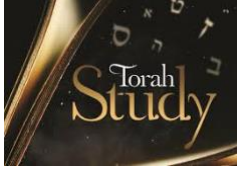


20170730 **Deuteronomy 1:1-3:22 "Getting beyond Kadesh Barnea: Saying Goodbye to Fear and Bitterness"**



"Getting beyond Kadesh Barnea: Saying Goodbye to Fear and Bitterness"

Series: "Lessons for Living: A Christian Walk through the Torah"

by Faber McMullen, Pastor of Union Grove Baptist Church

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Devarim | דברים | "Words "

- Torah: [Deuteronomy 1:1-3:22](#)

Some of you all know that I am a semi-retired lawyer, so I often have a legal perspective on the things we find in scripture. The rules of Evidence govern what we let into testimony in court. Without getting real technical, let me summarize a concept about statements or writings made by a dying person. The law and the courts accept these statements as not only admissible; but they are deemed to be highly credible. Why is this? Because generally speaking, dying people don't tell lies. They have no motivation to tell a lie. And, they generally say the things that are nearest and dearest to their heart.

Today we begin studying the Book of *Devarim* which you know as Deuteronomy. Many scholars believe that Moses wrote this book in the last 37 days of his life. What he said was important to him, and it should be important to us. It is credible. It is material. Please stand as we read together part of the Torah portion for today:

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| 19 | “Then we set out from Horeb (Mt Sinai), and went through all that great and terrible wilderness which you saw on the way to the hill country of the Amorites, just as the LORD our God had commanded us; and we came to Kadesh-barnea. |
| 20 | “I said to you, ‘You have come to the hill country of the Amorites which the LORD our God is about to give us. |
| 21 | ‘See, the LORD your God has placed the land before you; go up, take possession, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has spoken to you. Do not fear or be dismayed.’ |
| 22 | “Then all of you approached me and said, ‘Let us send men before us, that they may search out the land for us, and bring back to us word of the way by which we should go up and the cities which we shall enter. Deuteronomy Chapter 1 |

Please be seated.

"Devarim" means "Words" or "Things". It is sometimes called "The Fifth Book of Moses", and for centuries Jews have called it "Mishneh Torah"... or the "Repetition of the Torah". When you first look at the book of Deuteronomy, you might wonder

what it could be saying that is different from the first four books of the Torah, yet it has a very different tone as it summarizes the first 4 books. As a note of interest, Jesus quoted Deuteronomy more times than any other book in the Bible other than the Psalms. (He quoted the Psalms only one time more than Deuteronomy).¹ Deuteronomy is referenced forty-four times in the New Testament. This is Moses' concise summary of what God had done for the Children of Israel and what He intended for their future.

Moses is now 120 years old. He's addressing the people and he's giving a recount of what they've been through. Remember that many of the people listening had no personal memory of the bondage in Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, or anything else. They didn't know first-hand about many of the events leading up to where they now were. They were born in the wilderness so they were too young to remember anything different. In Deuteronomy, Moses retells the past 40 years to the people. This is right before the people move into the land. It is right before Moses dies. These are Moses' last words of encouragement. He is encouraging them to go in and take the land which God has promised them.



Looking at the map presented, you can get an idea of the journey that has been made. The Children of Israel left Egypt and it took them 50 days to reach Mt. Horeb (Mt. Sinai.) There at the base of the mountain, they waited as God gave

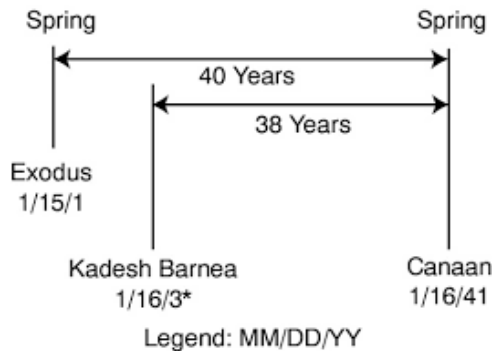
the law to Moses up on the mountain. Most Christians do not realize that it was on the 50th day after Passover or on *Shavuot* that God gave the law to His people. It was also exactkt 50 days after Passover that God gave the Holy Spirit to the church over a thousand years later. Shavuot is 7 sevens plus one. Shavuot is what we call the Day of Pentecost. You see both of these days happened on Pentecost. There God spoke with Moses and Israel stayed there for a year and eleven months. They then proceeded north to take the land that God had promised to them. It took them about a year to make their way from Sinai to Kadesh Barnea, so from the time they left Egypt until they arrived in Kadesh-Barnea was about two years.

