

*and officers among your tribes*; which Jarchi interprets of such that bind malefactors and scourge them, according to the decree of the judges, even the executioners of justice; and so the Jews commonly understand them to be, though some have thought they were judges also.

**Ver. 16.** *And I charged your judges at that time*, etc.] When they were appointed and constituted, even the heads and rulers before spoken of; this charge is also new, and not recorded before:

*saying, hear the causes between your brethren*; hear both sides, and all that each of them have to say; not suffer one to say all he has to say, and oblige the other to cut his words short, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it; but give them leave and time to tell their case, and give the best evidence they can of it:

*and judge righteously*; impartially, just as the case really appears to be, and according to the evidence given:

*between every man and his brother*; between an Israelite and an Israelite:

*and the stranger that is with him*; between an Israelite and proselyte, whether a proselyte of the gate, or of righteousness; the same justice was to be done to them as to an Israelite.

**Ver. 17.** *Ye shall not respect persons in judgment*, etc.] Or pass judgment, and give sentence according to the outward appearances, circumstances, and relations of men; as whether they be friends or foes, rich or poor, old or young, men or women, learned or unlearned; truth and justice should always take place, without any regard to what persons are:

*but you shall hear the small as well as the great*; persons in low, life, and in mean circumstances, as well as great and noble personages; or little causes and of no great moment, as well as those of the utmost importance; all must be attended to, a cause about a “prutah” or a farthing, as well as one about a hundred pounds, in which Jarchi instances, and if that came first it was not to be postponed:

*ye shall not be afraid of the face of man*; of the frowns and threatenings of rich men, and of such as are in power and authority; not be awed or intimidated by them from doing justice; (see <sup><8834></sup>Job 31:34),

*for the judgment [is] God’s*; judges stand in the place of God, are put into their office by him, and act under him, and for him, and are accountable to

him; and therefore should be careful what judgment they make, or sentence they pass, lest they bring discredit to him, and destruction on themselves:

*and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it;* which is said for their encouragement, as well as was an instruction to them not to undertake a cause too difficult for them; (see <sup><P182></sup>Exodus 18:22,26).

**Ver. 18.** *And I commanded you at that time all the things which ye should do.*] Delivered to them all the laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, which were then given him at Mount Sinai.

**Ver. 19.** *And when we departed from Horeb,* etc.] As the Lord commanded them to do, when they were obedient:

*we went through all the great and terrible wilderness;* the wilderness of Paran, called “great”, it reaching from Mount Sinai to Kadeshbarnea, eleven days’ journey, as Adrichomius<sup>f11</sup> relates; and “terrible”, being so hard and dry as not to be ploughed nor sown, and presented to the sight something terrible and horrible, even the very image of death; to which may be added the fiery serpents and scorpions it abounded with, (<sup><R185></sup>Deuteronomy 8:15),

*which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites;* that is, in the way that led to the mountain:

*as the Lord our God commanded us;* to depart from Horeb, and take a tour through the wilderness towards the said mountain:

*and we came to Kadeshbarnea;* having stayed a month by the way at Kibrothhattaavah, where they lusted after flesh, and seven days at Hazeroth, where Miriam was shut out of the camp for leprosy during that time.

**Ver. 20.** *And I said unto you, you are come unto the mountain of the Amorites,* etc.] Which was inhabited by them, and was one of the seven nations the Israelites were to destroy, and possess their land, and which lay on the southern part of the land of Canaan:

*which the Lord our God doth give unto us;* not the mountain only, but the whole country of that people, and even all the land of Canaan.

**Ver. 21.** *Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee*, etc.] The land of Canaan, on the borders of which they then were; (see Gill on “<sup><HEB></sup>Deuteronomy 1:8”),

*go up*; the mountain, by that way of it which was the way the spies went, and up to which some of the Israelites presumed to go when forbidden, they not complying with the call of God:

*and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee*; as in (<sup><HEB></sup>Deuteronomy 1:8),

*fear not, neither be discouraged*; though the people of the land were numerous and strong, and their cities large and walled.

