

Your Church Name Here

# ***POSSESS THE LAND***

## **The Danger of Not Moving Forward**

*Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount*

### Lesson 1

**INTRODUCTION:** (Deuteronomy 1:1-6) There is an inherent danger that pervades many churches. It is the danger of becoming comfortable in their present circumstances which often prevents the church from moving forward in the work of God. The children of Israel had wandered in the wilderness for forty years because they had refused to move forward into the Promised Land. There are times when churches and Christians forfeit God's fullest blessings because they refuse to move forward. After forty years of wandering, Moses came to the people to instruct them in their journey to the Promised Land. Our goal for the new year is to move forward and to possess the land which God has placed before us. The church has been given a responsibility by Christ to reach their Jerusalem, their Judea, and all of Samaria, as well as the uttermost places in the world. As a church, we must not stagnate in complacency nor fear what is ahead for us. Today's lesson will be the first of many which prepare us to move forward in this new year. Let us look at the condition in which the Israelites found themselves at this point.

- I. **THEY WERE NO LONGER IN EGYPT.** When Moses spoke to the people, they were in the wilderness. They had been delivered from the Egyptians some forty years before. They had miraculously escaped across the Red Sea, yet, for forty years, they had wandered in this wilderness. There were many times when there was no food or water, yet God had faithfully provided for them. Even when God's people refused to move forward, God remained faithful to His own. We can see the faithfulness of God in our lives. May we never forget how faithful God has been to us since we became a Christian and were delivered from the bondage of our sins.
- II. **THEY WERE NOT YET IN THE PROMISED LAND.** We were not delivered from Egypt to remain in the wilderness. God wants us to move forward. Although God had delivered them across the Red Sea into the wilderness, their faith was not strong enough to believe that He could deliver them across Jordan and face the enemies in that land. Remember the spies that went into Canaan and returned with a bad report? Their faithlessness led God to leave them in the wilderness for those forty years. Many Christians, though delivered from their past and the condemnation of Hell, have not believed that God can lead them to have victory in their Christian lives. Christians and churches stagnate because Christians lack the faith to believe that they can pass over Jordan and experience victory in their lives.
- III. **THE TIME HAD COME TO CROSS JORDAN.** Moses stood before the people in the wilderness on the first day of the eleventh month of the fortieth year to tell them what God

had commanded them to do. Moses was not giving them his commands. He was telling them what God had commanded them to do. Do not mistake the words spoken by your pastor and teachers as being their opinions when they are using God's Word from which to teach. There are times when we refuse to heed the words of the messenger because we do not take seriously the One from whom the message came. When the man of God speaks the Word of God, our hearts should yield to that word, not because it is from a man, but because it is from God. It was not Moses who decided that they should occupy the land. It was Moses delivering a message from God.

- IV. **THEY HAD ALREADY EXPERIENCED VICTORIES OVER POWERFUL ENEMIES WHILE IN THE WILDERNESS.** Sihon was the king of the Amorites. He was a mighty king with a strong and terrible army. Humanly speaking, these Israelites were not powerful enough to defeat Sihon's forces. The Israelites won a victory because the Lord was with them. This is the same victory that Rahab spoke of when the spies came to her (Joshua 2:9-11). Psalm 135:10-12 speaks of the same victory that was given to them in the wilderness, as does Psalm 136:17-19. We often think of what happened when they crossed the Red Sea and what happened after they crossed Jordan. Yet, God had given them one of the greatest victories of all while they were still wandering in the wilderness. God is our protector even when we have disobeyed what He has commanded us to do.
- V. **MOSES TOLD THE PEOPLE THAT IT WAS TIME BECAUSE THEY HAD DWELT LONG ENOUGH IN THIS MOUNT.** Many Christians and churches have stayed the same for too long. The same people fill the same pews. God challenges us that we have stayed in the same place for too long and encourages us to move forward to accomplish His purpose. This is what Moses was telling the people. They had been in the mount too long. They had wandered in the wilderness for forty years because of their disobedience. The past is now the past. It is time to move forward.

**CONCLUSION:** As we begin this new year and this new series, let us challenge ourselves to participate in moving forward. God has placed before us a command to possess the land. May we be willing to make the sacrifices and to trust God to give us the victories that He has promised if we would only trust Him.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Deuteronomy 1:6 – *The LORD our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount:*