So, here they were sitting on the edge of the land that God had promised them. His instruction was simple, In verse 21 of what we just read Moses says, "See, the LORD your God has placed the land before you; go up, take possession, as the LORD, the

¹ <http://blog.biblia.com/2014/04/which-old-testament-book-did-jesus-quote-most/>

God of your fathers, has spoken to you. Do not fear or be dismayed." So did they enter the land? NO. Did they possess the land? NO. What happened? What went wrong?

Our text today reveals much more than what we read a few weeks ago when we studied Numbers 13 and 14. In those earlier accounts (38 years prior) the text makes it appear that God ordered Moses to send out the spies, but here we see that it was the people who first hatched the idea. Look at verse 21-22. Moses says, "Then all of you approached me and said, 'Let us send men before us, that they may search out the land for us, and bring back to us word of the way by which we should go up and the cities which we shall enter.'"



The people got stuck in Kadesh-Barnea for 38 years. God never told the people or Moses to go in and see if the cities were walled or if they had open plazas. God never told Moses or the people to go in and assess the strength of the people. God did not tell him to go and see if there were giants in the land. God never told Moses or the people to go in and do reconnaissance of the weaponry. God told the people to go in and "possess the land" and

they refused to do what God told them to do. But why? Why did they hesitate to receive God's blessings? Why do we often hesitate to receive God's blessings.

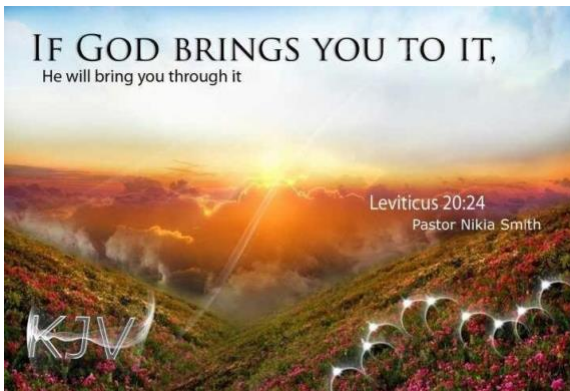
Kadesh Barnea is the place where you get stuck before you conquer what God has for you to conquer. It is the place and point of the greatest failure of the Israelites and it is the place and point of the greatest failure of Moses. It is also the point of our own greatest failures. When we're stuck in Kadesh Barnea we fail to enjoy what God has for us. Why did Moses want to know if there were a lot of people or not? Why did the people want to know if there were walls or if the cities had open plazas? Why did they want to know details of the cities. The simple answer is FEAR. They then put pressure on Moses who failed in his leadership. I think it would have been a perfect time for Moses to lay down a challenge like Joshua would say later, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Moses could have said, "Choose today what you will do. If you want to go back to Egypt and eat leeks, garlicks, and free fish, then go back to Egypt; but as for me and whoever will follow me, we are leaving tomorrow, and we are walking into the Promised Land to take it."

