

Warnings Against Self-Righteousness and Disobedience: Warnings That Must Be Heeded to Inherit the Promised Land Deuteronomy 09:01–21

1. *The warning against self-righteousness*

- a. The enemies faced by God's people: Are greater and stronger than believers
 - 1) Have fortified cities
 - 2) The Anakites are giants: No one can stand against them

- b. The promise of victory
 - 1) By the LORD's action: Will go ahead of His people like a devouring fire
 - 2) By the people's action: Will drive out and conquer the enemy quickly

- c. The strong warning against self-righteousness: Stated three times for emphasis
 - 1) It is not because of your righteousness that you receive the promised land
 - It is God who destroys the enemies of the land
 - It is because of their wickedness that He destroys them
 - 2) It is not because of your integrity that you inherit the promised land: The enemies are destroyed by God
 - Because of their evil
 - Because God fulfils His promise to the forefathers

- 1 Hear, Israel:
You are now about to cross the Jordan to go in and dispossess nations greater and stronger than you, with large cities that have walls up to the sky.

- 2 The people are strong and tall — Anakites! You know about them and have heard it said: “Who can stand up against the Anakites?”

- 3 But be assured today that the LORD your God is the one who goes across ahead of you like a devouring fire. He will destroy them; he will subdue them before you. And you will drive them out and annihilate them quickly, as the LORD has promised you.

- 4 After the LORD your God has driven them out before you, do not say to yourself, “The LORD has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness.” No, it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is going to drive them out before you.

- 5 It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations, the LORD your God will drive them out before you, to accomplish what he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

3) Understand this:
You are not righteous; you are stiff-necked and stubborn

2. *The warning against disobedience, against provoking God to anger and judgment*

a. The strong charge —
remember this and never forget it: God was provoked to anger in the wilderness wanderings

1) The cause:
Repeated rebellion

2) The LORD's anger was aroused enough to destroy His people at Mt. Horeb (Sinai)

b. The wonderful gift of God at Sinai:
The Ten Commandments, the covenant

1) The LORD kept Moses on Mt. Sinai for 40 days and nights:
Fasting, praying and receiving the commandments

2) The LORD gave Moses the commandments on two stone tablets: Written by the finger of God Himself

3) The LORD gave the Ten Commandments to Moses at the end of the 40-day fast

6 Understand, then,
that it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess,
for you are a stiff-necked people.

7 Remember this and never forget how you aroused the anger of the LORD your God in the wilderness.
From the day you left Egypt until you arrived here,
you have been rebellious against the LORD.

8 At Horeb you aroused the LORD's wrath so that he was angry enough to destroy you.

9 When I went up on the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that the LORD had made with you, I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights; I ate no bread and drank no water.

10 The LORD gave me two stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God. On them were all the commandments the LORD proclaimed to you on the mountain out of the fire, on the day of the assembly.

11 At the end of the forty days and forty nights, the LORD gave me the two stone tablets, the tablets of the covenant.

- c. The shocking announcement of God
- 1) Told Moses to go down to the people: Was disowning them
 - 2) Charged the people
 - With being corrupt
 - With being quick to disobey
 - With false worship
 - With being stiff-necked
- d. The threat of righteous judgment
- 1) To destroy the people
 - 2) To raise up a new people through Moses' descendants
- e. The righteous anger against terrible sin
- 1) Moses turned and went down the mountain: Carried the Ten Commandments with him
 - 2) Moses saw the terrible sin
 - He saw the idol and false worship
 - He saw how quickly they had turned away from the LORD's commandments
 - He cast the tablets down and broke them
- f. The great intercession for terrible sinners: Moses again prayed and fasted for 40 days and nights — fell prostrate before the LORD for 3 reasons
- 1) Because of their terrible sin and evil

- 12 Then the LORD told me,
 “Go down from here at once,
 because your people whom you brought
 out of Egypt have become corrupt.
 They have turned away quickly
 from what I commanded them
 and have made an idol for themselves.”
- 13 And the LORD said to me,
 “I have seen this people,
 and they are a stiff-necked people indeed!
- 14 Let me alone,
 so that I may destroy them
 and blot out their name from under heaven.
 And I will make you into a nation stronger
 and more numerous than they.”
- 15 So I turned and went down from the mountain
 while it was ablaze with fire.
 And the two tablets of the covenant
 were in my hands.
- 16 When I looked, I saw that you had sinned
 against the LORD your God;
 you had made for yourselves an idol
 cast in the shape of a calf.
 You had turned aside quickly from the way
 that the LORD had commanded you.
- 17 So I took the two tablets and threw them
 out of my hands, breaking them
 to pieces before your eyes.
- 18 Then once again I fell prostrate before the LORD
 for forty days and forty nights;
 I ate no bread and drank no water,
 because of all the sin you had committed,
 doing what was evil in the LORD's sight
 and so arousing his anger.

2) Because the LORD was angry enough to destroy them:
But He heard the prayer of Moses

3) Because the LORD was angry enough with Aaron to destroy him

g. The destruction of the sinful thing

1) Moses burned the idol

2) Moses ground the idol into powder and threw it into a stream

19 I feared the anger and wrath of the LORD, for he was angry enough with you to destroy you. But again the LORD listened to me.

20 And the LORD was angry enough with Aaron to destroy him, but at that time I prayed for Aaron too.

21 Also I took that sinful thing of yours, the calf you had made, and burned it in the fire. Then I crushed it and ground it to powder as fine as dust and threw the dust into a stream that flowed down the mountain.