

# Deuteronomy 9 Commentary

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[Moses on Mt Nebo \(Deuteronomy 34:1+\)](#)  
Listen to [Mt Nebo](#), as you Ponder How Moses' [May Have Felt](#)

Deuteronomy by [Irving Jensen](#)- used by permission

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Source: Ryrie Study Bible

## Deuteronomy

Dt 1:1-4:43	Dt 4:44-26:19	Dt 27:1-34:12
Moses' First Discourse	Moses' Second Discourse	Moses' Third Discourse
Historical Review	Legal Exposition	Prophetical Promises
Looking Back 40 Years	Looking Up What God Expected of Israel	Looking Ahead What God Will Do for Israel

Recapitulation of Wanderings	Rehearsal of Israel's Law				Ratification of Israel's Covenant		Historical Appendices
Remembrance of the past	Commandments for the Present				Dt 27:1-30:20 Blessing and Cursing		Dt 31:1-34:12 Death of Moses
Take Heed Don't forget	Ten Commands	Related Commands			Two Choices Affecting the Future		Moses' Parting Words
Dt 1:1-4:43 Looking Back	Dt 4:44-11:32 Exposition of Decalogue	Dt 12:1-16:17 Ceremonial Laws	Dt 16:18-20:20 Civil Laws	Dt 21:1-26:19 Social Laws	Dt 27:1-28:68 Ratification of Covenant	Dt 29:1-30:20 Terms of Covenant	Dt 31:1-34:12 Moses' Song, Blessing, Death
<b>Plains of Moab</b>							
<b>ca. 2 Months</b> <b>Moses: Author</b> (Except Dt 34)							

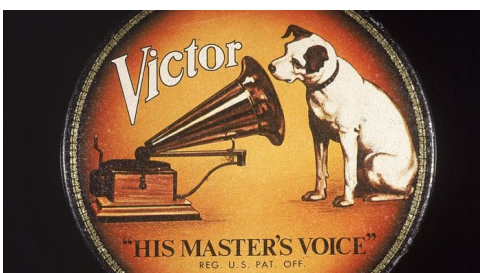
**Deuteronomy 9:1 "Hear, O Israel! You are crossing over the Jordan today to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than you, great cities fortified to heaven,**

- **crossing:** De 3:18 11:31 27:2 Jos 1:11 3:6,14,16 4:5,19
- **nations:** De 4:37-38 Dt 7:1 11:23
- **cities:** De 1:28 Nu 13:22,28-33
- [Click to see Multiple Bible Versions on this verse](#) - to go to next verse click arrow (>) at top of page
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

Deuteronomy 1:28+/deuteronomy-1-commentary#1:28 'Where can we go up? Our brethren have made our hearts melt, saying, "The people are bigger and taller than we; the cities are large and fortified to heaven. And besides, we saw the sons of the Anakim there."

Numbers 13:28-33+ "Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the **cities are fortified and very large;** and moreover, we saw the **descendants of Anak** there. (LESSON - DO NOT FOCUS ON YOUR "BIG" PROBLEMS BUT ON YOU BIG GOD!) 29" Amalek is living in the land of the Negev ([AMALEK IS A PICTURE OF OUR FLESH - KILL IT DAILY!](#)) and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan." 30 Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it." 31 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, **for they are too strong for us.**" 32 So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and **all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size.**" 33 "There also we saw **the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.**" (LESSON - GRASSHOPPERS FOR GOD IS OKAY - FOR WHEN WE ARE WEAK, WE ARE STRONG - 2 Cor 12:9+!)



[Are You Listening to the Master's Voice?](#)

## **BE ALL EARS ISRAEL!**

**Matthew Henry** summarizes the chapter - The design of Moses in this chapter is to convince the people of Israel of their utter unworthiness to receive from God those great favours that were now to be conferred upon them, writing this, as it were, in capital letters at the head of their charter, "I am not doing this for your sake," Ezekiel 36:32+.

I. He assures them of **victory** over their enemies (Dt 9:1-3).

II. He cautions them not to attribute their successes to their own merit, but to God's **justice**, which was engaged against their enemies, and his **faithfulness**, which was engaged to their fathers (Dt 9:4-6).

III. To make it evident that they had **no reason to boast** of their own righteousness, he mentions their faults, shows Israel their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins. In general, they had been all along a **provoking people** (Dt 9:7-24). In particular,

1. In the matter of the golden calf, the story of which he largely relates (Dt 9:-21).

2. He mentions some other instances of their rebellion (Dt 9:22, 23). And,

3. Returns, at Dt 9:25, to speak of the intercession he had made for them at Horeb, to prevent their being ruined for the golden calf.

**POSB** has a convicting introduction to this chapter asking "Is one race of people of more value than another race? Is there a nationality of people who has more merit, more worth than any other nationality? Is there a group of people anyplace who has more qualities within them that makes them more valuable than any other group of people? Within the human heart—the inner recesses of human nature—is there any person anyplace who has more worth, value, goodness, importance, merit, purity, righteousness than any other person? Not to God. But tragically, some people think so. It is this kind of false reasoning that gives rise to prejudice, discrimination, and atrocities. It is this kind of deceptive philosophy that has given rise to worldwide movements such as the super-human race of Nazism, the abuse of the worker by some leaders of capitalism, and the abuse of liberty and freedom by Communism. When it comes to human nature, no person has any more merit or worth, goodness or righteousness than any other person. We all stand equal before God. God shows no favoritism nor partiality to any person. For a person to think that he is better than someone else, that he has more value and worth than another person, that he is more acceptable and useful to God than others, that God favors him and blesses him more than others—is the height of self-righteousness. The danger of self-righteousness was of critical concern to Moses. The Israelites were soon to cross the Jordan River and begin their conquest of the promised land. As they conquered their enemies, there was the danger that thoughts of self-sufficiency might begin to arise in their minds. They might begin to think that they had defeated the enemy by the arm of the flesh, by their own power—that God had favored them with victory because they were a better people than the enemy, because they were of more value and worth than the enemy. Thoughts of being better and of meriting and deserving God's blessing could begin to penetrate their hearts. A spirit of vanity could consume them. And if vanity consumed them, they would begin to disobey every commandment of God. Contrary to being a righteous people, they were a stiff-necked and stubborn people who continually disobeyed God. A warning was desperately needed, a warning against self-righteousness and disobedience. (Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible)

**Wiersbe** - The word "hear" is used over fifty times in Deuteronomy, for God's people live by faith, and "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). The Jews couldn't see their God, but they could hear Him, while their pagan neighbors could see their gods but couldn't hear them (Ps. 115:5). In this section, Moses reminded the people that their conduct since leaving Egypt had been anything but exemplary, in spite of His long-suffering and grace. ([Be Equipped](#))

**Kalland** - Chapter 9 begins a section that points out once more that the greatness of the Lord, not any excellence of the Israelites, was to be the basis for Israel's acquisition of Canaan. Prior to this Moses had made it clear that God's choice of them was not because of their numerical superiority (Dt 7:7). Here he added that their entrance into the land would not be because of their righteousness either (v.5). To support this Moses launched into a long narration of the people's former recalcitrance and of the Lord's goodness and greatness. ([The Expositor's Bible Commentary – Volume 3: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel](#))

**Reformation Study Bible** - In this long section of exhortation (9:1–11:32), Moses turns toward the future.

**Warren Wiersbe** - Moses is pointing out dangers that God's people must avoid: forgetting God's goodness (chap. 6), compromising with the enemy (chap. 7), and becoming self-satisfied and complacent after great victory (chap. 8). In this chapter, he warns about a danger that all believers constantly face: the reappearance of an old sin. In Israel's case, that sin was rebellion against God. "But we are a new generation!" the people might have argued. "The old generation that died in the wilderness was guilty of rebellion. We are different!" But Moses warned them. He knew that human nature is the same from one generation to another and that people rarely learn from the mistakes of others. The sin we think we have conquered is the one that will conquer us. (See 1 Cor. 10:12.) Your

greatest fear may come before the battle (vv. 1–3), but your greatest danger may be after the battle (vv. 4–6). If the victory makes you proud, you will fall; but if God's blessing humbles you, you will succeed. God is able to make you stand (Rom. 14:4). (With the Word Bible Commentary)

**"Hear** (sema), **O Israel!** - Hear so as to do and focuses on action, not just hearing (cf. Jas 1:22–25+)! - A repeated refrain - Dt 5:1 Dt 6:4 Dt 9:1 Dt 20:3, cf Dt 27:9. Moses commands all the people of Israel to [be all ears](#) as we would say today. **Merrill** says here we encounter another **"Shema"** which reflects a major break in Moses' address and calls for the second generation to pay very close attention to what he says in this next section.

**Merrill** goes on to make an interesting comment - In the previous passage, Moses's concern was that the people would forget Yahweh and take credit for their own prosperity. In this text, the issue is not the likelihood that Yahweh will be forgotten but that Israel will attribute whatever good he does for Israel to their own worthiness (von Rad 1966a:74). In a sense, chapter 8 deals with salvation by works and chapter 9 with salvation by self-righteousness. Neither mindset is cognizant of the need for divine grace. ([Cornerstone Biblical Commentary](#))

**McIntosh** on **Hear** - These solemn words suggest that what follows deserves the most careful attention (cp. Jesus' use of the expression, "Most assuredly I say to you" [NKJV] some twenty-five times in John's Gospel - Jn. 1:51; Jn. 3:3; Jn. 3:5; Jn. 3:11; Jn. 5:19; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 5:25; Jn. 6:26; Jn. 6:32; Jn. 6:47; Jn. 6:53; Jn. 8:34; Jn. 8:51; Jn. 8:58; Jn. 10:1; Jn. 10:7; Jn. 12:24; Jn. 13:16; Jn. 13:20; Jn. 13:21; Jn. 13:38; Jn. 14:12; Jn. 16:20; Jn. 16:23; Jn. 21:18). ([Holman Old Testament Commentary](#))

**Hear** (hear, obey, understand)([08085](#)) **shama** means to hear (Adam and Eve hearing God = Ge 3:8, 10, Ge 18:10 = "overheard"), to listen (Ge 3:17, Ge 16:2 [= this was a big mistake and was the origin of Jews and Arabs!] Ex 6:9,16:20, 18:19, Webster's 1828 on "listen" = to hearken; to give ear; to attend closely with a view to hear. To obey; to yield to advice; to follow admonition) and since hearing/listening are often closely linked to obedience, shama is translated obey (1 Sa 15:22, Ge 22:18, 26:5, 39:10, Ex 19:5, disobedience = Lev 26:14, 18, 21, 27) or to understand. KJV translates shama "hearken" (196x) a word which means to give respectful attention. Of God's hearing in general or hearing our prayers (Hab 1:2, Ps 66:18, click here for more in the Psalms, cf God's hearing in Zeph 2:8, Ge 16:11, 17:20, 30:17, 22, Ge 21:17, 29:33, 30:6, 17, 22; Ex 2:24, Ex 16:8, 9, 12, Nu 11:1, 12:2). Shama means "to hear intelligently and attentively and respond appropriately." In other words to hear does not convey the idea of "in one ear and out the other!"

The greatest significance of the use of **shama** is that of relation of man to God, especially where the context speaks of **obedience**. Obedience is the supreme test of faith and reverence for (fear of) God. The Old Testament conception of obedience was vital. It was the one important relationship which must not be broken. While sometimes this relation may have been formal and cold, it nevertheless was the one strong tie which held the people close to God. The significant spiritual relation is expressed by Samuel when he asks the question, "Hath Yahweh as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in **obeying** (shama) the voice of Yahweh? **Behold**, to **obey** (shama) is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sa 15:22). It was the condition without which no right relation might be sustained to Yahweh. This is most clearly stated in the relation between Abraham and Yahweh when he is assured "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast **obeyed** (shama) my voice" (Ge 22:18). In prophetic utterances, future blessing and prosperity were conditioned upon obedience: "If ye be willing and **obedient** (shama), ye shall eat the good of the land" (Isa 1:19). After surveying the glories of the Messianic kingdom, the prophet assures the people that "this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently **obey** (shama) the voice of Yahweh your God" (Zec 6:15). On the other hand misfortune, calamity, distress and famine are due to their disobedience and distrust of Yahweh.