So many times we are at the point of taking the emotional, physical, spiritual, or financial territory that God has for us and then in fear we stop to count whether we have the strength in the flesh to take or accomplish what God has put in our heart. If God gives you territory; take it. If God gives you ministry; minister. If God gives you a work, then don't stop in Kadesh Barnea; leave and get to work. Kadesh-Barnea is the paralysis you feel when you are afraid of the future. Kadesh Barnea is the paralysis you feel when you're fixated on your past and you're filled with sorrow,

regret, or bitterness. I can't remember a single sound decision I've made based on fear. Fear is a paralyzer. Regret, anger, and bitterness are the other paralyzer. Bitterness is the compulsive fixation on a wrong that we have experienced in our past. If you can't get past your past you will never enter the Promised Land that God has for you. Let me say it to you differently, **if your mind is always on where you've been, you'll never get to where you're going.**

The text tells us that the journey to Kadesh-Barnea was a mere thirteen day journey. You know what that means? It means that God intended for the people to have manna in the desert during the thirteen day trip, and He intended for them to drink milk and eat honey on the fourteenth day. Instead, the people pressured Moses into changing the plan and I suppose when Moses shared it with God, God permissively allowed it. It was not God's perfect will, but He let them do it. Moses sent spies who came back and they instilled fear in the hearts of the people. The spies said, "the people are so big we felt like grasshoppers compared to them and that's how they saw us."

The Children of Israel accepted this fear as a belief system and then with doubts they said, "Where can we go up? Our brethren have made our hearts melt, saying, "The people are bigger and taller than we; the cities are large and fortified to heaven. And besides, we saw the sons of the Anakim there." The account in the Book of Numbers shows that not only did the people want to go back to Egypt, **but even worse they chose to believe that God was evil and that He had brought them out in the desert to die.** If they had believed the promises of God they would have never sent spies into the land. Don't ever believe that God is anything but good.



Kadesh-Barnea was their "place of decision". Did you know that you and I have a "place of decision" over and over with regard to God's will for our lives. Each of us must decide whether we want to remain in Kadesh-Barnea stuck in the wilderness, or whether we want to enjoy a victorious Christian life. **Guys, if God brings you to it, then He will bring you through it!** The wilderness is a place of defeat,

discouragement, hopelessness, and failure. You must decide whether you want to stay there or whether you want to move forward, find rest in Christ, and receive all that He desires for you in your "Promised Land".

The choice is between victory and defeat; spiritual maturity or spiritual immaturity. Countless Christians wander through their Christian journey like the Israelites wandered through the desert. They wander without any sense of purpose or direction.

God is ready not just to save you, but to do a work in you to renew your mind. Kadesh-Barnea isn't a place (at least as far as we're concerned) it is a mind-set. It is what you say in your heart even if your mouth is saying something else. The problem goes on in our minds. Usually pastors spend all of their time trying to get people to have the right belief system about God. This is good, but his word teaches more. It gives us lessons for learning. I want you to have the right belief about God, but I also want you to have the right belief system about yourself. I've told you since I came to Union Grove that all of us have three deep needs: 1) To be loved and accepted, 2) To have value and worth, and 3) To have an identity. If you try to meet these needs through any thing but God the end is frustration and conflict.

God has something better for you. God doesn't want you stuck in the wilderness. Jesus said, "I've come that you might have life and have it abundantly." (John 10:10) Ask the Lord today to show you how your system of thinking needs to be changed. He can transform you and your thinking. Do you really believe that God is good?



TRANSFORMING YOUR MIND

In Romans Chapter 12 Paul tells the church about this change of mind. He says, "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good

and acceptable and perfect.

The answer to getting past Kadesh Barnea and walking in God's best for you is right in this verse. First we must present our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice. We talked about this in the concept of Avodah a couple of weeks ago. That means our belief system is incorporated into our work, our service, and our worship. They are one and the same. Secondly, Paul goes on to say that we are not to be conformed with the world. In other words, we don't measure our value or worth or whether we're loved and accepted by what the world uses as a measure. But more importantly we are told to be **TRANSFORMED** by the renewing of your mind. This means we stop listening to the lies that were put in our head by a 2nd grade teacher who said, "You're dumb" or an ex-spouse that berated you. Transformation of your mind has to do with believing what God says about you and beginning to obey the whisperings that He puts in your heart.

A Christian wandering in the wilderness is not a fruitful Christian. Each Christian needs to ask himself today if he is still wandering around aimlessly in the desert or if he is really moving forward by faith. Let me encourage you this morning to get beyond the Kadesh-Barnea in your life.

Let us pray

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868 Tel: 936-825-1227