**Ver. 22.** *And ye came near unto me everyone of you*, etc.] Not every individual of them, but the heads of their tribes, that represented them; this is not to be understood of the present generation personally, but of their fathers, who all died in the wilderness, save a very few of them; but they being the same people and nation, it is so expressed:

*and said, we will send men before us*; that is, they thought it was proper and prudent so to do, and came to Moses to consult him about it; for we are not to suppose that they had determined upon it, whether he approved of it or not:

*and they shall search us out the land*: that they might know what sort of land it was, whether good or bad, fruitful or not, and whether woody or not: (see <sup><HEB></sup>Numbers 13:19,20)

*and bring us word again by what way we must go up*; or, “concerning the way<sup>f12</sup> in which we must go”; which is the best way of entering it, most easy and accessible, where the passes are most open and least dangerous:

*and into what cities we shall come*; which it would be the most proper to attack and subdue first.

**Ver. 23.** *And the saying pleased me well*, etc.] Taking it to be a rational and prudent scheme, not imagining it was the effect of fear and distrust:

*and I took twelve men of you out of a tribe*; whose names are given in (<sup><HEB></sup>Numbers 13:4-15).

**Ver. 24.** *And they turned and went up into the mountain*, etc.] As they were ordered and directed by Moses, (<sup><HEB></sup>Numbers 13:17)

*and came unto the valley of Eshcol*; so called from the cluster of grapes they cut down there, as they returned:

*and searched it out*; the whole land, and so were capable of giving a particular account of it.

**Ver. 25.** *And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands*, etc.] Besides the cluster of grapes, which was carried between two men on a staff; even pomegranates and figs, (<sup><04E33></sup>Numbers 13:23),

*and brought it down unto us*; who lay encamped at the bottom of the mountain:

*and brought us word again*; what sort of a land it was:

*and said, it is a good land which the Lord our God doth give us*; that is, Caleb and Joshua, two of the spies, said this, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it, and so Jarchi; yea, all of them agreed in this, and said at first that it was a land flowing with milk and honey, (<sup><04E27></sup>Numbers 13:27).

**Ver. 26.** *Notwithstanding, ye would not go up*, etc.] And possess it, as the Lord had bid them, and Moses encouraged them to do, as well as Joshua and Caleb, who were two of the spies sent into it:

*but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God*; disregarded the word of the Lord, and disobeyed his command, and thereby bitterly provoked him, which rebellion against him, their King and God, might well do.

**Ver. 27.** *And ye murmured in your tents*, etc.] Not in a private manner; for though the murmurs began there, they having wept all night after the report of the spies; yet it became general and public, and they gathered together in a body, and openly expressed their murmurs against Moses and Aaron, (<sup><04E1E></sup>Numbers 14:1,2),

*and said, because the Lord hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt*; a strange expression indeed! when it was such a plain amazing instance of his love to them, as could not but be seen by them; being done in such a remarkable and extraordinary manner, by inflicting judgments on their enemies in a miraculous way, giving them favour in their eyes, to lend them their clothes and jewels, and bringing them out with such an high hand, openly and publicly in the sight of them, where they had been in the most wretched slavery for many years; yet this is

interpreted an hatred of them, and as done with an ill design upon them, as follows:

*to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us*; which now, under the power of their fears and unbelief, they thought would be quickly their case; (see <sup><04037></sup>Deuteronomy 4:37).

**Ver. 28.** *Whither shall we go up?* etc.] What way can we go up into the land? where is there any access for us? the mountain we are come to, and directed to go up, is possessed by the Amorites, a strong and mighty people, who keep and guard the passes, that there is no entrance:

*our brethren have discouraged our hearts*; ten of the spies; for Joshua and Caleb encouraged them with very powerful arguments, which had they listened to, it would have been well for them:

*saying, the people is greater and taller than we*; more in number, larger in bulk of body, and higher in stature:

*the cities are great, and walled up to heaven*; an hyperbolic expression; their fears exaggerated the account of the spies; they told them they were great, large, and populous, walled, and strongly fortified; which appeared in their frightened imaginations as if their walls were so high as to reach up to heaven, so that it was impossible to scale them, or get possession of them:

*and, moreover, we have seen the sons of the Anakims there*; the giants so called from Anak, the son of Arba, the father of them; their names are given, (<sup><04132></sup>Numbers 13:22,23 <sup><04145></sup>Joshua 14:15 15:13,14).