**Shama** - 82 verses - Clearly this is a **key word** in Deuteronomy - Deut. 1:16; Deut. 1:17; Deut. 1:34; Deut. 1:43; Deut. 1:45; Deut. 2:25; Deut. 3:26; Deut. 4:1; Deut. 4:6; Deut. 4:10; Deut. 4:12; Deut. 4:28; Deut. 4:30; Deut. 4:32; Deut. 4:33; Deut. 4:36; Deut. 5:1; Deut. 5:23; Deut. 5:24; Deut. 5:25; Deut. 5:26; Deut. 5:27; Deut. 5:28; Deut. 6:3; Deut. 6:4; Deut. 7:12; Deut. 8:20; Deut. 9:1; Deut. 9:2; Deut. 9:19; Deut. 9:23; Deut. 10:10; Deut. 11:13; Deut. 11:27; Deut. 11:28; Deut. 12:28; Deut. 13:3; Deut. 13:4; Deut. 13:8; Deut. 13:11; Deut. 13:12; Deut. 13:18; Deut. 15:5; Deut. 17:4; Deut. 17:12; Deut. 17:13; Deut. 18:14; Deut. 18:15; Deut. 18:16; Deut. 18:19; Deut. 19:20; Deut. 20:3; Deut. 21:18; Deut. 21:20; Deut. 21:21; Deut. 23:5; Deut. 26:7; Deut. 26:14; Deut. 26:17; Deut. 27:9; Deut. 27:10; Deut. 28:1; Deut. 28:2; Deut. 28:13; Deut. 28:15; Deut. 28:45; Deut. 28:49; Deut. 28:62; Deut. 29:4; Deut. 29:19; Deut. 30:2; Deut. 30:8; Deut. 30:10; Deut. 30:12; Deut. 30:13; Deut. 30:17; Deut. 30:20; Deut. 31:12; Deut. 31:13; Deut. 32:1; Deut. 33:7; Deut. 34:9;

**You are crossing over the Jordan today to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than you** (see Dt 7:1+), **great cities fortified to heaven** (hyperbole meaning "well-defended" - Dt 1:28+) - Moses first says **you are crossing over the Jordan** in

the present tense (Lxx = [diabaino](#) [of Macedonian vision in Acts 16:9+ crossing from Asia to Europe with Gospel!] in present tense) picturing this as action in process (even though they had not yet officially begun to cross) because it was so sure that they would cross and possess. Moses begins this chapter by emphasizing the greatness of the enemy Israel would be facing. The implication is that Israel could not defeat this enemy relying on her own strength. "Humanly speaking, Israel had no hope of successful siege operations against such well-prepared defenses." (McIntosh) In Numbers 14+ this same description of the enemy and their fortresses caused fear and unbelief and failure to follow through, something Moses wants to prevent in the second generation encouraging them that Jehovah would go before them as a **consuming fire** (v3).

**THOUGHT** - It is notable that in encouraging Israel (Dt 9:1-2) Moses uses almost the exact language the 10 spies had used to discourage Israel 38 years earlier! The principle is clear that when obstacles suggesting failure are viewed from God's perspective they become opportunities for success. Or as Paul would say "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?" (Ro 8:31+) John would say "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." (1 Jn 4:4+) And "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 Jn 5:4-5+) What are the giants in your life? Do you believe Moses, Paul and John? Then "cross over" for the battle is the Lord's.

**Guzik** - God was leading Israel into something too big for them. It was a challenge they could only meet if they trusted in God. ([Deuteronomy 9](#))

**Utley** - "**nations greater and mightier than you**" This is a repeated theme (see note at 1:28). The theological point (i.e., YHWH's sovereign choice and His promise to the Patriarchs) is in 7:6–9. He is trustworthy and true. His character is magnified in Israel's stubbornness and stiffneckedness (cf. vv. 6, 7, 13, 24, 27; 10:16; 31:27). ([Deuteronomy 9 Commentary](#))

**John Walton - fortified cities** - The fortification techniques developed in the Middle Bronze period included steep earthen slopes (some reaching fifty feet) at the foundation of the walls and a ditch around the outside dug to bedrock. These features would both hamper the approach of siege machines and prevent tunneling. The stone walls were twenty-five to thirty feet wide and perhaps thirty feet high. (IVPBBCOT)

**Today** - Hebrew {hyyom,} "this day," frequently denotes, as here, At this time. Very soon. They had come, 38 years before this, nearly to the verge of the promised land, but were not permitted, because of their unbelief and rebellion, at that day or time, to enter; but this time they shall certainly pass over. This was spoken in the eleventh month of the fortieth year of their journeying; and it was on the first month of the following year they passed over: and during this interval Moses died.

**Possess** (03423) **yarash** to take possession of, inherit, dispossess, to drive out. Yarash is an especially important word in contexts dealing with Israel's conquest of and possession of the land of Canaan. Yahweh first promised possession of the land in the context of the Abrahamic covenant (Ge 15:7-21+). Note also that "possessing" implies "dispossessing" another nation. In a legal sense, the right of possession passed from one generation to the next and so constituted "inheritance." Note that possession of the promised land and/or the "inheritance" was directly connected to Israel's trust relationship with the Lord, so that breaking trust, and thus breaking the covenantal relationship with Yahweh led to dispossession. But even in exile, Israelites awaited the day when they would repossess the land (Jer. 30:3+ - May 14, 1948 is when Israel was given statehood but this is not the final fulfillment - that awaits the Millennial Reign of their Messiah).

**Yarash** is a key word in Deuteronomy - Deut. 1:8; Deut. 1:21; Deut. 1:39; Deut. 2:12; Deut. 2:21; Deut. 2:22; Deut. 2:24; Deut. 2:31; Deut. 3:12; Deut. 3:18; Deut. 3:20; Deut. 4:1; Deut. 4:5; Deut. 4:14; Deut. 4:22; Deut. 4:26; Deut. 4:38; Deut. 4:47; Deut. 5:31; Deut. 5:33; Deut. 6:1; Deut. 6:18; Deut. 7:1; Deut. 7:17; Deut. 8:1; Deut. 9:1; Deut. 9:3; Deut. 9:4; Deut. 9:5; Deut. 9:6; Deut. 9:23; Deut. 10:11; Deut. 11:8; Deut. 11:10; Deut. 11:11; Deut. 11:23; Deut. 11:29; Deut. 11:31; Deut. 12:1; Deut. 12:2; Deut. 12:29; Deut. 15:4; Deut. 16:20; Deut. 17:14; Deut. 18:12; Deut. 18:14; Deut. 19:1; Deut. 19:2; Deut. 19:14; Deut. 21:1; Deut. 23:20; Deut. 25:19; Deut. 26:1; Deut. 28:21; Deut. 28:42; Deut. 28:63; Deut. 30:5; Deut. 30:16; Deut. 30:18; Deut. 31:3; Deut. 31:13; Deut. 32:47; Deut. 33:23;

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## Special Topic - [The Name Israel](#) - Bob Utley

### I. The Name's meaning is uncertain (BDB 975).

- A. EI Persisteth
- B. Let EI Persist (JUSSIVE)
- C. EI Perseveres
- D. Let EI Contend

E. **EI Strives**

F. He who strives with God (Ge. 32:28)

## II. Usages in the OT

**A. Jacob's name** (supplanter, heel grabber, BDB 784, cf. Gen. 25:26) is changed after wrestling with the spiritual personage at the river Jabbok (cf. Gen. 32:22–32; Exod. 32:13). Often the meanings of Hebrew names are sound plays, not etymologies (cf. 32:28). Israel becomes his name (e.g., Gen. 35:10; 32:13).

**B. It came to be used as a collective name for all of his twelve sons** (e.g., Gen. 32:32; 49:16; Exod. 1:7; 4:22; 28:11; Deut. 3:18; 10:6).

**C. It came to designate the nation formed by the twelve tribes before the exodus** (cf. Gen. 47:27; Exod. 4:22; 5:2) and after (cf. Deut. 1:1; 18:6; 33:10).

**D. After the united monarchy of Saul, David, and Solomon the tribes split under Rehoboam** (cf. 1 Kings 12).

1. the distinction starts even before the official split (e.g., 2 Sam. 3:10; 5:5; 20:1; 24:9; 1 Kgs. 1:35; 4:20)

2. designates the northern tribes until the fall of Samaria to Assyria in 722 B.C. (cf. 2 Kings 17).

**E. Used of Judah in a few places** (e.g., Isaiah 1; Micah 1:15–16).

**F. After the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles it became the collective name for all of Jacob's descendants again** (e.g., Isa. 17:7, 9; Jer. 2:4; 50:17, 19).

**G. Used of laity in contradistinction from priests** (cf. 1 Chr. 9:2; Ezra 10:25; Neh. 11:3).

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## Deuteronomy 9:1-6 How Deserving Are We?

I remember the day our secondhand refrigerator finally broke down. As a young newlywed employed by a Christian ministry, I didn't have much money to spend on repairs. Not knowing where to turn for reliable help, I called a friend in the electrical business. He assured me that he would handle the problem. Later that evening, I found a brand-new refrigerator in our kitchen. I asked myself, "What did I do to deserve such help?"

It's easy to think we deserve the help that others graciously give us. When we're successful, we tend to assume that we deserve our possessions. Success goes to our head. It makes us proud and can even turn us away from God.

In Deuteronomy 9, we read of God's reminder to Israel about the reason they would be successful. God wanted His people to remember that He was leading them into the land to fulfill His purpose and promises. They would succeed because of Him, not because of their own righteousness (Dt 9:4-5). He knew they would be tempted to become ungrateful after they were prospering in the Promised Land.

Ungratefulness is a temptation for us today as well. If our endeavors are successful, let's make sure we are thankful to God for His goodness, help, and protection. —Albert Lee ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Help me, O Lord, lest my heart become proud,  
For all of my talents by You are endowed;  
Nothing I have can I claim as my own—  
What mercy and grace in my life You have shown!  
—D. De Haan

**We don't need more to be thankful for, we just need to be more thankful.**

**Deuteronomy 9:2 a people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim, whom you know and of whom you have heard it said, 'Who can stand before the sons of Anak?'**

- **great:** De 2:11,12,21
- **Who can stand:** De 7:24 Ex 9:11 Job 11:10 Da 8:4 11:16 Na 1:6
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passage:

Deuteronomy 2:11-12+ Like the Anakim, they are also regarded as Rephaim, but the Moabites call them Emim.<sup>12</sup> The Horites formerly lived in Seir, but the sons of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them and settled in their place, just as Israel did to the land of their possession which the LORD gave to



them.

Deuteronomy 2:21-20+ It is also regarded as the land of the Rephaim, for Rephaim formerly lived in it, but the Ammonites call them Zamzummin, a people as great, numerous, and tall as the Anakim, but the LORD destroyed them before them. And they dispossessed them and settled in their place,

Numbers 13:22; 28+ When they had gone up into the Negev, they came to Hebron where Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai, the descendants of Anak were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) 28 "Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there.

**a people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim** (long-necked --tall-- men, early giant people), **whom you know and of whom you have heard** ([shama](#)) **it said, "Who can stand before the sons of Anak?"** (this question may have been a proverb because of their fierce reputation) - This is the second time Moses has mentioned these "GIANT PEOPLES" and his point was that they were defeated by the Edomites and the Ammonites because Yahweh gave them the victory. In addition the second generation had experienced victory over the giant king Og of Bashan! The upshot is that "big people" will not be a "big problem" for a "big God" when the second generation enters the Promised Land. So the answer to the question **Who can stand before the sons of Anak?** (aka they are no "pushovers!") is that God can stand against them and this same God was on Israel's side promising them the victory. In Dt 7:24+ Moses had promised Israel "no man will be able to stand before you until you have destroyed them." So again Moses is emphasizing that in light of the greatness of the enemy, Israel would not be able to stand before them relying on their own arm of flesh. The point is that from a purely military viewpoint Israel did not stand a chance against such a formidable foe! What Israel needed to do was "Turn their eyes on God." What Christians need to do when confronted by "giants" in their life (circumstances, people, etc) is make a "course correction" and realign their focus from the "giants" to God as Helen Lemmel wrote in her great hymn...

