

Deuteronomy 1:19-25

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/deut/deut-1/deuteronomy-119-25/>

Moses continues to recount Israel's history in leaving Egypt up to this point. At Kadesh Barnea, he commanded the Israelites to go up and occupy the Promised Land because it has been given to them by the LORD, the one to whom all things belong. The people asked to send in a party to spy out the land, which Moses agreed to.

This section summarizes the events found in the book of Numbers, especially in chapters 13 and 14. Here Moses recounted the experience of the Israelites' journey from *Horeb to Kadesh-barnea*. Their destination was *the hill country of the Amorites*, the central part of the land of Canaan. The journey *from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea* was not easy. The wilderness through which the Israelites traveled was *great and terrible*. But they traveled through that harsh territory because that is what *God had commanded*.

Whereas the term "*great*" in this context refers to the magnitude and extent of the land, the word translated as "*terrible*" refers to something that is fearful or dreadful. This is the meaning intended by Moses here. For, according to [Deuteronomy 8:15-16](#) where these two terms are repeated, the wilderness was a land full of "fiery serpents and scorpions." Moreover, it had no water in it, but God brought water for His people "out of the rock of flint." So, when Moses said that the land was *great and terrible*, he reminded the Israelites that their passing through the wilderness was possible due to God's protection and provision.

Now, as the people of God made the stop at *Kadesh-barnea*, Moses seized the opportunity to encourage them to consummate their journey. God had granted them the land. It was now time for them to move in. Moses used two affirmative commands (*go up, take possession*) coupled with two negative commands (*do not fear, or be dismayed*) to express this certainty regarding the land and to motivate the people to act.

The people asked Moses to *send some men before them to search out the land and "bring back to us word of the way by which we should go up and the cities which we shall enter."* This idea *pleased* Moses. The idea, as stated, says that the people wanted to know clearly the path to take and the *cities* to

conquer. However, we will soon find out the added information leads to a lack of trust in the LORD.

Since the peoples' idea to send out spies to get information to map out the campaign *pleased* Moses, he took *one man from each tribe*, so twelve in all, and commissioned them to go to the land to map it out. The spy party *turned and went up into the hill country, and came to the valley of Eshcol and spied it out*. The valley of Eshcol (literally "the valley of the grape cluster") was located near Hebron, a city situated 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem ([Numbers 13:22-24](#)). Moses specifically mentions *the valley of Eshcol* because it is where the twelve spies found the enormous cluster of grapes that evidence the fertility of the land ([Numbers 13:23-24](#)). Upon their return, the spies *took some of the fruit of the land* (grapes, pomegranates, and figs, according to [Numbers 13:23](#)) *in their hands and brought good report to the Israelites*. They said, "*It is a good land which the LORD our God is about to give us.*"

Biblical Text:

¹⁹ **"Then we set out from Horeb, 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.' ²³ "The thing pleased me and I took twelve of your men, one man for each tribe. ²⁴ "They turned and went up into the hill country, and came to the valley of Eshcol and spied it out. ²⁵ "Then they took *some* of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down to us; and they brought us back a report and said, 'It is a good land which the Lord our God is about to give us.'**