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God's Response

14: 20-38

God's response DIG: What was the "different spirit" that was upon Caleb? What would later become of Caleb (see verse 24 and Joshua 14:10-14)? Why did ADONAI reserve His sharpest rebuke for the parents of the Exodus generation? Why did Ha'Shem immediately strike down the ten spies, but not the people who listened to them?

REFLECT: What is the difference between regret and true repentance? Between admitting sin and confessing sin? Does forgiveness mean that we don't have to suffer the consequences of our sin? Why? Why not? God's people missed an opportunity to enter the Promised Land. Are there opportunities in your life that you might be missing?

God had the time, and the wilderness had the sand.

Here ADONAI reveals one of the harshest realities of **His** judgment. It has been said that if **God** is for us, who could be against us? But if **God** is against us, there is no hope. **Isra'el** was about to learn what it meant to have **God** against **her**, a situation where even the most feeble of foes would triumph over the armies of **Isra'el**.²⁵²

God responded to Moshe's intercession (14:20-23): ADONAI finally spoke: **I have forgiven** (Hebrew: *salach*, basically meaning *to pardon*), **as you have asked. He** was moved by the intercession of **Moshe** (**to see link click [Ca](#) - Moses Intercedes for the People**). **But the forgiveness** in this case was not without consequences for the horrific sins of **the Israelites. The** faithless **people** would not be put to death, and it did not affect anyone's individual salvation, but neither could things go back to the way they had been on the day before the rebellion. The point of no return had been reached.²⁵³ The words of **Ha'Shem** are forceful and direct: **As sure as I live**, just as **the whole earth** will be **filled with the glory of ADONAI** in the Messianic Kingdom; now, **I declare that none of the people who saw My glory and the signs I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet tested Me these ten times and did not listen to My voice, will see the land I swore to their ancestors!**

The sages teach that the ten testings were: (1) the testing at the Sea of Reeds (Exodus 14:10-12); (2) the waters of Marah (Exodus 15:22-26); (3) the wilderness of Tzin (Ex 16:1-3); (4) the first sin of the manna when they kept it overnight (Ex 16:20); (5) the second sin of the manna when the people tried to gather on the Sabbath (Ex 16:27-28); (6) the mummering at waters of Rephidim (Ex 17:1-7); (7) the golden calf incident (Ex 32:1-10); (8) the sin of Tev'erah (Num 11:1-3); (9) the mummering at kivrot Ha'Ta'avah and the sin of the quail (Num 11:4-35); (10) is now the sin of Kadesh-barnea (Numbers Chapters 13 and 14). In summary, none of those who treated Me with contempt will see it.²⁵⁴ As a result, the Exodus generation would not be allowed to see the Promised Land, the prize of His grace for the faithful.

Caleb and Joshua will live (14:24-25): But My servant Caleb, because he had a different Spirit with him and has fully followed Me. ADONAI singles out Caleb, calling him "My servant" and remarking with affection his different Spirit. It may be that Caleb was the principal spokesman in the defense of the goodness of the Land and the supreme character of YHVH (14:7-9). Caleb's ultimate vindication came forty-five years later (Joshua 14:6-15 and Judges 1:11-15). Him I will bring into the Land he entered, and it will belong to his descendants (14:24). Joshua is not specifically mentioned here, but it is obvious that he, too, would live and go into the Promised Land (see the book of Joshua).

Now, since the Amalekites and the Canaanites are living in the valley, tomorrow turn around and get yourselves into the wilderness along the way to the Sea of Reeds (14:25). Here is a verse of sadness. ADONAI reminded Moshe that there were inhabitants already living in the Land, Amalekites and Canaanites; hence, the people needed to turn back into the wilderness. They had been brought near for the purpose of fighting those inhabitants of the Land in a struggle for possession. But now they were not to fight. They had lost their opportunity; it was back to the sand, back to God's time.²⁵⁵



The Exodus generation will die in the wilderness of Tzin (14:26-35): A reiteration of the rhetorical questions asked in **14:11** introduces another cycle of responses. This literary style provides expanding layers in which additional detail is added. **ADONAI said to Moshe and Aaron, "How long am I to put up with this evil community who keep grumbling about Me? I have heard the complaints of the people of Isra'el, which they continue to raise against Me."** Moshe lifted up **His** hand in an oath to swear that the entire **Exodus generation** (except for **Caleb** and **Joshua**) **would fall in the wilderness**. "As surely as I live, **ADONAI** swears, as surely as you have spoken in **My** ears, I will do this to you." They said they wanted to **die in the wilderness (14:2)**, so they had brought on **themselves their** own punishment. "Your carcasses will drop in this wilderness!" Moses led the longest funeral march in history. **Every single one of you who were included in the census over the age of twenty** (see [Aj - The Command to Number](#)), you who have complained against Me, will certainly not enter the Land about which I raised my hand to swear that I would have you live in it - except for **Caleb** and **Joshua"** (14:26-30). But at the same time the new census list (see [Ec - The Second Census: The New Generation of Hope](#)) is tangible evidence that **YHWH's** promises will be kept. A new generation of **Israelites** would indeed enter the long-awaited land of Canaan.²⁵⁶