[Turn your eyes upon Jesus,](#)

Look full in His wonderful face;  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim  
In the light of His glory and grace.

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**QUESTION - [Who were the Anakim / Anakites?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The Anakim/Anakites were a formidable race of giant, warlike people (Deuteronomy 2:10, 21; 9:2) who occupied the lands of southern Israel near Hebron before the arrival of the Israelites (Joshua 15:13). The Anakim's ancestry has been traced back to Anak, the son of Arba (Joshua 15:13; 21:11), who at that time was regarded as the "greatest man among the Anakim" (Joshua 14:15).

The name "Anakim" most likely means "long-necked," i.e., "tall." The Hebrews thought them to be descendants of the Nephilim, a powerful race who dominated the pre-Flood world (Genesis 6:4; Numbers 13:33). When the twelve Israelite spies returned from exploring the Promised Land, they gave a frightening report of "people great and tall" whom they identified as the sons of Anak (Deuteronomy 9:2). The Israelites, seized with fear and believing themselves to be mere "grasshoppers . . . in their sight" (Numbers 13:33), rebelled against God (Deuteronomy 1:26-28) and refused to enter the land God had promised them.

The Israelites were exhorted by Moses (Deuteronomy 1:19) not to fear the Anakim, but they refused to trust God's promises (Deuteronomy 1:32-33). As a result, God became angry (Deuteronomy 1:34-39) and prohibited the "evil generation" from entering the Promised Land; Joshua and Caleb were the only exceptions (Deuteronomy 1:35-36). Because of their fear of the Anakim and their rebellion against God, the children of Israel were forced to wander for another 38 years in the wilderness.

During the conquest of Canaan, Joshua expelled the Anakim from the hill country, and Caleb finally drove them out of Hebron completely. However, a small remnant found refuge in the cities of Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod (Joshua 11:22). Many Bible scholars speculate that the Anakim's descendants were the Philistine giants David encountered (2 Samuel 21:15-22), including Goliath of Gath (1 Samuel 17:4-7). [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Deuteronomy 9:3 "Know therefore today that it is the LORD your God who is crossing over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and He will subdue them before you, so that you may drive them out and destroy them quickly, just as the LORD has spoken to you.**

- **know:** De 9:6 Mt 15:10 Mk 7:14 Eph 5:17

- **crossing over before you:** De 1:30 20:4 31:3-6 Jos 3:11,14 Mic 2:13 Rev 19:11-16
- **a consuming fire:** De 4:24 Isa 27:4 30:27,30,33 33:14 Na 1:5,6 2Th 1:8 Heb 12:29
- **he will:** De 7:1,2,16,23,24 Ex 23:29-31 Isa 41:10-16 Ro 8:31
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 4:24 "For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

## FOLLOW THE LEADER

Follow the leader was a game many of us played as children, but here the Leader is God and those who are to follow are not children but the Israeli men of war.

**Know therefore today** - After emphasizing that Israel needed to know the greatness of their enemy, Moses now describes the greatness of Israel's God, for it would be in dependence on His arm that they would be enabled to attain victory.

This phrase was used in Dt 4:39 with the added exhortation to take it to heart that Yahweh "is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other." In Dt 7:9 Moses said "**Know therefore** that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments." **Know** is the Hebrew verb [yada](#) which is rendered in the Septuagint with the verb [ginosko](#) meaning to know by experience.

**That it is the LORD your God Who is crossing over before you as a consuming**(devouring - [akal](#)) **fire** - God is compared to a **consuming fire**, which would destroy everything in its path, in this case indicating a vivid metaphor for the judgment of God on the wicked people in the promised land. As Yahweh had led the first generation safely through the wilderness with His Shekinah glory, He would now lead them successfully to victory as their **consuming fire**! Proverbs 21:31 says it well "The horse is prepared for the day of battle, But victory belongs to the LORD."

Note in Dt 9:3-6 the repetition of the phrase **the LORD your God** - it is He Who crosses over (v3), it is He Who drives the enemy out (v4), again it is He Who drives them out (v5) and it is He Who is giving Israel the good land (v6). These truths would (should) serve to counter the tendency of flesh to say WE won the victory!

**Consuming fire** - 8x in 8v - Ex 24:17; Dt. 4:24; Deut. 9:3; Isa. 29:6; Isa. 30:27; Isa. 30:30; Isa. 33:14; Heb. 12:29.

Vocal song - All Consuming Fire

**He will destroy them and He will subdue them before you** - While God would **destroy** and **subdue**, this does not signify Israel had nothing to do as indicated by the next clause. **Destroy** is clearly a key word in Deuteronomy 9 (Dt. 9:3; Dt. 9:8; Dt. 9:14; Dt. 9:19; Dt. 9:20; Dt. 9:25)

**McGee** - God takes the responsibility of putting them out of the land. God is the Landlord. He is the Creator. He has a right to do this. When I hear a fellow who is liberal in his theology complain about this, I feel like saying, "You little pip-squeak, you keep quiet. You and I are just little creatures down here." God is the sovereign Creator; we are the creatures. ([Deuteronomy 9 Mp3's](#))

**Guzik** - Israel could know both facts: That in themselves, the job was impossible (without Me you can do nothing, John 15:5), but in God the battle could not be lost (I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me, Philippians 4:13). ([Deuteronomy 9](#))

**Destroy** (demolish, exterminate, annihilate)(Lxx = [exolethreuo](#) = utterly destroyed) ([08045](#))([shamad](#)) is a verb meaning "be destroyed, decimated, perished, overthrown, exterminated, i.e., pertaining to being in a totally ruined state, which can include death of a person or extinction of an entity." (Swanson) The destruction depicted by **shamad** usually involves a rather sudden catastrophe such as warfare or a mass killing. For example in Dt 6:15 God says He will "**wipe**" Israel off the face of the earth, so great was His anger against them! Many of the uses of **shamad** have God as the subject rendering the destruction, sometimes against Israel's enemies, sometimes threatening Israel herself or Aaron her priest. Nearly four-fifths of the occurrences of [שָׂמַד](#) carry a heavy theological load since they are in contexts where God is the immediate or implied subject. Extermination comes upon a nation or class of people because they have fallen under the judgment of God. Two-thirds of the theological uses occur in Deut. The OT authors have appropriated the word as indicating what God will do or did to the nations that inhabited the land of Canaan. Deut 7:23–24 is typical. The inhabitants had to be annihilated because of their abominations, lest Israel learn their ways and



abandon God.

**Shamad** in Deuteronomy - Deut. 1:27; Deut. 2:12; Deut. 2:21; Deut. 2:22; Deut. 2:23; Deut. 4:3; Deut. 4:26; Deut. 6:15; Deut. 7:4; Deut. 7:23; Deut. 7:24; Deut. 9:3; Deut. 9:8; Deut. 9:14; Deut. 9:19; Deut. 9:20; Deut. 9:25; Deut. 12:30; Deut. 28:20; Deut. 28:24; Deut. 28:45; Deut. 28:48; Deut. 28:51; Deut. 28:61; Deut. 28:63; Deut. 31:3; Deut. 31:4; Deut. 33:27

**So that** (purpose) **you may drive** ([yarash](#)) **them out and destroy them quickly** - Israel's responsibility is clearly stated and would be a belief (faith) in God's promise to destroy and subdue the enemy which they would drive out and destroy. In summary, God had prepared the enemy for Israel and **to drive them out** and **destroy them** was Israel's responsibility, which we see in the book of Judges was only partially accomplished. As Guzik asks "Was God going to do it, or was Israel going to do it? Both, really – God was calling Israel to workers together with Him (2 Corinthians 6:1)."

**Guzik** - Archaeologist William F. Albright, in his book *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, describes what the primary focus of Canaanite religion was: sex. The featured idols recovered by archaeologists are hundreds of nude female forms in sexually suggestive forms, as well as male idols associated with homosexual cults (*From the Stone Age to Christianity*, pages 232-235).. "Thus the Canaanites, with their orgiastic nature-worship, their cult of fertility in the form of serpent symbols and sensuous nudity, and their gross mythology, were replaced by Israel." ([Deuteronomy 9](#))

**Pulpit Commentary** on **destroy them quickly** - There is no contradiction here of what is said in Deuteronomy 7:22; for there the reference is to the **possession** of the land by Israel, here it is to the **destruction** which was to come on the Canaanites — the former was to be by degrees, the latter was to come suddenly and overwhelmingly ([Deuteronomy 9](#))

**Perish** (Lxx = [apollumi](#) = ruined) ([06](#))([abad](#)) is a verb meaning to perish, to be destroyed, to be ruined, to be lost, to in a state of ruin and destruction pertaining to an object, including the death (Ex 10:7). The perishing and destruction can refer to a wide variety of things, usually in the context of judgment:

**Abad** in Deuteronomy - Deut. 4:26; Deut. 7:10; Deut. 7:20; Deut. 7:24; Deut. 8:19; Deut. 8:20; Deut. 9:3; Deut. 11:4; Deut. 11:17; Deut. 12:2; Deut. 12:3; Deut. 22:3; Deut. 26:5; Deut. 28:20; Deut. 28:22; Deut. 28:51; Deut. 28:63; Deut. 30:18; Deut. 32:28;

**Just as the LORD has spoken to you** - God is faithful to keep His promises, promises like those below in Exodus 23...

Exodus 23:23+ "For My angel (IS THIS THE [Angel of the LORD](#)) will go before you and bring you in to the land of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will completely destroy them.

Exodus 23:27+ "I will send My terror ahead of you, and throw into confusion all the people among whom you come, and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you.

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### Norman Geisler - DEUTERONOMY 9:3—Were the Canaanites destroyed quickly or slowly?

**PROBLEM:** This verse claims the Canaanites were destroyed "quickly" (maher), but an earlier passages (Deut. 7:22+) said it would not be quickly, but "little by little."

**SOLUTION:** There are two different ways to understand this. First, it may be an example where the same term is applied to the same thing in different senses. It was quick, relative to the magnitude of the work, but slow with regard to the rate of their occupation. Or, it may be referring to two different things in the same basic sense. The initial victories were rapid, but mop-up activity took much longer. They **conquered** the land in a short time, but they **occupied** it much more slowly. The major battles did not take long, but all the subsequent minor skirmishes took some time. (When Critics Ask)

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**God as Consuming Fire** - Fire, which (the apocryphal) Ecclesiasticus 39:26 groups with water, iron, salt, flour, milk, honey, wine, oil and clothing as a basic necessity, is the servant of human beings. It cooks their food (Ex 12:8; Is 44:15–16; Jn 21:9), makes them warm (Is 44:15; Jn 18:18) and gives them light to see (Is 50:11; Mt 25:1–13). It can be part of a manufacturing process (Gen 11:3) and can refine metals (Is 1:25; Mal 3:2–3). It also burns refuse (Lev 8:17). Because starting a fire is work (cf. 2 Macc 10:3), it is p 287 prohibited on the sabbath (Ex 35:3).

But fire, which can terrify as well as benefit, is also an instrument of warfare. Throughout the Bible many battles end with the victors (sometimes at God's command) burning down the city of the losers (e.g., Josh 6:24; 8:8; 11:11; Judg 1:8; 1 Kings 9:16; cf. Mt 22:7). This is why war itself or its fury can be likened to, or spoken of, as fire (Num 21:28; Is 10:16; Zech 12:6).

Fire can be the instrument of execution for criminals (Gen 38:24; Lev 20:14; 21:9; Josh 7:15; cremation is otherwise not practiced in

the Bible; see Crime and Punishment). So it is in Daniel 3, where rescue from fire is a miracle (cf. Heb 11:34). Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, although thrown into Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, survive the ordeal without harm. The event causes the pagan king to bless the Hebrews' God and to promote the three youths.

Unlike Greek mythology, the Bible has nothing to say about the origin of fire. But this very silence compels readers to presume fire to be one of the gifts of creation. Already Abel brings fat portions of his firstlings to sacrifice (Gen 4:4), implying a burnt offering. (Incidentally, although Genesis 4:4–5 does not inform us how Cain and Abel recognize that God has regard for the sacrifice of Able but not of Cain, commentators have long speculated that, as in other OT stories, divine fire burns up one offering but not the other.)

**Religious Uses.** Beyond the common secular uses, people also used fire for religious purposes. In Numbers 31:22–23, for instance, fire is an instrument of ceremonial purification. More importantly, sacrifices—not just “burnt offerings”—are typically burned (cf. Lev 2:2, etc.). Perhaps we should find here a symbol: the fire represents God's desire to destroy sin and to purify his people (cf. Is 6:6–7). Moreover, the smoke from fire rises, which is an appropriate indication of the symbolic movement of sacrifice: the offerer on earth is seeking to communicate with God in heaven (cf. incense and prayer ascending to heaven, Rev 8:4; Phil 4:18).

The practice of burning offerings is not confined to Israel. The OT refers, for example, to the sacrificial burning of children by pagans and apostate Jews (e.g. Lev 18:21; Deut 18:10; 2 Kings 16:3; 17:17; 21:6; 23:10; Jer 7:31; 32:35). Several of these refer to the cult of Molech and use the phrase “make their sons and daughters pass through the fire” (RSV). Reference is also made to “strange” or “unholy” fire, which seems to involve fire taken from elsewhere than the official altar. According to Leviticus 6:8–13 the fire on the altar of burnt offering should be ever-burning: the priests must not allow it to go out. It is a sign of God's continual presence.

**Theophany of Fire.** In Genesis 15:17 the presence of God appears as a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch, and in Exodus 3:2 God makes himself known to Moses “in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush” (RSV; see Burning Bush). This association of God with fire runs throughout the Bible. God descends upon Mount Sinai “in fire” in Exodus 19:18. (That there is thunder encourages one to think of the lightning; but that there is smoke and a mountain moves one to envisage a volcano; cf. 2 Sam 22:8–9.) When Ezekiel tries to describe the indescribable—that is, the form on the divine throne—he says, “Upward from what had the appearance of his loins I saw as it were gleaming bronze, like the appearance of fire enclosed round about; and downward from what had the appearance of his loins I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness round about him” (Ezek 1:27 RSV). In Revelation 4:5 lightning flashes from God's throne.

Often the imagery of God's appearance is clearly that of a thunderstorm, and the fire that is mentioned must be akin to lightning. In Psalm 18:14 (a battle theophany), lightning flashes are God's arrows (cf. Ps 144:6). Psalm 29:7 says that “the voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness” (RSV). In Ezekiel 1:4 the prophet sees “a storm wind” come “out of the north, and a great cloud, with brightness round about it, and fire flashing forth continually” (RSV).

That God should appear as fire is appropriate for many reasons. Just as all physical life depends on the fire that is the sun (cf. Rev 16:8), so does all spiritual life depend on God. Just as fire both purifies and destroys, so does God purify the righteous and destroy the wicked (“for our God is a consuming fire,” Heb 12:29 RSV). Just as fire lights up the blackness of night, so does God overcome the dark powers of evil. Just as fire is mysterious and immaterial, so too is God enigmatic and incorporeal. And just as fire is always flickering and changing its shape and cannot be held for examination, so is God always the indefinable who is beyond our grasp. (It is striking that in 1 Kings 19:12, in the revelation on Horeb [= Sinai] to Elijah, God is not in the fire as he is for Moses on Sinai, but in the silence. Here God, against expectation, dissociates himself from a traditional constituent of the theophany. He need bind himself to no natural element.)

If God himself appears as fire, so do the things around him. His throne is “fiery flames,” its wheels “burning fire” (Dan 7:9). His angelic servants are “flames of fire” (Heb 1:7, quoting LXX Ps 104:4; and Lk 10:18, the devil as lightning or a meteor). Between the cherubim are fire and coals of fire (Ezek 10:2, 6–7). Before God's throne is a “sea of glass mingled with fire” (Rev 15:2; cf. 1 Kings 7:23; 2 Chron 4:2), and from before God issues a “stream of fire” (Dan 7:10). The “seven spirits of God” are “torches of fire” (Rev 4:5). Heavenly chariots are made of fire (2 Kings 2:11; 6:17). Even the eyes of the glorified Jesus and other heavenly creatures are like flames of fire (Dan 10:6; Rev 1:14; 2:18). In Acts 2:3–4 the Holy Spirit too is associated with fire (“tongues as of fire”; cf. Is 5:24).

**Fire from God.** During the exodus God makes a pillar of fire to lead his people in the wilderness. p 288 The pillar is the outward sign of God's guiding presence (Ex 12:21; Num 14:14); the same presence covers the tabernacle (Num 9:15–16).

But it is much more typical for supernatural fires to be destructive. Fire falls from heaven and consumes Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:24), Nadah and Abihu (who conduct improper ritual, Lev 10:1–2), murmuring Israelites (Num 11:1), soldiers of Ahaziah (2 Kings 1:10; cf. Lk 9:54), Job's flocks (Job 1:16), and Gog and Magog (Rev 20:9; cf. Ezek 38:22; 39:6). Sometimes the image is of something like lightning (e.g., Ex 9:24; Num 11:1); other times one thinks rather of a volcanic eruption (e.g., Sodom and Gomorrah).

Fire also occasionally falls not to consume the wicked but to consume a sacrifice, a circumstance that shows God's reality and approval (Lev 9:24; Judg 6:21; 1 Kings 18:24: “the God who answers by fire, he is God” [RSV]; 1 Chron 21:26; 2 Chron 7:1; Lk 9:54:

“do you want us to bid fire to come down from heaven?” RSV). In Revelation 13:13 making fire fall from heaven is a “great sign,” yet something that the eschatological false prophet can nevertheless do.

**God’s Wrath and Eschatological Fire.** In what seems to us to be bold anthropomorphism, God’s anger burns like a fire (Hos 8:5). It is hot, and he pours it out like fire (Nahum 1:6; cf. Lam 2:4). Isaiah 66:15 (God comes in fire to “render his anger in fury”) and Jeremiah 15:14 (God says, “in my anger a fire is kindled which shall burn for ever”; cf. 17:4) are typical. Prophecies of destruction by fire are often simply figurative ways of saying that God’s judgment is sure or thorough (e.g., Ps 97:3; Is 33:12; Joel 2:3; Mic 1:4). For Ezekiel “the fire of my wrath” is a fixed expression (Ezek 21:31; 22:21, 31; 38:19).

The images of God’s fiery wrath vary from text to text. In several texts the image is of God as a mythical, fire-breathing monster (cf. Job 41:19–21; Rev 9:17; 11:5). Thus in Psalm 18:8 smoke comes from his nostrils, devouring fire from his mouth (cf. 2 Sam 22:9); and Isaiah 30:33 likens the Lord’s breath to a stream of brimstone (cf. 65:5). But in Jeremiah 21:14 one sees a forest fire; in Lamentations 1:13, lightning (“from on high he sent fire”); in Malachi 3:2, a furnace (“a refiner’s fire”); and in Isaiah 30:33, a carefully stacked pile of wood.

The association of fire with wrath and the fact that God sometimes destroys the wicked by raining fire make it natural that eschatological judgment be depicted as fire. 2 Thessalonians 1:7 says that the Lord Jesus will be revealed “from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire” (RSV). Revelation’s accounts of the latter days are filled with fire-falling from heaven (8:7, 8; 13:13; 16:8), coming from the mouths of humans and beasts (9:17–18; 11:5), punishing the wicked (14:10; 17:16; 18:8). Furthermore, although the prophecy in Zephaniah 3:8 (“in the fire of my jealous wrath all the earth shall be consumed” RSV) is probably figurative (cf. Deut 32:22; Amos 7:4), the one in 2 Peter 3:7, according to which the world is now “stored up for fire,” [RSV] should be taken literally.

Most commonly the object of eschatological fire is not the world as such but the people in it, especially the wicked (cf. Heb 10:27). There are a variety of pictures. Fire will burn up dross to refine metal (Mal 3:2); it will burn like an oven (Mal 4:1); it will burn up unfruitful trees (Mt 3:10), unfruitful branches (Jn 15:6, though this may be only parabolic, since the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine epistles do not mention eschatological fire otherwise), tares (Mt 13:40) and chaff (Mt 3:12). It will even burn up flesh (Jas 5:3).

Fire belongs not only to the moment of the final judgment but also to the world of eternity; it is the fearful antithesis of the kingdom of God. Already Isaiah 66:24 speaks of a fire that will not be quenched. In the NT this is assumed to be the everlasting and tormenting fire of hell (Mt 5:22; 13:42; 18:8–9). Revelation 20:10, 14–15 envisages a frightful “lake of fire” into which the devil and his false prophet, death and hades, and all evildoers are cast at the end. Hell is nonetheless also said to be, paradoxically, dark (Mt 8:12; 2 Pet 2:17; Jude 13).

The expectation of eschatological fire may provide the background for some NT texts that are otherwise obscure. When John the Baptist, in a prophecy of the last judgment, warns of a baptism of fire, the image is of a river or stream of fire (cf. Dan 7:10); so we should perhaps imagine an eschatological stream of fire by which the wicked are consumed and the righteous refined (cf. Zech 13:9). The obscure Mark 9:49, according to which “everyone will be salted with fire” (RSV), could presuppose the same idea. (Salt preserves, while fire destroys; eschatological fire does both.) In 1 Corinthians 3:10–15 the judgment day is a fire that tests all: it burns up the dross and refines that which is truly valuable.

In Isaiah 4:5, however, eschatological fire is not destructive. In the latter days there will be over Mount Zion a cloud by day “and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night” (RSV). This prophecy recalls the pillar of fire of the exodus (cf. Ex 13:21). As in 2 Kings 6:17 (the fiery hosts that protect Elisha) and Zechariah 2:5 (“I will be to her [Jerusalem] a wall of fire round about” RSV), here God protects his people with fire. ([Longman, et al - Dictionary of Biblical Imagery](#) - excellent resource)

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**Like a Consuming Fire** - Moses encouraged Israel on the edge of the promised land by saying, “The Lord your God is the one who goes across ahead of you like a devouring fire. He will destroy [your enemies]; he will subdue them before you” (Deut. 9:3). The simile of a devouring or consuming fire often appears in Scripture as a picture of the judgment of God: “See, the Name of the Lord comes from afar, with burning anger and dense clouds of smoke; his lips are full of wrath, and his tongue is a consuming fire” (Isa. 30:27; cp. 30:30,33; 33:14; Nah. 1:5-6).

God’s judgment may be temporal, in his present opposition to kings, nations, and individuals, or eternal at the great white throne (Rev. 20:11-15). The second coming of Christ is often spoken of in fiery terms: “This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus” (2 Thess. 1:7-8; cp. Isa. 66:15). The writer of Hebrews alludes to Deuteronomy 9:3 and 4:24 in exhorting Christians to live holy lives: “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our ‘God is a consuming fire’” (Heb. 12:28-29).

Many people who do not object to God judging Sodom and Gomorrah or the wickedness terminated by the flood of Noah still find

fault with Israel's invasion of Canaan. The point of view of Deuteronomy, however, sees Israel as the divine instrument of wrath upon wickedness. That they had something to gain (a homeland) from the process is beside the point. There is no suggestion in Scripture that Israel was qualified morally to act in judgment against the Canaanites. In fact, Deuteronomy 9:4-6 expressly teaches that they were not. God sometimes uses dirty objects for his work simply because clean ones are not to be found. (McIntosh [Holman Old Testament Commentary](#))

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### Deuteronomy 9:3 - GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY - OUR RESPONSIBILITY

"He will destroy them...so that you may drive them out and destroy them." (Deut. 9:3 NASB)

In all of God's dealings with mankind, there is a curious merging of the divine and the human.

Take the Bible, for example. There is the divine Author, and there are human authors, who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

As far as salvation is concerned, it is of the Lord from start to finish. There is nothing a man can do to earn or deserve it. And yet he must receive it by faith. God clearly elects individuals to salvation, but they must enter in at the strait gate. And so Paul writes to Titus of "the faith of God's elect (Tit. 1:1).

From the divine standpoint, we are "kept by the power of God." Yet there is also the human side—"through faith" (1 Pet. 1:5). "Kept by the power of God through faith."

Only God can make me holy. Yet He will not make me holy without my cooperation. I must add to my faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love (2 Pet. 1:5-7). I must put on the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:13-18). I must put off the old man and put on the new man (Eph. 4:22-24). I must walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16).

You find the merging of the divine and the human in the whole area of Christian ministry. Paul plants, Apollos waters, but God gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:6).

When we come to leadership in the local church, we learn that only God can make a man an elder. Paul reminded the Ephesian elders that it was the Holy Spirit who had made them overseers (Acts 20:28). Yet a man's own will is involved. He must desire to exercise oversight (1 Tim. 3:1 JND).

Finally, in the text with which we began, we see that it is God who destroys our enemies, but we must drive them out and destroy them (Deut. 9:3 NASB).

In order to be balanced Christians, we must recognize this merging of the divine and human. We must pray as if everything depended on God but work as if everything depended on us. Or to borrow the wartime exhortation, "Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition." As someone suggested, we must pray for a good harvest but keep on hoeing. (William MacDonald Truths to Live By)

**Deuteronomy 9:4 "Do not say in your heart when the LORD your God has driven them out before you, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land,' but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is dispossessing them before you.**

- **Speak not:** De 9:5 7:7,8 8:17 Eze 36:22,32 Ro 11:6,20 1Co 4:4,7 Eph 2:4,5 2Ti 1:9 Tit 3:3-5
- **wickedness:** De 12:31 18:12 Ge 15:16 Lev 18:24,25
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Leviticus 18:24-25+ 'Do not defile yourselves by any of these things; for by all these the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled. 25 'For the land has become defiled, therefore I have brought its punishment upon it, so **the land has spewed out its inhabitants.**

### WARNING AGAINST PRIDE

**Do not say in your heart when the LORD your God has driven them out before you-** Moses had given a similar warning in Dt 8:17+ declaring "'Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.'" So there

Moses addressed the temptation of Israel to think it was their physical prowess which brought about their conquest of the Promised Land. Here Moses warns Israel of the temptation to take credit was driving out and destroying the strong enemy. They could have easily become proud. The inherent danger of Israel's flesh (and that of all of us), is to become self-congratulatory when they began to experience victory after victory over their formidable foes. "Look at what WE have accomplished." This is a variation on the warning in chapter 8 to not forget God. Here, while they might not totally forget Him, they forget that their victory is a manifestation of His provision of grace and power.

The **heart** of men's problem is the problem of their **heart**. This passage recalls Dt 8:17+ "Otherwise, **you may say in your heart**, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.'

**Guzik on do not say in your heart** - Israel's temptation to pride did not come in something they would actually say. Long before we will say proud words we think proud thoughts in our heart. Therefore Israel must not think in their heart that it was because of their righteousness that the Lord has given them the land. i. This is a preview of salvation by grace through faith, in which we cannot think that it is our righteousness that has obtained it. Instead, it is the righteousness we have received in Jesus Christ.ii. When we receive any gift from God, we are tempted to take it and use it to glorify ourselves. Israel must not do this in regard to the gift of the Promised Land, and we must not do it in regard to any gift the Lord would give us. ([Deuteronomy 9](#))

**Grant on do not say in your heart** - But although there might be no open declaration that this would be their triumph it might still be the thought that would be in their hearts. Openly they might express their delight in the work of the Lord in giving them the victory, but inwardly they might really believe that this was due to their own righteousness, the rightful reward for a faithful people. ([What the Bible Teaches – Leviticus and Deuteronomy](#))

**Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess ([yarash](#)) this land** - Note the key word in vv4-6 is righteousness, pointing out the danger of a victorious Israel to begin to gloat in self-righteousness. Israel would begin to believe they deserved the land because of their own righteousness. Moses seeks to completely cut off that dangerous sin of a self-righteous spirit. . Conquest of the Promised Land was not to be seen by Israel as a reward from God because they were so good!

**McIntosh** makes an understatement - Israel (as Moses will explain beginning in Dt 9:7) possessed a bad track record when it came to righteousness. ([Holman Old Testament Commentary](#))

**But it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is dispossessing them before you-** Lev 18:1-30+ gives more detail on the wickedness of the nations. So it was not Israel's righteousness but the enemies wickedness that God gave them victory over these peoples. It was not because Israel was so good, but that the pagans were so bad!

**Grant** draws an excellent analogy with Jesus' disciples in the NT who had experienced "victory." - There was the possibility of falling into the trap of crediting themselves with the victory and quite forgetting that the battle and the triumph were the Lord's alone. When the twelve disciples were sent by the Lord, two by two, on a preaching tour of Israel they saw the hand of the Lord at work (Mk 6:7-13). They preached that men should repent, they cast out many demons, and they anointed the sick with oil. When they returned it is emphasised that they told the Lord "all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught" (Mk 6:30). They regarded the work and its results as being their doing. With this background the Lord Jesus invited them to the place where He knew that there would be thousands waiting and there would be insufficient food to feed them. As the day wore on the disciples approached the Lord with the request, "Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread". The Lord answered, "Give ye them to eat" (Mk 6:36-37). They had been claiming what they had done and now He challenged them to do this. Their response should have been to state they could not, but that He could. Nevertheless, He showed clearly that any work for God is His work and that disciples are only servants. Any power given to them is His alone. ([What the Bible Teaches – Leviticus and Deuteronomy](#))

**Bob Utley makes an excellent point on God's grace repeatedly manifest to Israel** - It must be stated clearly that the Exodus, the Wilderness Wandering, and the Conquest were grace acts on YHWH's part, not merited rewards due to Israel's actions: (1) It was YHWH's love for "the fathers"—Deut. 4:37–38; 7:8; 10:15 (2) It was not Israel's number—Deut. 7:7 (3) It was not Israel's strength and power—Deut. 8:17 (4) It was not Israel's righteousness or uprightness—Deut. 9:5–6 (5) YHWH continues to love Israel even amidst judgment—Jer. 31:3 ([Deuteronomy 9 Commentary](#))

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Deuteronomy 9:4; 2 Corinthians 4:7 ACHIEVEMENTS—not given their due

Not According to Its Worth - One night in the fall of 1861, while watching campfires from thousands of bivouacs around Washington, D.C., Julia Ward Howe experienced a powerful inspiration of words and music—the melody familiar, the prose militantly biblical. They danced separately in her head at first, then together, then arm in arm. She sent the poem to the Atlantic Monthly, which published it in the spring of 1862. "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" became an instant sensation all over the North. Julia did not profit by it, however; she received only \$5 for her classic. Lorraine Petersen became the Sun-Maid Raisin Girl in 1915, appearing in

a red bonnet, holding a basket of the fruit. The company made millions. She received \$15 a week as part-time model and part-time seeder/packer for the Griffin and Skelley Packing Company. The company purchased the original Sun-Maid portrait from her for \$1,700.

In seventy days General Tomoyuki Yamashita's troops in Northern Malaya advanced seven hundred miles, all the while outfighting, outwitting, and out-maneuvering General Percival. Then, with a stroke of military genius, his 30,000 men captured Singapore and its 100,000 Britons. For this stunning achievement, military commander Tojo, ever jealous, transferred Yamashita to Manchuria, a military no-man's-land. There he stayed for three years while Japan lost the war. There is a quintessential unrewarded merit: God in Christ reconciling the world to himself—an expressed spiritual elegance the unsaved cannot fathom, an accepted spiritual glory the saved fail to esteem. (Hurley, Virgil - Speaker's sourcebook of new illustrations)

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**Warren Wiersbe - Self-Confident People Who Failed** - A wealthy farmer (Luke 12:13–21). A courageous apostle (Matt. 26:31–35). A mighty ruler (Dan. 4). A self-satisfied church (Rev. 3:14–22). Some successful businessmen (James 4:13–17). All those people failed. They apparently did not take these words to heart: "Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him" (Prov. 26:12).

**Deuteronomy 9:5** "It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land, but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God is driving them out before you, in order to confirm the oath which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

- **not for your righteousness** : Titus 3:5
- **that he may**: Ge 12:7 13:15 15:7 17:8 26:4 28:13 Ex 32:13 Eze 20:14 Mic 7:20 Lu 1:54,55 Ac 3:25 13:32,33 Ro 11:28 15:8
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ISRAEL DID NOT DESERVE THE LAND

**It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart**(uprightness of heart - 1 Chr 29:17, Job 33:3, Ps 119:7) **that you are going to possess** ([yarash](#)) **their land** - Just in case they missed the thrust of the previous passage, Moses reiterates their possession of the enemy land was not merited by Israel's "goodness." The subsequent description in Dt 9:7-29 is clear evidence that the conquest that Israel would experience in the Promised Land was not a mark of divine approval for she had repeatedly proven herself to be stubborn, stiff-necked and rebellious against Yahweh. In fact as this chapter ends the only reason the second generation was even alive to hear Moses was because he had interceded with God Who had threatened to destroy the entire nation (see Dt 9:24-29 [below](#)).

**THOUGHT** - Believers are inclined to attribute their spiritual successes to their godliness when it would be more accurate to connect them with God's faithfulness. (McIntosh)

**NET Note** on Heb "**uprightness of your heart**" (so NASB, NRSV). The Hebrew word [tsedaqah](#), "**righteousness**" תְּצַדִּיק, though essentially synonymous here with **yosher** "**uprightness**" יָשָׁר, carries the idea of conformity to an objective standard. The term **yosher** "**uprightness**" יָשָׁר has more to do with an inner, moral quality (cf. NAB, NIV "integrity"). Neither, however, was grounds for the LORD's favor. As he states in both vv. 4–5, the main reason he allowed Israel to take this land was the sinfulness of the Canaanites who lived there (cf. Ge 15:16).

**Righteousness** (Lxx = [dikaiosune\(06666\)](#) [tsedaqah](#) from **tsedeq** = rightness, righteousness) conveys the idea of that which is straight and so one who is upright or righteous is one who walks a straight path. It describes justice, right actions, and right attitudes, as expected from both God and people when they judge. The root thought is that which conforms to an ethical or moral standard. The first use is one of the most significant uses in the OT - "Then he (ABRAM) believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness." (Ge 15:6) Righteousness is God's values and character in action (Jer. 9:24). He loves righteousness (Ps. 33:5). In Ps. 40:10, it is parallel with his faithfulness, salvation, loving-kindness and truth. Tsedaqah in Deuteronomy - Deut. 6:25; Deut. 9:4; Deut. 9:5; Deut. 9:6; Deut. 24:13; Deut. 33:21;

**Pulpit Commentary** - The distinction between **righteousness** and **uprightness** (straightness) of heart, is that the former (צַדִּיק) has reference to rectitude of *conduct*, the latter (יָשָׁר) to rectitude of *motive and purpose*. "By naming justice [righteousness], he excludeth all merit of works, and by righteousness [uprightness] of heart, all inward affections and purposes. which men might plead, notwithstanding that



they fail in action. Yet these two are the chief things which God respects in men (Ps 15:1-2; 1 Chr 29:17)" (Ainsworth). ([Deuteronomy 9](#))

**Uprightness** (03476)(**yosher** from **yashar** = to be straight) straightness, uprightness. It conveys more the sense of means integrity or moral lifestyle. Pr 2:13 refers to two paths in life and warns people to stay on the "paths of **uprightness**" and not to stray onto the crooked path (cf David's "walk" in 1 Ki 9:4). Ps 119:7 (cf Job 33:3) = "**uprightness** of heart." Pr 4:11 = "**upright** paths." Pr 14:2 = "He who walks in his **uprightness** fears the LORD." God delights in uprightness (1 Chr 29:17).

