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## Defeat by the Canaanites and Amalekites

### 14: 39-45

**Defeat by the Canaanites and Amalekites DIG:** Why did the people attempt to go into battle against the Amalekites? If they had “repented” why did YHVH not grant them victory? Why do you think ADONAI allowed the Israelites to be defeated? What is the difference between being remorseful and being repentant? Between admitting sin and confessing sin?

**REFLECT:** What is the difference between remorse and repentance? Between admitting sin and confessing sin? After studying the episode at Kadesh-barnea, how would you define “faith” in this context? Ask the Lord to help you to obey Him when He calls so that you will not miss out on opportunities for service. Ask Him to give you grace to walk faithfully with Him.

**Faith is simply obeying ADONAI in spite of how we feel, what we see, or what we think might happen.**



The day after **their** great failure (**to see link click [Bz](#) - Faith and Obedience**), **the Israelites** were supposed to start on **their** long march through the wilderness, but the nation refused to obey. Stricken with guilt and grief **the people** attempted

to invade Canaan, but the end was disastrous. It was a classic example of too little, too late. **ADONAI's** oath (see [Cb - God's Response](#)), that **the Exodus generation** must die in the wilderness, was final. Now, too late to walk in faith, **the people** were determined to walk up to **the Land** that **they** had just refused to enter. Unbelief, a spirit of complaining, and a rebellious attitude are terrible masters that cause no end of trouble in the lives of those who cultivate them. **Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall (Proverbs 16:18).**<sup>259</sup>

**When Moshe told these things to all the people of Isra'el, the people felt great remorse.** But **they** thought **they** could change the consequence of **their** actions with one more act of repentance. **They arose early the next morning, came up to the top of the mountain** overlooking **Kadesh-barnea** looking to **the Promised Land** and said: **Here we are, and we did sin, but now we'll go up to the place ADONAI promised (14:39-40).** But the offer by **God** had been revoked from **the Exodus generation.** **They** had reached a point of no return and could not change the decree by **Ha'Shem.** **Their** feeble attempt was doomed to fail.

Ordinarily, repentance is a very simple matter. When we realize we have sinned, we **confess** it (**First John 1:9**), stop that behavior, turn around, and go in a godly direction. In this case, it was not so simple. **Isra'el** had sinned by breaking the command of **YHVH** to **go up** and **take the Land.** **The LORD** had already sentenced them to forty years of wandering in the wilderness, but **they** thought **they** could reverse **His** decision by reversing **their** original lack of faith by going up and taking **the Land.** **They** were sincere, but sincerely wrong.

**Moshe answered, "Why are you opposing what ADONAI said? You won't succeed! He warned the people, "Don't go up there, because ADONAI isn't with you. If you do, your enemies will defeat you" (14:41-42).** Again, the critical issue is not human strength or even human resolve or determination. The key is the presence of **God** in **their** midst. **The Ark,** the sign of **God's** presence, remained in the camp and did not go up with **the Israelites** as **they** attacked **the Canaanites** and **Amalekites.** The result was predictable. **The Israelites** were soundly defeated in battle. The death of **the Exodus generation** had begun.<sup>260</sup>

**The Canaanites and the Amalekites are there ahead of you, and you will be struck down by the sword. The reason will be that you have turned away from following ADONAI, so that ADONAI won't be with you (14:43).** Neither **Moses** nor the ark left the camp, the Sh'khinah glory didn't move from the

Tabernacle, and the silver trumpets didn't blow. What were **they** thinking? Man's efforts without **God's** blessing do more harm than good, for **Yeshua Himself** said: **Without Me you can do nothing (John 15:5). But they were a presumptuous, stubborn people, so in their arrogance they went on up toward the high parts of the hill-country, even though the ark for the covenant of ADONAI - and Moshe - stayed in the camp. So,** as was predicted, **the Canaanites and the Amalekites living in that hill-country descended, struck them down and chased them** over one hundred miles north, **all the way back to Hormah (14:44-45).** It was a sad day for the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.<sup>261</sup> So, this attempt to invade **the Land** totally failed. It seems that at this point, circumcision was discontinued, and probably the observance of **the Passover** as well because **they** could not observe **the Passover** uncircumcised (**Joshua 5:2-12**). But **God** continued to communicate through **Moses**, and to provide manna, shoes, clothing, and water (**Deuteronomy 8:2-6 and 29:5-6**).<sup>262</sup>

The conclusion is replete with antithetical statements in relationship to the initial instructions given by **God** and **Moses**. In **YHVH's** instruction to **Moshe**, **He** stated that **He** was giving **them the Promised Land**; but now when **they** attempted to enter **the place ADONAI promised, they** were warned against doing so. **Moshe** instructed **the Israelites** to **go up into the Land (13:17)**; now they are commanded, **"Do not go up."** In earlier episodes of rebellion, **Israelite remorse** often led to **Moses** interceding with **YHVH** to withdraw **His** punishment of the nation or at least to lighten its effect. But in this case, **the prophet** proclaimed further warning if **the people** should respond rebelliously again and attempt to conquer **the Land**. In the end, **the Canaanites and Amalekites**, whom **the Israelites** would have easily conquered if **the Divine Warrior** was on their side, were easily defeated.

The entire experience at **Kadesh-barnea** teaches us that there is no substitute for faith in **God's** promises and obedience to **His** commands. Faith is simply obeying **ADONAI** in spite of how we feel, what we see, or what we think might happen. When **God's** people trust and obey, **the LORD** delights in doing wonders for **them**, because **they** glorify **His Name**.<sup>263</sup>

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for both your love-gift of gracious forgiveness and **Your** perfect wisdom to provide the way so **You** could forgive. Thank **You** so very much that **Your** heart, full of love, did not give up on mankind when we sinned; but **Your** omniscient wisdom made a plan to rescue us from sin. **You** knew*

all along when **You** gave the mitzvot to **Moses**, that **Isra'el** would not keep them. **Moshe**, the greatest of all the prophets of the TaNaKh, declared in no uncertain terms that **Isra'el** would break **God's** commandments and be driven into exile (**Deuteronomy 4:25-28** and **30:1**). But **Your** lovingkindness never ends for those who love **You**. **ADONAI**, **Your** act of forgiveness and salvation in **Messiah Yeshua**, is rooted in **Your** lovingkindness, which can be seen in forgiveness, and makes it possible to have a relationship with **You**.

Faith is the correct response that opens the door for **You** to bless people with **Your** gracious love by the outpouring of **Messiah's righteousness**. **He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21)**. Then **Abraham believed in ADONAI and He reckoned it to him as righteousness (Genesis 15:6)**. May I keep my eyes on **You** and have faith in **You**. No matter how much I stumble in this life, **You** are always there to pick me up and dust me off. In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen