

-Save This Page as a PDF-

Moshe Remembered God's Judgment on Isra'el

1: 34-46

Moshe Remembered God's judgment of Isra'el DIG: Explain the reason that God judged the older generation and swore that they would not enter the Promised Land. Why is ADONAI so angry, even with Moshe? Why does he make an exception of Caleb and Joshua? What punishment is meted out to everyone else? What about that seems fair? Unfair? Merciful? Harsh? What response does this punishment elicit? Why does the LORD respond as He does? What must Isra'el still learn about YHVH before they re-enter the Land? How would remembering this history lesson from Moshe help them to learn this? What is the difference between unbelief and doubt?

REFLECT: When has obedience led you to receiving the best of what the LORD had for you? How hard is it for you to stand up to what you know is right when you are in the minority? How are you like Caleb and Joshua? How are you different? What "frightening" thing have you attempted for God? Did fear get the best of you? Or did he calm your fears? How? What "miraculous" thing has he done for you? What impact has that had on your faith? On your family's faith? What is YHVH leading you to do that you are not heeding? What does faithful obedience look like today? Be specific.

Moshe remembered Isra'el's refusal to obey God's command to march against Canaan, and their unwillingness to believe ADONAI's promise of victory caused Him to respond in anger. The entire adult population of the Exodus would be sentenced to death in the wilderness.

Your carcasses will fall in the desert; and your children will wander about in the desert for forty years bearing the consequences of your prostitutions until the desert eats up your carcasses. It will be a year for every day you spent reconnoitering the land that you will bear the consequences of your offenses - forty days, forty years. Then you will know what it means to oppose me (see the commentary on [Numbers Cg - The Judgement of Forty Years](#))!

From the Sea of Reeds to Horeb (1:34-40): Isra’el’s refusal to obey YHVH’s command to march against the pagan nations in Canaan, and **her** unwillingness to believe **the LORD’s** promise of victory caused **Him** to respond in **anger**. Since **Moshe** had already delineated the penalties for **not listening, or carrying out all of His mitzvot (Leviticus 26:14-39)**, when **He** heard the tone of Isra’el’s words (James 3:3-8), **He** swore that **the generation of the Exodus** would die in **the wilderness**. **He** was angry and swore an oath (1:34) saying: **Not one of these men and women of this evil generation will see the good Land that I swore to give your fathers (1:35). The rabbis place the age of accountability at twenty (Shabbat 32b; 1 QS 1:10-11).** Disobedience causes us to forfeit the best of what **ADONAI** has for us.

The only **exceptions** were **Caleb and Joshua**. **Caleb** is mentioned in four other passages (**Numbers 14:24; Joshua 14:8-9 and 14**), and both **Caleb** and **Joshua** are referred to once (**Numbers 32:12**).⁵² Both stood firm against a nation of doubters (**Numbers 14:6-9**). They had complete confidence that **YHVH** was fully capable of leading **Isra’el** to victory over the giants of Canaan. As a result, **they** were exceptions to the death sentence issued upon **the** entire adult **generation of the Exodus**. In the book of **Numbers**, **Caleb** and **Joshua** symbolized the new generation that was unmarked by unfaithfulness, and who would receive **the** Promised **Land**. The contrast between these two and all the others is the contrast between **belief** and **unbelief**, and consequently, between those who receive **the Land** and those who did not.⁵³ **Caleb and Joshua will see it - yet to them and their children I will give the Land that they have walked on, because they have followed ADONAI wholeheartedly (1:36).** Obedience allows us to receive the best of what **God** has for us.

What’s the difference between **unbelief** and doubt? **Unbelief** is a matter of the will; it causes people to rebel against **YHVH** and say, “No matter what **the LORD** says or does, I will not believe and obey!” Doubt, however, is a matter of the heart and the emotions; it’s what people experience when they waver between fear and faith (**Matthew 14:31; James 1:5-8**). The doubter says, “**Lord, I believe; help my unbelief**” (**Mark 9:24**)! **ADONAI** wants to encourage doubters, and help them **believe**; but all **He** can do with rebels is bring judgment. At **Kadesh-barnea**, **Ha’Shem** declared that **the generation of the Exodus** would wander for the next thirty-eight years (they had already been in **the wilderness** two years) until all the people twenty years and older had died. Then he would take the next generation – the children and teenagers – and lead them into **the** Promised **Land** where they would conquer the enemy and claim their inheritance.⁵⁴

Caleb and **Joshua** believed **God**, so **He** decreed that **they** would live through **the**

wilderness wanderings and enter **the** Promised **Land**. But later, even **Aaron** and **Moses** rebelled against **YHVH** and were kept out of **the Land**. When **the LORD** instructed **Moshe** to provide water by speaking to **the rock**, **he** struck **the rock** instead (**Numbers 20:11**)! As a result, **Moses** forfeited the privilege of leading **the people** into **the Land**, when **God** said: **You will not enter there, either (1:37)**. Leaders are ultimately responsible for the decisions of their people. **Moshe's** identification with **his people** meant that **he** also accepted with **them** the penalty for **their** failure to obey.

When **Moses** declared that **YHVH was even angry with me on your account**, **he** wasn't excusing **himself** by blaming **the Israelites**. What this means is that the rebellious attitude of **the people** had provoked **him** to disobey **ADONAI**. **Moshe** had been grieved so often by **the people's** complaining and disobeying that it finally got the best of **him** and **he** lost the meekness for which **he** was so well-known.

Even the greatest spiritual leaders are but frail human beings apart from the grace of **God**, and many of them failed in their strongest points. **Moses'** greatest strength was meekness, but he lost his temper. **Abraham** was known for his great faith, yet in a time of testing he fled to Egypt and lied about his wife. **David's** greatest strength was his integrity (**Psalms 78:72**), but he failed miserably and became a liar and a hypocrite, and **Peter's** great strength was his courage, yet three times he became afraid and denied his **Lord**. **Therefore, let the one who thinks he stands watch out that he doesn't fall (First Corinthians 10:12).**⁵⁵

Because **Moshe** would not go into **the Land** with the new generation, a new leader would have to be appointed, namely, **Joshua**. **The LORD** said to **Moses**, "**Joshua son of Nun, who stands before you, will enter there - encourage him, for he will enable Isra'el to inherit the Land**" (**1:38**).



What was different about **Caleb** and **Joshua**? **They** saw the same things that the other **ten men** saw! They interpreted it differently. Why? Because they had faith. And faith gives you a different perspective. The lesson is simple: **Not by might, nor by power, but by My Ruach! Says ADONAI-Tzva'ot (Zechariah 4:6b).** **Joshua** said at that time: **If ADONAI is pleased with us, He will lead us into that Land and give it to us - a Land flowing with milk and honey. Only don't rebel against ADONAI, and don't be afraid of the people of the Land. Like the mana in the wilderness, they will be food for us. The protection over them is gone. ADONAI is with us! Do not fear them (Numbers 14:8-9).**

Moses goes on to point out the irony of **Isra'el's** rebellion that **his** present audience will clearly understand. **Moreover, your little ones - whom you said would become plunder, and your children who today have no knowledge of good or evil - will enter there.** The generation of **Israelites** who rebelled against **God** out of a desire to protect **themselves** and **their children** from what **they** thought was certain death would be survived by **those** very **children**. **They**, rather than **their parents**, would inherit **the Land** promised by **YHVH**. **They** had been innocent in the matter of the rebellion, having **no knowledge of good or evil**.⁵⁶ This phrase does not signify innocence, but a lack of ability to discern morally. **The LORD** said: **To them I will give it and they will possess it (1:39).**

The reason the covenant between **YHVH** and **His people** must be renewed (see [Fm - Renewal of the Covenant](#)) is that **God's people** had become disobedient and had lost **His** promise for one generation. **Moses** is reminding a new generation that this renewal is both a warning and a blessing. The warning is that each generation is responsible for obedience to **the LORD**. The blessing is that each generation has a new hope for **God's** best, regardless of the disobedience of previous generations.⁵⁷

But as for you, turn around and journey back into the wilderness by way of the Sea of Reeds (1:40). The Sea of Reeds Road ran to the east of **Kadesh-barnea**, extending from Elath in the south to the southern region of the Dead Sea (by Zorah) in the north. **YHVH** had closed the door of opportunity for **them** to enter Canaan. It is not always possible or permissible to recoup an opportunity lost by unbelief.

From Horeb to Kadesh-barnea (1:41-46): Then rebellion turned tochutzpah. **You** answered and said to me, "We have sinned against **ADONAI**. We will go up and fight ourselves, just as **ADONAI** our God commanded us." So, each of you strapped on his weapons of war, figuring it was easy to go up to the hill country. But it was too late! When **they** had **Ha'Shem's** protection, **they** failed to act; now that **He** would no longer protect **them**, **they** wanted to charge forward. **But ADONAI said to me, "Tell them, 'Do not go up and fight - for I am not with you, and you will be defeated by your enemies' (1:41-42)." But, once again, the people did not listen. The LORD would not dwell in the midst of such people and their defeat was inevitable.**

So, even after a further attempt at correction, **the people** did not hear **the LORD's** immediate instruction. **I told you, but you would not listen** (Hebrew: *shema*) - **you rebelled against the command of ADONAI and presumptuously went up into the hill country (1:43).** The details are not given, but **the Amorites who lived in that hill country came out against you, and they chased you as bees, who attack and sting anyone who approaches their hive, and scattered you from Seir to Hormah** (related to the Hebrew word *cherem*, meaning *devoted to destruction*). This demonstrated the fact that not every war in which **Isra'el** fought was a valid part of the Holy War **(1:44).**

Tears mean nothing in the face of willful disobedience. **Then, you returned and wept before ADONAI, but ADONAI did not listen to your voice or pay attention to you because your repentance was not sincere; in fact, you persisted in your rebellion to the last in spite of continued warning, and only changing your attitude through fear, after the fatal decree had already been proclaimed (1:45).**

So, you stayed in Kadesh-barnea for a long, but unspecified period - many days - like the days you had spent before (1:46). It was as if **Isra'el** hovered between Egypt, the place of deliverance, and **the Land of Promise**, yet to be fulfilled.

*Dear Awesome **Father God**, How I love and respect **You**! Every good attitude/ability that I might desire in a friend to have- is in **You**. **You** not only have so many wonderful qualities, but **You** have nothing about you that is not wonderful. I can completely trust **You** at all times for **You** see the future with crystal clarity. **You** love each of **Your** children and delight*

in blessing them. Even when a trial happens to **Your** child, **You** can turn it into a blessing when they have an attitude of trusting **You**. **These trials are so that the true metal of your faith (far more valuable than gold, which perishes though refined by fire) may come to light in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Messiah Yeshua. (First Peter 1:7).** Praise **You** that when **You** clearly tell me to do something, even when I don't understand, I can totally trust **You** and know that the wisest thing is to follow **Your** guidance. I love **You**. In **Your** holy **Son's** name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen