

Deut. 9:1 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,

Deut. 9:2 A people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of *whom* thou hast heard *say*, Who can stand before the children of Anak!

“Presently” instead of “this day” would have been a better choice from the Hebrew. Moses pulls no punches concerning the might of the nations they will have to conquer to gain possession of the land. He is basically saying that yes they are greater and mightier than you, and their cities are protected by high walls. In fact, it seemed that there was no other nation who could defeat the Anakims. The Anakims were a race of giants that were descendants of the Nephilim, the offspring of the fallen angels and women on earth. (See journal on Genesis 6 for further explanation.)

Gen. 6:4 ¶ There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare *children* to them, the same *became* mighty men which *were* of old, men of renown.

Num. 13:33 And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, *which come* of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

Deut. 9:3 Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God *is* he which goeth over before thee; *as* a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee.

The children of Israel have nothing to fear from any army they face as they march forth as God leads them with faith that He will be faithful to His word. YHWH declares that He will be a “consuming fire” to destroy their enemies and drive them out before His people. God always speaks truth and there is no power in creation that can stand against Him. The safest place to be is in the center of His will.

Deut. 9:4 Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee.

Deut. 9:5 Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In these verses Moses is basically warning the people not to get the big head. It is not because they are so righteous that God is going to destroy their enemies; it is because the enemy is so wicked. The people of Israel are not being given the land because they deserve it, but because the enemy is so wicked that God must judge them. God knew when the time of judgment could no longer be delayed and made the promise of the land to their forefathers accordingly. God even told

Abraham exactly when his descendants would be allowed to take possession of the land according to that foreknowledge.

Gen. 15:13-16 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land *that is* not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet full.

Deut. 9:6 Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou *art* a stiffnecked people. Deut. 9:7 Remember, *and* forget not, how thou provokedst the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD.

Moses continues to drive home the truth that the people of Israel are not deserving of this land because of their righteousness. In fact, they are a *stiffnecked* people, stubborn and willfully disobedient. He then goes right on to prove the truth of what he is saying. He reminds them that they have provoked God's anger from the very first day that they left Egypt. In spite of all the ways God had proven Himself as their protector and provider, they had been rebellious even until the current time.

Deut. 9:8 Also in Horeb ye provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry with you to have destroyed you.

Deut. 9:9 When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, *even* the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water:

Deut. 9:10 And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them *was written* according to all the words, which the LORD spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly.

Deut. 9:11 And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, *that* the LORD gave me the two tables of stone, *even* the tables of the covenant. I'm sure it wasn't necessary to reiterate their many offenses against the Lord, but Moses points out one of the most obvious ones--when they were camped at Horeb (Sinai) and Moses went up the mountain for 40 days and nights to receive the stone tablets that contained the Ten Commandments. It was a time when God had clearly declared His presence by speaking to them out of the midst of the fire. You would have thought that would have served to keep them in check for at least that long.

Deut. 9:12 And the LORD said unto me, Arise, get thee down quickly from hence; for thy people which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt have corrupted *themselves*; they are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten image.

Deut. 9:13 Furthermore the LORD spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people:

Deut. 9:14 Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they.

But no.....The Lord sent Moses back down the mountain declaring His intent to destroy the whole lot of them and start over with descendants of Moses. Why? They had already gotten tired of waiting and assumed that a few weeks of quiet indicated God was not interested in what they were doing. So what do they do? They decide to make themselves an idol and act just like the heathen Egyptians from whom He had delivered them. They were acting in direct disobedience to God's command.

Deut. 9:15 So I turned and came down from the mount, and the mount burned with fire: and the two tables of the covenant *were* in my two hands.

Deut. 9:16 And I looked, and, behold, ye had sinned against the LORD your God, and had made you a molten calf: ye had turned aside quickly out of the way which the LORD had commanded you.

Deut. 9:17 And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and brake them before your eyes.

Moses reiterates how he came down the mountain burned with the fire of God's presence carrying the two stone tables detailing the covenant they had agreed to. He describes how he saw the golden calf and angrily threw the two stone tablets down and broke them to pieces in front of the people. He couldn't believe how quickly they had broken their covenant with the Lord.

Deut. 9:18 And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

Deut. 9:19 For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you. But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also.

Moses had invested much of himself as God's chosen leader of the people and did not want to see God destroy them. Again, he entered God's presence for 40 days and nights and fasted as he interceded with God to show mercy in spite of their sins. He admits that he was afraid because God was so angry. He had spent an extended period of time in the presence of Most Holy God, and the sin of the people was all more hideous in his sight because of it. He knew that God's righteousness would demand judgment, and he was terrified that God would destroy the people in spite of his pleas.

He reminded them that God granted his request and they were not destroyed.

Again, we are reminded of the truth declared by James.

James 5:16 The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. And as the last sentence of verse 29 indicates, this wasn't the first time Moses has successfully interceded on their behalf.

Deut. 9:20 And the LORD was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time.

Deut. 9:21 And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, *and ground it very small, even until it was as small as dust:* and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount.

Moses makes a point that the LORD wanted to destroy Aaron for his lack of courage in leadership. Moses interceded specifically for Aaron as he interceded for the people.

I thought it was interesting that Moses described the calf as “the sin” of the people. It was the symbol of their sin and that is why he destroyed it so publicly and so thoroughly before the people. Exodus adds another interesting bit of information.

Ex. 32:20 And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt *it* in the fire, and **ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.**

I believe he was driving home the point that each person was accountable for their participation. Drinking the bitter water would have pictured their acknowledgement of personal guilt.

Deut. 9:22 And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibrothhattaavah, ye provoked the LORD to wrath.

Taberah is mentioned in Numbers 10-11 as one of the places the people complained about having to follow the leadership of the cloud of God’s presence.

Num. 11:1-3 And *when* the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard *it*; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed *them that were* in the uttermost parts of the camp. And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched. And he called the name of the place Taberah: because the fire of the LORD burnt among them.

The event at Massah was identified in chapter 6 as the place where the people questioned God’s character and ability to provide water for them, and Moses was instructed to strike the rock to make provision for water.

Kibrothhattaavah was the name given to the place where the people complained about the lack of meat in their diet, and the Lord rained down quail upon them and struck them with a plague.

The point is being made that they are a stiffnecked people. No matter how many times the Lord intervened miraculously on their behalf, it was never enough to satisfy them that He could and would supply their needs. I can’t help but ask—How often are we guilty of the same attitude?

Deut. 9:23 Likewise when the LORD sent you from Kadeshbarnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you; then ye rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and ye believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice.

The final bit of proof concerning the character of the people—Their decision not to trust Him and take possession of the land after the report of the spies at Kadeshbarnea. That was the straw that broke the camel's back so to speak for that generation (20 years and older). The Lord declared that none of them would enter the Promised Land except Caleb and Joshua.

Deut. 9:24 Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you.

Deut. 9:25 Thus I fell down before the LORD forty days and forty nights, as I fell down *at the first*; because the LORD had said he would destroy you.

Deut. 9:26 I prayed therefore unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, destroy not thy people and thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

I don't remember noticing this before, but it sounds like Moses again interceded (with fasting as well?) for 40 days and nights as he did when he went to receive the law for the second time. Again, his request was for God's mercy to spare the people. It's interesting to note that he did not hesitate to "remind" God that it was His mighty hand that had delivered the people that He had chosen as His special inheritance among mankind.

Deut. 9:27 Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin:

Deut. 9:28 Lest the land whence thou broughtest us out say, Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness.

Deut. 9:29 Yet they *are* thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out by thy mighty power and by thy stretched out arm.

Moses has learned well. He encourages God to "remember," in the same way that God has encouraged the people to remember. Just as we are to look to Jesus and not hypocritical "Christians," Moses reminds God to remember Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and not look at the sin of their stubborn, wicked descendants. He reminds God that the honor of His name is at stake. The people of Egypt could accuse Him of not having the ability to bring His people into the land He had promised them. They would assume that He never loved them to begin with. In verse 29 Moses is basically saying, "But we know that you do love them and you are able to act in accordance to your word and will."

I couldn't help but be reminded that scripture describes Moses as God's friend.

Ex. 33:9-11 And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood *at* the door of the tabernacle, and *the* LORD talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand *at* the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man *in* his tent door. And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.

To speak with someone as a friend is to dialogue with someone from the heart. At first read it sounds pretty presumptuous for Moses to speak with God in such a way. As we listen to the heart behind the words, however, we hear the heart of a man that loves his Lord and his people—a man that remembers his own sin and how God showed him grace and mercy. Moses was truly concerned about

God's honor and glory before the heathen nations. Moses knew he was praying according to God's will. This reminds me of the words of another friend of the Savior's.

1John 5:14 ¶ And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

1John 5:15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.