**Yosher** - 14v - correctly(1), honest(1), integrity(1), justly due(1), right(1), upright(1), uprightness(8), what is justly due(1). - Deut. 9:5; 1 Ki. 9:4; 1 Chr. 29:17; Job 6:25; Job 33:3; Job 33:23; Ps. 25:21; Ps. 119:7; Prov. 2:13; Prov. 4:11; Prov. 11:24; Prov. 14:2; Prov. 17:26; Eccl. 12:10

**but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God is driving them out before you** In Ge 15:16 God had said that during the 400 years while Israel was in Egypt, "the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete." Now their iniquity was complete and that is why they were driven out of the land.

**Utley** - Israel is not being given the land Canaan because of her godliness, but because of the Canaanite's ungodliness (cf. v. 4; Gen. 15:12–21; Lev. 18:24–28 ([Deuteronomy 9 Commentary](#)))

**TSK** - On many occasions, it may be seen in the history of the world, that God punishes the wicked by the instrumentality of other men, who are as wicked as themselves. Not the Israelites' righteousness, but the wickedness of the inhabitants, and the promise of God to their fathers, was the cause of their obtaining Canaan.

**in order** (purpose) **to confirm the oath which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob** Driving the enemy out was evidence that Yahweh was confirming the Abrahamic Covenant. Covenant is the basis for His actions, not Israel's intrinsic worthiness (because she had none). The promise of the land in the Abrahamic Covenant was a manifestation of God's grace (and faithfulness to His covenant promises).

As **Merrill** says Israel's "qualification (Ed: for attaining victory in the land) lay in the elective grace of their God, who had called their patriarchal ancestors into covenant with himself and who had promised to them a seed and a land." ([Cornerstone Biblical Commentary](#))

**McGee**- God did not come down to deliver Israel because they were a wonderful people. He knew all the time that they were a stiff-necked people, but He heard their cry in Egypt. And friend, if you recognize that you are a sinner and need a Savior, then you will need to cry to Him for salvation. He will hear you. Do you know why? Not because of who you are, but for Christ's sake. If you will turn to Christ in faith, He will save you. ([Deuteronomy 9 Mp3's](#))

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## Deuteronomy 9:6

Know, therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness.—Deut. 9.6.

In these words another peril, constantly threatening the people of God, is revealed, that, namely, of interpreting His goodness to them as resulting from their own righteousness. In the case of these very people, in process of time this was the peculiar sin that wrought their undoing. They came to look with contempt upon others, a sure sign of self-righteous pride. The result was that national exclusivism which prevented their fulfilment of pur-pose and ensured their downfall. The matter may be stated most powerfully perhaps by a personal application. It is well, therefore, that we constantly remind ourselves that when at last life's probationary experiences are done, and we pass on to the Father's home and the greater things beyond, our right of entrance there will be that of His abounding grace alone. As to service, we must never forget our Lord's words, that having done everything, we have but done our duty, and remain unprofitable servants. As to life itself, no long triumph over temptation, or realization of the character of holiness, can be thought of as creating our claim on God. Pride in our own righteousness, satisfaction with our own goodness, trust in our own holiness, are alike foolish and reprehensible. To the soul that knows itself, it is a growing wonder that God should love us at all. That He does so, is our only confidence. (G Campbell Morgan - Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible)

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## Bob Utley - SPECIAL TOPIC: COVENANT PROMISES TO THE PATRIARCHS

This initial promise of a special covenant relationship was made to:

1. Abraham, Gen. 12:1–3
  - a. land, Gen. 12:7; 13:4–15; 15:18–21
  - b. people, Gen. 13:16; 15:4–5; 17:2–6; 22:18
  - c. blessing to the world, Gen. 18:18; 22:18

2. Isaac, Gen. 26:2–4
    - a. land
    - b. people
    - c. blessing to the world
  3. Jacob, Gen. 28:2–4, 13; 35:9–12; 48:3–4
    - a. land
    - b. people
  4. the nation of Israel (a land), Exod. 3:8, 17; 6:8; 13:5; 33:1–3; Deut. 1:7–8, 35; 4:31; 9:3; 11:25; 31:7; Josh. 1:6
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### **F B Meyer - Deuteronomy 9:5 Not for thy righteousness.**

It is well to be reminded that we have no claim on God. All He does for us and gives us is of his own free grace. By grace have we been saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves — it is the gift of God. There certainly was nothing in us to merit eternal life, before our conversion; and it is equally sure that there has been nothing since to merit the continuance of his favour. Indeed, as we remember and review the past, to us belong shame and confusion of face for our repeated acts of disobedience. Oh the depth of the riches of his grace!

If we were not saved for our goodness, we shall not be lost for the lack of it. — When we have been betrayed into sin, in the keenness of our remorse, the fear is suggested lest God should put us utterly away. And there would be ground for the fear if we had been chosen because of our righteousness.

But since our original acceptance with God did not depend on works of righteousness which we had done, but on his mercy in Jesus Christ, it will not be undone by our failures. This thought does not lead to carelessness and indifference, but to a holy fear of sinning.

If our justification was apart from our merit, our sanctification will be. — The one was a gift, so must the other be; the hand of faith must receive each from Christ, and her voice must render thanks for each, as the unmerited gift of Divine Love. Where is boasting, then? It is shut out. We can claim nothing but emptiness and need. Handfuls of withered leaves! The Lord Jesus is our only hope, pleading for us in heaven, and living within our hearts. Of ourselves we are nothing: only in Him are we complete.

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### **James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - THE LAND OF PROMISE Deuteronomy 9–11**

“What He wills, I say I must;  
 What I must, I say I will;  
 He commanding, it is just  
 What He would I should fulfil.  
 Whilst He biddeth I believe  
 What He calls for He will give;  
 To obey Him is to live.”

Canaan may fitly represent the present inheritance of the believer, although many seem content to abide in the wilderness with the promise of “bread and water,” instead of passing over into full deliverance and joyful abundance (Heb. 3:17). From the above chapters we might learn the—

I. Character of this Possession. “It is a land watered and watched by the Lord from the beginning of the year to the end” (Dt 11:10–12). And may typify the grace and fullness given us of God in Jesus Christ (John 1:16, 17).

II. Difficulties to be Expected. “Nations greater and mightier than thyself” (Dt 9:1, 2). Paul tells us about these mightier ones in Romans 7, and also how to conquer in Ro 7:25.

III. Condition to be Remembered. “Speak not in thine heart, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in,” etc. (Dt 9:5, 6). The condition of receiving the greater blessing is not our righteousness but emptiness (Isa. 40:29).

IV. Attitudes to be Maintained. In Dt 10:12 they are exhorted: (1) To fear; (2) to walk; (3) to love; (4) to serve; (5) to keep; and in chapter 11:22 (6) to cleave (see 2 Peter 1:8).

V. Faith to be Exercised. “Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours” (chap. 11:24). The moment the feet of faith rests on the promise the blessing is secure (Mark 11:24).

VI. Promise to be Trusted. “The Lord thy God is He which goeth before thee” (Dt 9:3). I will dwell in them (2 Cor. 6:16). It is God in us that doeth the works (John 14:10).

VII. Victory to be Gained. "None shall be able to stand before thee," and the fear of thee shall be upon the land (chap. 11:25). How does the present-day Church answer to this? (Acts 6:10; Luke 21:15).

**Deuteronomy 9:6 "Know, then, it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stubborn people."**

- **Know, then:** De 9:3,4 Eze 20:44
- **give:** Moses repeats this a third time, that, if it were possible, he might root out of the Israelites the opinion of their own deserts, before God rooted out the Canaanites from their country.
- **stubborn:** De 9:13 10:16 31:27 Ex 32:9 33:3 34:9 2Ch 30:8 36:13 Ps 78:8 Isa 48:3,4 Eze 2:4 Zec 7:11,12 Ac 7:51 Ro 5:20,21
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 32:9 The LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, **they are an obstinate people.**

Exodus 33:3 "Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, because **you are an obstinate people,** and I might destroy you on the way."

Exodus 33:5 For the LORD had said to Moses, "Say to the sons of Israel, **You are an obstinate people;** should I go up in your midst for one moment, I would destroy you. Now therefore, put off your ornaments from you, that I may know what I shall do with you."

Exodus 34:9 He said, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, O Lord, I pray, let the Lord go along in our midst, **even though the people are so obstinate,** and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your own possession."

Psalm 78:8 And not be like their fathers, A stubborn and rebellious generation, A generation that did not prepare its heart And whose spirit was not faithful to God.

Isaiah 48:3; 4 "I declared the former things long ago And they went forth from My mouth, and I proclaimed them. Suddenly I acted, and they came to pass. 4 "Because I know that you are obstinate, And your neck is an iron sinew And your forehead bronze,

Ezekiel 2:4 "I am sending you to them who are stubborn and obstinate children, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.'

### ISRAEL'S RIGHTEOUSNESS DID NOT MERIT POSSESSION OF THE LAND

**Know, then, it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess** ([yarash](#)) - In short, God was not giving the Promised Land to Israel because of their righteousness. In summary Moses gives 3 reasons Israel would possess the land - (1) wickedness of the inhabitants, (2) surety of the Abrahamic Covenant and (3) a gift from God (aka "grace"!)

In fact, just to emphasize the fact that Israel did not deserve victory in the Promised land, Moses goes on to point out that what they did deserve was divine destruction (see Dt 9:13-14).

**For you are a stubborn people** - In case they still thought they had earned the right to possess the Promised Land, Moses explains that instead of being a righteous people, Israel was a **stubborn people**. To reiterate their promise of victory (and attaining of it) in the land was a clear manifestation of God's grace (undeserved favor) and His faithfulness to keep covenant with the patriarchs. **Stubborn** is literally two words in Hebrew [qasheh](#) meaning stiff (hard) and neck ([oreph](#)). Israel was like an unbroken draft animal that refused to turn its head to the right or left, repeatedly manifesting a spirit unsubmitive to Yahweh.

**Stephen** described a similar picture in addressing the Jews who were persecuting him declaring "You men who are **stiff-necked** ([sklerotrachelos](#)) and uncircumcised in heart (i.e., unbelievers - cf Ro 2:28-29+, Dt 30:6+) and ears are always resisting ([anthistemi](#) in present tense = continually) the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.." (Acts 7:51+)

**Stubborn** (obstinate, stiff) ([07186](#))([qasheh](#)) means hard, harsh, cruel, severe, strong, violent, fierce. This term's basic function is to describe something as hard. The root **qāshî** apparently arose from an agricultural milieu. It emphasizes, first, the subjective effect of an ox that is unsubmitive to the yoke and refuses to bend its neck and draw the load. It is found in Dt 9:6, 13, Dt 26:6 = "**hard** labor," Dt 31:27 = "stubbornness."

**THOUGHT** - As believers, we probably seldom think in our heart that we deserved salvation. But once we are in the family of God, filled with His Spirit and guided by His Word, as we experience spiritual victories privately or publicly, the ever present temptation of our fallen flesh (still present in believers) is to "take credit" (at least in part) for the victory! That's a dangerous heart attitude to harbor because God is always opposed to the proud while dispensing grace to the humble. May we all have a proper perspective when we are enabled by the Lord to experience spiritual victory. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

**McGee** - Do you know that God does not save you and me because we are good? We are sinners. He saves us for Christ's sake, not for our sake. Friend, if you think that somehow or other God will find something in you that merits salvation, forget it, because you will be disappointed. God knows you, and He says He can't find anything righteous in you at all. It is for Christ's sake that God saves us, and God finds everything we need in Him. How wonderful that is! You see that in this passage of Deuteronomy there is the seed for the gospel of the grace of God. ([Deuteronomy 9 Mp3's](#))

**Puritan writer John Trapp** has some insightful, pithy comments - We are wondrous apt to wind ourselves into the fool's paradise of a sublime dotage, upon our own worth and righteousness; otherwise, what need so many words here to one and the same purpose? The Scripture doth not use to kill flies with beetles, to cleave straws with wedges of iron, to spend many words where is no need. ([Deuteronomy 9](#))

**Deuteronomy 9:7** "Remember, do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness; from the day that you left the land of Egypt until you arrived at this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD.

- **Remember:** De 8:2 Eze 16:61-63 20:43 36:31 1Co 15:9 Eph 2:11 1Ti 1:13-15
- **from the day:** De 31:27 Dt 32:5,6 Ex 14:11 Ex 16:2 Ex 17:2 Nu 11:4 14:1-10 16:1-35 Nu 20:2-5 21:5 25:2 Ne 9:16-18 Ps 78:8-72 95:8-11
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:** (Israel's persistent bad attitude)

Deut 4:23-24+ So **watch** yourselves, that you do not forget (THERE'S THE PROBLEM - RAPID ONSET SPIRITUAL AMNESIA!) the covenant of the LORD your God which He made with you (THE COVENANT AT MOUNT SINAI), and (WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE FORGET?) make for yourselves a graven image in the form of anything against which the LORD your God has commanded you. For (EXPLAINING WHY THEY NEED TO CONTINUALLY WATCH THEMSELVES!) the LORD your God is a **consuming fire**, a jealous God.

Exodus 14:11 Then they said to Moses, "Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? **Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt?**"

Exodus 15:23-26 When they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of **Marah**, for they were bitter; therefore it was named Marah. 24 **So the people grumbled at Moses**, saying, "What shall we drink?" 25 Then he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree; and he threw it into the waters, and the waters became sweet. There He made for them a statute and regulation, and there He tested them (BITTER WATER = NO WATER TO DRINK, cf Dt 8:2 = LET THEM GO HUNGRY). 26 And He said, "If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer." ([Jehovah Rapha: \(Jehovah Rophe\) The LORD our Healer](#))

Exodus 16:2-3 The **whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled** against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. 3 The sons of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the LORD'S hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Exodus 17:1-2 Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel journeyed by stages from the wilderness of Sin, according to the command of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore **the people quarreled with Moses** and said, "Give us water that we may drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?"

**FORTY YEARS OF  
REBELLIOUSNESS**

**Deere** has an interesting comment that "This section (Dt 9:7-21) and what follows (Dt 7:22-10:11) are a well-argued commentary on the meaning of the statement "you are a stiff-necked people" ("you are a stubborn people." - Dt 9:6). ([Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**Remember, do not forget** - First the positive, then the negative using both "[sides of the same coin](#)" to greatly emphasize the need for them to hold the following thought fast in their mind. Israel was to keep the picture of past misbehavior which serves to foster humility instead of pride (that tends to come when God gives us good things and we think we deserved them!)

Israel is commanded to **remember** the Lord's past redemptive acts especially His miraculous deliverance of Israel from slavery (Dt 5:15; Dt 7:18; Dt 8:2, 18; Dt 9:7, 27; Dt 11:2; Dt 15:15; Dt 16:3, 12; Dt 24:9, 18, 22; Dt 25:17) Dt 32:7 sums it up well "Remember the days of old, Consider the years of all generations. Ask your father, and he will inform you, Your elders, and they will tell you."

**THOUGHT** - It is good to be *reminded* of (BUT NOT TO DWELL UPON) who were were before we were saved that we might continually be amazed by God's grace that chose to rescue us from spiritual death and eternal punishment!

**Remember** (record, mention) ([02142](#))(**zakar**) means to recall, call to mind past events that affect a present state, thought or action. (cf Ge 42:9) A bad remembrance was by Israel remembering what they ate in Egypt (Nu 11:5)! When Judah was in exile in Babylon, they "remembered Zion" (Ps 137:1) "In a majority of cases, the act denoted by this verb is more than recollection. In most instances, the act of "remembrance" is an act of covenantal or legal obligation, which leads to a present act. Remembrance is an act of recognition, not solely an act of reflection." Not only are the actions of humans remembered, but the actions of God are also remembered. The Israelites were to remember God's dealings with Pharaoh and the Egyptians (Deut. 7:18), God's guidance for forty years in the wilderness (Deut. 8:2) and God's provision for past generations (Deut. 32:7). The Israelites were accused of not remembering God's mighty acts (Ps. 78:42; 106:7). One of the sins which Israel confessed after the exile was the sin of forgetting the works of God (Neh. 9:17). Inherent in this forgetfulness concerning Yahweh is the rationale for the exile. Forgetting in this sense means ignoring the covenant and its obligations for the people. Thus, Yahweh was within his legal (as well as moral) right to revoke the covenant, and his obligation to protect the people and keep them on the land. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Zakar in Deuteronomy** - Deut. 5:15; Deut. 7:18; Deut. 8:2; Deut. 8:18; Deut. 9:7; Deut. 9:27; Deut. 15:15; Deut. 16:3; Deut. 16:12; Deut. 24:9; Deut. 24:18; Deut. 24:22; Deut. 25:17; Deut. 32:7;

**Guzik** - God's purpose in reminding Israel of their rebellions against Him was not to discourage them or to make them feel defeated. The purpose was so that they would recognize their own weakness and trust in Him. **You have been rebellious against the Lord:** The same idea is communicated in the New Testament at 1 Corinthians 10:12: Therefore let him who things he stands take heed lest he fall. When we remember our sinful nature, we walk in the poverty of spirit Jesus said was essential to a life of blessing (Matthew 5:3). ([Deuteronomy 9](#))

**McIntosh** points out that "**Spiritual insensitivity** is often associated with a **poor or selective memory**. God wanted Israel to **reflect soberly on their distressing record** from the day they left Egypt until they arrived on the fringe of the promised land. God does not desire his people to spend their lives grieving over their sins, but neither does he want them to be unconcerned about their obedience. Israel's track record had been consistently rebellious against the Lord through Moses' long association with them. ([Holman Old Testament Commentary](#))

**John Trapp** - Nothing is so hard as to be humbled; for man is a proud, cross creature, that would be something at home, whatever he is abroad; and comes not down without a great deal of difficulty. Hence it is, that Moses so sets it on here, and with one knock after another drives this nail home to the head, that he might cripple their iron sinews, bring their stiff necks to the yoke of God's obedience, and make them know that he was Jehovah, when he had "wrought with them for his name's sake, not according to their wicked ways, nor according to their corrupt doings." {Eze 20:43-44; Eze 36:31-32} ([Deuteronomy 9](#))

**How you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness**- This verse summarizes Dt 9:8-25 in which Moses rehearses the history of the Israelites from the time of their deliverance from Egypt to underscore the fact that they had no righteousness of their own to boast about! To the contrary they had continually angered the Lord over the 40 years after He had graciously delivered them from bondage. Moses is making a clear case against Israel showing how absurd it would be for them to ever think that the Promised Land was given to them from God as a reward for their righteousness! And so in Dt 9:8-25 Moses emphasizes that Israel had no intrinsic righteousness!

**From the day that you left the land of Egypt until you arrived at this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD-** Israel had continually rebelled against the good and gracious hand of the LORD! **Rebellious** ([marah](#)) is translated in the **Septuagint** with the verb [apeitheo](#) meaning to refuse to believe or disobey (if you disbelieve you manifest it by disobeying).

Even before Israel was completely delivered from Egypt, they began to complain and this would prove a harbinger of things to come! Moses records their first faith failure in Exodus 14...

When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his servants had a change of heart toward the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" 6 So he made his chariot ready and took his people with him; 7 and he took six hundred select chariots, and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. 8 The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he chased after the sons of Israel as the sons of Israel were going out boldly. 9 Then the Egyptians chased after them with all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and they overtook them camping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon. 10 As Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD. 11 Then they said to Moses, "**Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt?**" 12 "**Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.**" 13 But Moses said to the people, "Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the LORD which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. 14 "The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent." (Exodus 14:5-14+).

**Rebellious** ([04784](#))([marah](#)) means to be contentious, refractory, disobedient, , contrary, rebellious, and openly defiant to an authority by not obeying commands. Most of the uses of **marah** refer to rebellion by Israel or Judah against Jehovah. **Marah** signifies an opposition to someone motivated by pride: (Dt. 21:18). **Marah** is used with similar descriptive words - stubborn (Dt 21:18, 20, Jer 5:23, Ps 78:8), to grieve (Isa 63:10, Ps 78:40), to refuse (Isa 1:20, Neh 9:17), to transgress (Lam 3:42), to sin (Ps 78:17), to test (Ps 78:56), to rebel (**marad** in Neh 9:26), to reject or profane (Ezek 20:13).

**Marah** in Deuteronomy - Dt. 1:26 = "rebelled against the command of the LORD"; Dt. 1:43 = 'you rebelled against the command of the LORD, "; Dt. 9:7; Dt. 9:23; Deut. 9:24; Deut. 21:18 = "rebellious son"; Dt. 21:20; Dt. 31:27 "you have been rebellious against the LORD."

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**Brian Bell** - Why this book? - Because of memory lost. Ever hear of the story about the 3 absent-minded sisters who lived together, Anabelle, Mabel, & Gladys? Anabelle announced she was going upstairs to take a bubble bath. She filled the tub, got one leg in & forgot if she was getting in or getting out. She called Mabel to help. Mabel started up the stairs, making it to the landing, & then couldn't remember if she was going up or coming down. It was Gladys' time to help. Gladys shaking her head lamented, "those 2 sisters of mine, if they didn't have me to help them remember they wouldn't make it through the day. I'm glad I'm not like that, knock on wood." She wrapped twice on the coffee table, then responded looking in the direction of the front door, "Come in!" **We all forget at times.** Sometimes it can paralyze us and keep us from moving ahead. To get where we need to go, we need to remember where we've been. \*That's why the Israelites needed the Book of Deut. It reminded them of their past & prepared them for their future. This second generation of desert wanderers were about to enter the Promise Land. But before they could move ahead, they needed to recall & emblazon on their minds & hearts the precious heritage God had given them (ED: History is HIS-story) As they would reflect on God's Faithfulness they would build faith for the future. Ps.103:1-5 And forget none of His benefits

**Deuteronomy 9:8 "Even at Horeb you provoked the LORD to wrath, and the LORD was so angry with you that He would have destroyed you.**

- [Horeb](#) (Mt Sinai): Ex 32:16 Ps 106:19-22
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Psalm 106:19-22+ They made a calf in Horeb And worshiped a molten image. 20 Thus they exchanged their glory For the image of an ox that eats grass. 21 They forgot God their Savior (VERY QUICKLY FORGOT! SEE COMMENTS BELOW.), Who had done great things in Egypt, 22 Wonders in the land of Ham And



## HOT WRATH AT HOREB

**Deere** points out that "This (GOLDEN CALF) incident (Ex. 32), perhaps more than any other until that time, illustrates Israel's sinfulness on the one hand and God's grace on the other. ([Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**Even at Horeb you provoked the LORD to wrath** - Horeb is Mt Sinai and this refers to the episode of the Golden calf as described in Exodus 32:1-7+. Recall the context -- Earlier God had Himself spoken the words of the "10 Commandments" (Ex 20:1-17+) directly to Israel and they were so frightened by the sight and sounds coming from the mountain (Ex 20:18+) that they ask Moses "Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die. 20 Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you (BY THE FRIGHTENING SCENE ON MT SINAI), and in order (PURPOSE) that the **fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin.**" (Ex 20:19-20+) Clearly, the fear of God did not remain with Aaron or the Israelites and they quickly forgot and broke the first commandments they had just heard from God Himself in Ex 20:3-5+ "You shall have no other gods before Me. 4 "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. 5 "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me."

