

# Deuteronomy 9:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven,

## Analysis

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The call 'Hear, O Israel' (Shema Yisrael) demands attention to crucial truth. 'Thou art to pass over Jordan this day' emphasizes immediacy and certainty. The nations are 'greater and mightier than thyself,' with fortified cities 'walled up to heaven' (hyperbolic language emphasizing impossibility from human perspective). This sets up the chapter's theme: victory comes from God's power, not Israel's worthiness or strength. The conquest isn't reward for righteousness but execution of God's judgment on Canaanite wickedness (v. 4-5). This humble perspective prevents pride and acknowledges grace—a principle continuing in the New Testament where salvation is 'not of works, lest any man should boast' (Ephesians 2:9).

## Historical Context

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Spoken on the plains of Moab just before Jordan crossing (circa 1406 BC traditional dating), this address prepared Israel psychologically and spiritually for conquest. The Canaanite city-states possessed superior military technology (iron chariots, fortified cities) and established armies. From human calculation, conquest was impossible—Israel had no siege equipment, limited iron weaponry, and were recently-liberated slaves. Archaeological evidence confirms the formidable nature of Canaanite defenses (Jericho's walls, Hazor's fortifications). God deliberately set impossible odds to demonstrate that victory was His gift, not their achievement.

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. What 'impossible' challenges are you facing that require acknowledging dependence on God's power rather than your own ability?
2. How does pride in past successes tempt you to approach current challenges in your own strength?
3. In what ways does recognizing that spiritual victory is God's gift rather than human achievement transform your approach to Christian living?

## Interlinear Text

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שְׁמַע	יִשְׂרָאֵל	אֵת	הָ	עָבַר	הַיּוֹם	אֵת	הַיַּרְדֵּן
Hear	O Israel	H859		Thou art to pass over	this day	H853	Jordan
H8085	H3478			H5674	H3117		H3383
לָבֹא	לְךָ	שֶׁתָּ	לְךָ	גָּדֹל	תָּ	וְעֶצְמָךְ	יִמְךָ
to go in	to possess	nations	great	and mightier	H4480	than thyself	cities
H935	H3423	H1471	H1419	H6099		H5892	
גָּדֹל	תָּ	וּבָצָר	תָּ	בְּשָׁמַיִם:			
great	and fenced up	to heaven					
H1419	H1219	H8064					

## Additional Cross-References

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**Deuteronomy 11:31** (Parallel theme): For ye shall pass over Jordan to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God giveth you, and ye shall possess it, and dwell therein.

**Deuteronomy 4:38** (Parallel theme): To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou art, to bring thee in, to give thee their land for an inheritance, as it is this day.

**Deuteronomy 1:28** (Parallel theme): Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there.

**Deuteronomy 3:18** (References Israel): And I commanded you at that time, saying, The LORD your God hath given you this land to possess it: ye shall pass over armed before your brethren the children of Israel, all that are meet for the war.

**Deuteronomy 11:23** (Parallel theme): Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves.

**Deuteronomy 7:1** (Parallel theme): When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou;

**Joshua 1:11** (Parallel theme): Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.