**Ver. 29.** *Then I said unto you, dread not, neither be afraid of them.*] With such like words he had exhorted and encouraged them before the spies were sent, and he still uses the same, or stronger terms, notwithstanding the report that had been made of the gigantic stature and walled cities of the Canaanites. This speech of Moses, which is continued in the two following verses, is not recorded in (<sup><04145></sup>Numbers 14:5), it is only there said, that Moses and Aaron fell on their faces, but no account is given of what was said by either of them.

**Ver. 30.** *The Lord your God, which goeth before you*, etc.] In a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night:

*he shall fight for you*; wherefore, though their enemies were greater and taller than they, yet their God was higher than the highest; and cities walled up to heaven would signify nothing to him, whose throne is in the heavens:

*according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes*: which is observed to encourage their faith in God; for he that wrought such wonders in Egypt for them, which their eyes, at least some of them, and their fathers, however, had seen, what is it he cannot do?

**Ver. 31.** *And in the wilderness*, etc.] Where he had fed them with manna, brought water out of rocks for them, protected them from every hurtful creature, had fought their battles for them, and given them victory over Amalek, Sihon, and Og:

*where thou hast seen how the Lord thy God bare thee as a man doth bear his son*; in his arms, in his bosom, with great care and tenderness:

*in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place*; supplying their wants, supporting their persons, subduing their enemies, and preserving them from everything hurtful to them; and therefore having God on their side, as appeared by so many instances, of his favour to them, they had nothing to dread or fear from the Canaanites, though ever so mighty.

**Ver. 32.** *Yet in this thing ye did not believe the Lord your God*.] That they might go up and possess the land at once, and that he would fight for them, and subdue their enemies under them; or notwithstanding the favours bestowed upon them, and because of them, they did not believe in the Lord their God, and which was a great aggravation of their unbelief, and was the cause of their not entering into the good land, (<sup>389</sup>Hebrews 3:19).

**Ver. 33.** *Who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in*, etc.] For when the cloud was taken up they journeyed, and when that rested, there they pitched their tents; and hereby they were directed to places the most convenient for water for them and their flocks, or for safety from those that might annoy them:

*in fire by night, to show you by what way ye should go*; which otherwise they could not have found in dark nights, in which they sometimes travelled, and in, a wilderness where there were no tracks, no beaten path, no common way:

*and in a cloud by day*; to shelter them from the scorching sun, where there were no trees nor hedges to shade them, only rocky crags and hills.

**Ver. 34.** *And the Lord heard the voice of your words*, etc.] Of their murmurings against Moses and Aaron, and of their threatenings to them, Joshua and Caleb, and of their impious charge of hatred of them to God for bringing them out of Egypt, and of their rash wishes that they had died there or in the wilderness, and of their wicked scheme and proposal to make them a captain, and return to Egypt again:

*and was wroth, and sware*; by his life, himself; (see <sup><0443></sup>Numbers 14:28), *saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 35.** *Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see the good land*, etc.] The land of Canaan; not only not one of the spies that brought the ill report of that land, but of that body of people that gave credit to it, and murmured upon it:

*which I sware to give unto your fathers*; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; (see <sup><0608></sup>Deuteronomy 1:8).

**Ver. 36.** *Save Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, he shall see it*, etc.] Enter into it, and enjoy it:

*and Joshua* also; who was the other spy with him, that brought a good report of the land; (see <sup><0638></sup>Deuteronomy 1:38),

*and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children*: not the whole land of Canaan, but that part of it which he particularly came to and searched; and where the giants were, and he saw them, and notwithstanding was not intimidated by them, but encouraged the people to go up and possess it; and the part he came to particularly, and trod on, was Hebron, (<sup><0432></sup>Numbers 13:22) and which the Targum of Jonathan, Jarchi, and Aben Ezra, interpret of that; and this was what was given to him and his at the division of the land, (<sup><0443></sup>Joshua 14:13-15 15:13,4),

*because he hath wholly followed the Lord*; (see <sup><0424></sup>Numbers 14:24).

**Ver. 37.** *Also the Lord was angry with me for your sakes*, etc.] Not at the same time, though, as some think, at the same place, near thirty eight years



afterwards, they provoking him to speak unadvisedly with his lips; (see <sup><010></sup>Numbers 20:10-12 <sup><062></sup>Psalms 106:32,33),

*saying, thou shalt not go in thither*: into the land of Canaan; and though he greatly importuned it, he could not prevail; (see <sup><025></sup>Deuteronomy 3:25-27).

**Ver. 38.** [*But Joshua, the son of Nun, which standeth before thee*, etc.] His servant and minister, which this phrase is expressive of:

*he shall go in thither*: into the good land, instead of Moses, and as his successor, and who was to go before the children of Israel, and introduce them into it, as a type of Christ, who brings many sons to glory:

*encourage him*; with the promise of the divine Presence with him, and of success in subduing the Canaanites, and settling the people of Israel in their land; and so we read that Moses did encourage him, (<sup><030></sup>Deuteronomy 31:7,8)

*for he shall cause Israel to inherit it*; go before them as their captain, and lead them into it; fight their battles for them, conquer their enemies, and divide the land by lot for an inheritance unto them; so the heavenly inheritance is not by the law of Moses, and the works of it, but by Joshua, or Jesus, the Saviour, by his achievements, victories, and conquests.

**Ver. 39.** *Moreover, your little ones, which ye said should be a prey*, etc.] To the Amorites, into whose hands they expected to be delivered, (<sup><027></sup>Deuteronomy 1:27) (see <sup><043></sup>Numbers 14:3)

*and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil*; not being at years of understanding, and which is a common description of children; it is particularly expressed “in that day”, for now they were the very persons Moses was directing his speech unto, and relating this history, it being thirty eight years ago when this affair was, so that now they were grown up to years of discretion:

*they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it*: the relation of which now might serve greatly to encourage their faith, as well as it would be a fulfilment of the promise of the land made unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which was not made of none effect through the unbelief of the Israelites, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, since their posterity was to enjoy it, and did.

**Ver. 40.** *But as for you, turn ye*, etc.] From the mountain of the Amorites, the border of the land of Canaan:

*and take your journey into the wilderness, by the way of the Red sea*: (see <sup>44-45</sup>Numbers 14:25). Jarchi says this wilderness was by the side of the Red sea, to the south of Mount Seir, and divided between the Red sea and the mount; so that now they drew to the side of the sea, and compassed Mount Seir, all the south of it, from west to east.

**Ver. 41.** *Then ye answered, and said unto me*, etc.] Not being willing to go into the wilderness again, though they wished they had died in it; nor to go the way of the Red sea, which was their way back again to Egypt, though they had been for appointing a captain, and returning thither; but now they repented of what they had said and done:

*we have sinned against the Lord*; by murmuring against his servants, and disobeying his commands:

*we will go up and fight according to all that the Lord our God hath commanded us*; which is more than they were bid to do; they were only ordered to go up and possess the land, and it was promised them the Lord would fight for them:

*and when ye had girded on every man his weapon*; his sword upon his thigh; a large number of them, for all of them were not so disposed, though many were:

*ye were ready to go unto the hill*; though before backward enough, when they were bid to do it. De Dieu, from the use of the word <sup>f13</sup> in the Arabic language, renders it, “ye reckoned it easy to go up unto the hill”; before it was accounted very difficult, by reason the passes were kept and guarded by the Amorites; but now there was no difficulty, when they were bid to go another way, but were ready at once to go up, which comes to the same sense; he further observes, that the word, in another conjugation in the same language, signifies to make light of, or despise <sup>f14</sup>; and so may be rendered, “and ye despised”; that is, rejected and despised the order given them to go into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea in the preceding verse, by their attempting to go up the hill; though the word so taken will bear another sense, agreeable to the first, that they now made a light matter of it, as if it was nothing, and there was no difficulty in it to go up the hill, which before was too hard and heavy for them.

**Ver. 42.** *And the Lord said unto me*, etc.] When the people had armed themselves, and were in motion, or ready to set forward to ascend the hill:

*say unto them, go not up, neither fight*; neither go up the hill, and if they did, contrary to this order, and should meet with enemies, not fight them, but retreat:

*for I am not among you*: the ark of the covenant, the symbol of his presence, was then among them, but it did not go with them, it continued in the camp, (<sup><0144></sup>Numbers 14:44) nor did the Lord exert his power, or show himself present with them, or to be on their side, but left them to themselves, and to their enemies:

*lest ye be smitten before your enemies*; God not being with them to fight for them, protect and defend them, and give them victory.

**Ver. 43.** *So I spake unto you*, etc.] The words, the orders he had received from the Lord to deliver to them:

*and ye would not hear*; so as to obey them, and act according to them:

*but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord*: as before, by not going up when he would have had them gone, and now by attempting it when he forbid them:

*and went presumptuously up into the hill*; that is, of themselves, in their own strength, disregarding the commandment of God, and what they were threatened with; this they endeavoured to do, for they were not able to effect it; the Amorites, perceiving them to make up the hill, came pouring down upon them in great numbers, and stopped them, and obliged them to retreat; (see <sup><0145></sup>Numbers 14:45).

**Ver. 44.** *And the Amorites which dwelt in the mountain*, etc.] Elsewhere called Canaanites, being one, and a principal one of the seven nations of Canaan, and who were joined and assisted in the attack by the Amalekites, (<sup><0145></sup>Numbers 14:45)

*came out against you, and chased you, as bees do*; which being disturbed in their hives come out in great numbers, and with great fury and ardour (for, though a small creature, it has a great deal of spirit); and pursue the aggressor, and leave him not till they have stung him, though thereby they lose their stings, and quickly their lives, at least their usefulness; so these Amorites, being irritated at the approach of the Israelites on their borders,

came out in great numbers and with great wrath, and fell upon them and smote them, and pursued them a long way, as is after expressed, though these in the issue were destroyed themselves. The Syriac version renders it, “as bees that are smoked”: or irritated by smoke; which is a method that has been used, and was anciently: to dispossess them of their hives, and get their honey, as Bochart<sup>f15</sup> from various writers has shown, as from Virgil<sup>f16</sup>, Ovid<sup>f17</sup>, and others; and when they are too much smoked become exceeding angry as Aristotle<sup>f18</sup> and Pliny<sup>f19</sup> observe; and which same writers take notice of the strength and force of their stings, as that they will kill with them the largest animals, even horses have been killed by them; and, though such small feeble creatures, are not afraid to attack men and beasts; yea, sometimes people have been obliged to leave their habitations, and have been driven out of their country by them, of which Aelianus<sup>f20</sup> gives an instance; all which shows the aptness and propriety of this simile; (see ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 118:12) and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah; pursued them as far as Mount Seir, even to another place on the borders of Edom, which was called Hormah, either from the destruction now or afterwards made here; (see Gill on ~~Numbers~~ Numbers 14:45), though some take it not to be the proper name of a place, but an appellative, and render it, “even unto destruction”; so the Jerusalem Targum; that is, destroyed them with an utter destruction.

**Ver. 45.** *And ye returned and wept before the Lord*, etc.] Those that remained when the Amorites left pursuing them, returned to the camp at Kadesh, where Moses and the Levites were, and the rest of the people; and here they wept at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and hence said to be “before the Lord”; they wept because of the slaughter that had been made among them, and because of their sin in going contrary to the will of God, and because they were ordered into the wilderness; and very probably they cried and prayed unto the Lord, that they might not be turned back, but that he would go with them, and bring them now into the promised land:

*but the Lord would not hearken to your voice*, nor give ear unto you; was inexorable, and would not repeal the order to go into the wilderness again, where he had sworn in his wrath their carcasses should fall; the sentence was irrevocable.

**Ver. 46.** *So ye abode in Kadesh many days*, etc.] Yea, some years, as some think:

*according to the days that ye abode there*; that is, according to Jarchi, as they did in the rest of the journeys or stations; so that as they were thirty eight years in all at several places, they were nineteen years in Kadesh; the same is affirmed in the Jewish chronology <sup>f21</sup>. Maimonides says <sup>f22</sup> they were eighteen years in one place, and it is very probable he means this; but Aben Ezra interprets it otherwise, and takes the sense to be, that they abode as many days here after their return as they did while the land was searching, which were forty days, (~~0435~~ Numbers 13:25), but without fixing any determinate time, the meaning may only be, that as they had been many days here before this disaster, so they continued many days after in the same place before they marched onward into the wilderness again.