Ha'Shem's sharpest rebuke came in response to **their** charge that **He** wanted to harm **their children**. The attacks on **His** grace and the rebuffs of **His** mercy **He** tolerated. The forgetfulness of **His** power and the ignoring of **His** acts of deliverance **He** set aside. But there was one thing that **Ha'Shem** simply would not tolerate - the accusation that **He** had brought **the people** into **the wilderness** with the intent of destroying **their children**, so that **they** would die **in the wilderness** or to **be taken as plunder** by victorious enemies.

Hence a further element of cosmic justice is declared that **the children**, concerning whose safety **their parents** made such a false charge against YHVH, **these children**, would be **the ones** who would actually enter and enjoy **the Promised Land**.²⁵⁷

But your children, the wilderness generation, who you said would be taken as plunder (Numbers 14:3 and Deuteronomy 1:39) - them I will bring in. So, the wilderness generation will see the Land that the Exodus generation rejected; they despised the Pleasant Land (Psalm 106:24). But you, the Exodus generation, your carcasses will fall in this wilderness; and your children will wander about in the wilderness for forty years bearing the consequences of your spiritual adultery (Hebrew: *zenuth*, meaning *harlotry, prostitution, or unfaithfulness*) until the wilderness eats up your carcasses. It will be a year for every day you spent spying out (Hebrew: *tur*, meaning *to seek out, spy out or explore*) the Land that you will bear the consequences of your offenses - forty days, forty years. The reader is left with a sense that God's condemnation of **the entire Exodus generation** to a gradual **forty-year** death in **the desert** is a punishment that fitted the crime. **Then you will know what it means to oppose me! I, ADONAI, have spoken. I will certainly do this to this whole evil Exodus generation who have assembled together against Me. The lies of the ten spies had fallen on ears ripe for mutiny - so they will be destroyed in this wilderness and die there (14:31-35).**

The death of the evil spies (14:36-38): The people as a whole received a commuted sentence, a mitigated judgment. But not **the ten men** who were responsible for **the** treasonous **lies** that lead to the rebellion against YHVH. **They** fell as a down payment on God's oath. **So the ten men Moses had sent to explore the Land, who returned and made the whole community grumble against Him by lying about it were struck down and died of a plague before the LORD**, proving that **their evil** report was simply a lie. The judgment against **them** was immediate. But **the Exodus generation they** influenced would live out **their** lives **in the wilderness** under a death sentence of **forty years**. Only **Caleb** and **Joshua** were exempt from this judgment. **Of the men who went to explore the Promised Land, only Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh survived.** The repeated mention of these two **men** is deserved, for together **they** withstood a nation.²⁵⁸

*Dear Heavenly Father, Praise you that having a loving relationship with **You** is so much better to have than any earthly relationships! **Since Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips will praise You (Psalms 63:3).** When **Joshua and Caleb** stood against the whole nation, it must have been very hard for **them, especially** the entire nation angry at*

them and wanting to stone them (**Numbers 14:10**). **Loving** and obeying **You** must have been much more important to them than anything else in this world!

Everyone desires to be **loved**. **Your** great **love** is the best way to fill the **love** spot in our lives. **Love** from family and friends is nice, but it is only temporary. Sometimes our family and friends are nowhere to be found. **Your love** is so much better than any temporary **love** for **Your love** is eternal. **Your love** is great and always there (**Hebrews 13:5c**). **You** are loving even when **You** must discipline (**Heb 12:6**). **Your love** is all day long, every day of the year. **You** never have days when **You** are not **loving**. **You** are always one-hundred percent holy (**Isaiah 6:3**) and one-hundred percent **Love**. **For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him (Psalms 103:11).**

You are so wonderful and worthy of all our **love**! Even if all my friends and family should choose to turn away from **You**, still I want to follow **You**. Thank **You** so very much for **Your** Awesome, **forever Love**! Give thanks to **ADONAI-Tzva'ot**, for **ADONAI is good, for His love endures forever (Jeremiah 33:11b)**! In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen