

Deuteronomy 1:26-33

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/deut/deut-1/deuteronomy-126-33/>

Moses continues recounting their exodus history. Due to lack of trust in the LORD, the Israelites rebelled against the command to go up to possess the land. They refused to take possession of what God had given.

Despite the statement of the scouts — *It is a good land which the LORD our God is about to give us* — *the people rebelled against the command of the LORD to go up and possess the land of Canaan. In spite of the good report, God's promise, and God's faithfulness up to that point, the people chose to focus on the fearful news. They grumbled in their tents and fretted that the people in Canaan were bigger and taller than them. Further, they worried that the cities are large and fortified to heaven. And besides, they saw the sons of the Anakim there.* The descendants of Anak were giants and warlike people ([Numbers 13:33](#); [Deuteronomy 2:10](#); [9:2](#)). Moses emphasizes that the rebellion of the Israelites was due to their lack of trust in their LORD. They had a good report but chose to focus on the things that were fearful.

Moses recounts his admonition to them. He told them at that time, *'Do not be shocked, nor fear them.'* Moses reminded Israel of all the battles God had fought for them to that point, saying, *'The LORD your God who goes before you will Himself fight on your behalf, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes.'* But not only did God fight for the people while they dwelt in Egypt, He also protected them during their wandering in the desert. As Moses stated, *'in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, just as a man carries his son, in all the way which you have walked until you came to this place.'*

Israel had been carried just like a child is carried, all the way to that point. They had walked into difficulty ignorantly following God. Now that they knew the difficulty (because of the spies report) their fear *made their hearts melt.*

Rather than believing by faith, the Israelites insisted that the LORD hated them and desired to deliver them *into the hands of the Amorites.* In other words, they thought that God, the suzerain (ruler), would reject His vassals as covenantal partner. This contradicts God's own words that He intended for Israel to be His "own possession among all the peoples, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation" ([Exodus 19:5-6](#)). The people already forgot how God bore

them on eagles' wings in order to bring them to Himself ([Exodus 19:4](#)). So, they began to doubt His power.

This unbelief caused the Israelites to ask, "*Where can we go up?*" The function of this rhetorical question is to show the extent to which the people lost all their hope to enter and conquer the Promised Land. Again, the reason for this hopelessness was because the Israelites heard from the spies that the people residing in Canaan were *bigger and taller* than they and that the cities were *large and fortified*. Besides all this, the spies also saw *the sons of the Anakim there*, an ancestry that can be traced back to Anak, the son of Arba ([Deuteronomy 2:10](#); [Joshua 15:13](#)). Despite the impressive portrayal of the Anakim or the size of Canaan, Moses continued to encourage the people telling them not to be *shocked nor fear them*, because the battle belongs to Yahweh the great warrior (cf. [Exodus 14:14](#); [Exodus 15:3](#)). God has fought for His people when He redeemed them from slavery in Egypt and carried them through the wilderness experience, *just as a man carries his son*. All these experiences with God would have resulted in trust on the part of the Israelites. Unfortunately, they refused to trust the God who went ahead of them by day in a pillar of *cloud* to provide guidance for them on their journey and by night in a pillar of *fire* to enlighten them (cf. [Exodus 13:21](#)). Such an attitude was unacceptable, and God was going to deal with it accordingly.

Biblical Text:

²⁶ **“Yet you were not willing to go up, but rebelled against the command of the Lord your God; ²⁷ and you grumbled 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 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.” ²⁹ “Then I said to you, ‘Do not be shocked, nor fear them. ³⁰ ‘The Lord your God who goes before you will Himself fight on your behalf, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, ³¹ and in the wilderness where you saw how the Lord your God carried you, just as a man carries his son, in all the way which you have walked until you came to this place.’ ³² “But for all this, you did not trust the Lord your God, ³³ who goes before you on *your way*, to seek out a place for you to encamp, in fire by night and cloud by day, to show you the way in which you should go.**