**Provoked to wrath (07107)(qatsaph)** means a strong emotional outburst of anger, especially when man is the subject of the reaction, the first us describing Pharaoh who "was furious." Most of the seventeen passages which speak of God becoming angry are descriptions of his wrath at Israel because of their disobedience (e.g., Lev. 10:6) and sin (Num. 16:22; Lam. 5:22) And so 23x **qatsaph** is said that God was wrath, whether against the heathen or against his covenant people. As in the present passage it can refer to God being angry or provoked (Deut. 9:7, 8, 22; Zech. 1:2; 8:14). Jehovah's anger at the "strange fire" offered by [Nadab and Abihu](#) resulted in their death (just as it did for all of the first generation out of Egypt, except for Joshua and Caleb). In Isa 47:6 qatsaph speaks of Yahweh's anger that resulted in Judah's exile to Babylon. 32v - Gen. 40:2; Gen. 41:10; Exod. 16:20; Lev. 10:6; Lev. 10:16; Num. 16:22; Num. 31:14; Deut. 1:34; Deut. 9:7; Deut. 9:8; Deut. 9:19; Deut. 9:22; Jos. 22:18; 1 Sam. 29:4; 2 Ki. 5:11; 2 Ki. 13:19; Est. 1:12; Est. 2:21; Ps. 106:32; Eccl. 5:6; Isa. 8:21; Isa. 47:6; Isa. 54:9; Isa. 57:16; Isa. 57:17; Isa. 64:5; Isa. 64:9; Jer. 37:15; Lam. 5:22; Zech. 1:2; Zech. 1:15; Zech. 8:14

**And the LORD was so angry with you that He would have destroyed(shamad) you** - This is described in Ex 32:9-14+ "The LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, they are an **obstinate (qasheh)** people (THIS IS AT THE VERY BEGINNING OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL!). 10 "Now then let Me alone, that **My anger may burn against them** and that **I may destroy them;** and I will make of you a great nation." (THIS WAS GOD'S "PLAN B"! 11 (MOSES APPEALS TO HIS POWER, HIS DELIVERANCE) Then Moses entreated the LORD his God, and said, "O LORD, why does Your anger burn against Your people whom You have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12 (MOSES APPEALS TO HIS REPUTATION, HIS HONOR) "Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, 'With evil intent He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your burning anger and change Your mind about doing harm to Your people. 13 (MOSES APPEALS TO THE COVENANT) "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'" 14 So (GOD RELENTS) the LORD changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people."

**Angry (0599)(anaph)** means to be angry, enraged, or to breathe through the nose (see note on aph). The word derives its meaning from the heavy breathing and snorting typical of anger. Anaph is only of God's anger or displeasure with His people: Moses (Dt. 1:37; 4:21); Aaron (Dt. 9:20); Solomon (1 Ki. 11:9); and Israel (Dt. 9:8; 1 Ki. 8:46; 2 Ki. 17:18; Ps. 60:1; Ps. 79:5). Each of these men (and the nation) provoked God's anger. Psalm 2:12, refers to the anger of Messiah.

**Anaph** - 14x in 14v - Deut. 1:37; Deut. 4:21; Deut. 9:8; Deut. 9:20; 1 Ki. 8:46; 1 Ki. 11:9; 2 Ki. 17:18; 2 Chr. 6:36; Ezr. 9:14; Ps. 2:12; Ps. 60:1; Ps. 79:5; Ps. 85:5; Isa. 12:1

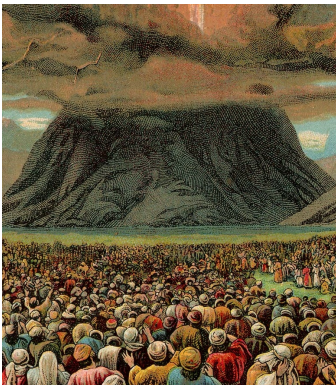
**Deuteronomy 9:9 "When I went up to the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which the LORD had made with you, then I remained on the mountain forty days and nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water.**

- **When I went up to the mountain:** Ex 24:12,15,18

- **to receive the tablets of stone:** De 9:15 Ex 31:18 34:28 Jer 31:31,32 Ga 4:24
- **then I:** Ex 24:18 34:28 1Ki 19:8 Mt 4:2
- **I neither:** De 9:18 1Ki 13:8,9 2Ki 6:22
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Exodus 24:12-20+ Now the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and remain there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commandment which I have written for their instruction." 13 So Moses arose with Joshua his servant, and Moses went up to the mountain of God. 14 But to the elders he said, "Wait here for us until we return to you. And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a legal matter, let him approach them." 15 Then Moses went up to the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. 16 The glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud. 17 And to the eyes of the sons of Israel the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the mountain top. 18 Moses entered the midst of the cloud as he went up to the mountain; and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.



Mt Sinai - Yahweh Like a Consuming Fire

### MOSES WAS FASTING WHILE ISRAEL WAS FEASTING!

**When I went up to the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which the LORD had made with you, then I remained on the mountain forty days and nights** - Remember Moses is speaking to the second generation and he refers to this as **the covenant which the LORD had made with YOU** He does not say THEM. And yet undoubtedly some of those now listening were not even born. The point is that the nation is bound to the Mosaic Covenant originally cut with the first generation. Note the striking irony, for while Moses was receiving the tablets of the covenant, Israel was breaking several of the commandments on the tablets!

**Tablets of the covenant** - used only 3x all in this chapter Dt 9:9 Dt 9:11 Dt 9:15

**I neither ate bread nor drank water** - This is the first of two 40 day fasts (Dt 9:18). While Moses was fasting, rebellious Israel was feasting, Exodus 32:6+ recording "So the next day they rose early and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play (MANY INTERPRET "**PLAY**" AS ENGAGE IN IMMORAL ACTIVITIES)."

**McIntosh** makes an excellent point - These stone tablets were given to Moses at the end of a period of forty days and forty nights when he ate no bread and drank no water. **He found from personal experience the reality that the presence of God is more satisfying than food** (cp. Deut. 8:3). ([Holman Old Testament Commentary](#))

#### Deuteronomy 9:9-16 Fast Freeze

Thanks to Internet technology, I can watch ice building up on Lake Michigan from my warm office 30 miles away. The changing angle of the sun's rays in winter chills the earth. Frigid temperatures turn surging water into rock-hard ice in a surprisingly short time. Witnessing this rapid transition reminds me of how quickly our hearts can turn cool toward God.

That happened to the ancient Israelites. After God miraculously rescued them from slavery, they became impatient when Moses climbed Mt. Sinai to meet God and didn't return according to their timetable. So they got together and created their own god (Exodus 32:1). The Lord told Moses to hurry back down the mountain because the people had so quickly turned away (Deuteronomy 9:12).

When situations don't unfold according to our timetable, we might assume that God has lost interest in us. When we no longer feel close to Him, our hearts may grow cold. But God is always with us. As the psalmist wrote, "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?" (Psalm 139:7).

Even when God seems distant, He's not. His presence fills heaven and earth (Ps 139:8-10). There's never a reason to let our hearts freeze over.—Julie Ackerman Link ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,  
With all Thy quickening powers;  
Kindle a flame of sacred love  
In these cold hearts of ours.  
—Watts

The question is not where is God, but where isn't He

**Deuteronomy 9:10 "The LORD gave me the two tablets of stone written by the finger of God; and on them were all the words which the LORD had spoken with you at the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly.**

- **The LORD** Ex 31:18
- **Written by the finger of God:** De 10:4 Mt 12:28 Lu 11:20 2Co 3:3 Heb 8:10
- **All the words** De 4:10-15 5:6-21 18:16 Ex 19:17-19 20:1-18
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

##### THE FINGER OF GOD...

Exodus 8:18-19+ The magicians tried with their secret arts to bring forth gnats, but they could not; so there were gnats on man and beast. 19 Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is **the finger of God.**" But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

Exodus 31:18+ (Fulfillment of the promise of Ex 24:12+ When He had finished speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the **finger of God.**

##### FROM THE MIDST OF THE FIRE....

Deuteronomy 4:12 "Then **the LORD spoke to you from the midst of the fire** you heard the sound of words, but you saw no form—only a voice.

Deuteronomy 4:15 "So watch yourselves carefully, since you did not see any form on the day **the LORD spoke to you at Horeb from the midst of the fire,**

Deuteronomy 4:33 "Has any people heard the voice of **God speaking from the midst of the fire,** as you have heard it, and survived?

Deuteronomy 4:36 "Out of the heavens He let you hear His voice to discipline you; and **on earth He let you see His great fire, and you heard His words from the midst of the fire.**

Deuteronomy 5:5 while I was standing between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you **were afraid because of the fire** and did not go up the mountain. He said, (THE TEN COMMANDMENTS)

Deuteronomy 5:22 "These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly at the mountain **from the midst of the fire,** of the cloud and of the thick gloom, with a great voice, and He added no more. He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.

Deuteronomy 5:24 "You said, 'Behold, the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire; we have seen today that God speaks with man, yet he lives.

Deuteronomy 5:26 'For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking **from the midst of the fire,** as we have, and lived?

Deuteronomy 9:10 “The LORD gave me the two tablets of stone written by the finger of God; and on them were all the words which the LORD had spoken with you at the mountain **from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly.**

Deuteronomy 10:4 “He wrote on the tablets, like the former writing, the Ten Commandments which **the LORD had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire** on the day of the assembly; and the LORD gave them to me.

## **DIVINE COMMANDMENTS WRITTEN IN STONE**

**The LORD gave me the two tablets of stone written by the finger of God-** As indicated by Ex 8:18-19+ above one meaning of the **finger of God** is that it is a reflection of the power of God. Sadly Moses would end up breaking these precious tablets in righteous indignation against Israel's sin of the golden calf. The finger of God emphasizes how personal and intimate Yahweh's association was with the covenant He had declared to the people.

**NET Note on finger of God** - The expression “the finger of God” has come up before in the book, in the plagues (Exod 8:15) to express that it was a demonstration of the power and authority of God. So here too the commandments given to Moses on stone tablets came from God. It too is a bold [anthropomorphism](#); to attribute such a material action to Yahweh would have been thought provoking to say the least. But by using “God” and by stating it in an obviously figurative way, balance is maintained. Since no one writes with one finger, the expression simply says that the Law came directly from God. This is a double figure of speech (1) in which God is ascribed human features ([anthropomorphism](#)) and (2) in which a part stands for the whole (synecdoche). That is, God, as Spirit, has no literal finger nor, if he had, would he write with his finger. Rather, the sense is that God himself – not Moses in any way – was responsible for the composition of the Ten Commandments (cf. Ex 31:18; Ex 32:16; 34:1). (See also Utlely's topic - [Anthropomorphic Language to describe God](#))

**NET Note- The very finger of God.** This is a double figure of speech (1) in which God is ascribed human features (anthropomorphism) and (2) in which a part stands for the whole (synecdoche). That is, God, as Spirit, has no literal finger nor, if he had, would he write with his finger. Rather, the sense is that God himself—not Moses in any way—was responsible for the composition of the Ten Commandments (cf. Exod 31:18; 32:16; 34:1).

**And on them were all the words which the LORD had spoken with you at the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly** - So Yahweh spoke these words in Exodus 20:1-18. Now He records them, written in stone! And as discussed below, it appears that the mountain was burning with fire (cf Dt 9:15) for 40 days and 40 nights (even as Israel made the golden calf!)

**Utlely-** “**the LORD had spoken with you at the mountain from the midst of the fire**” This is a recurrent theme (cf. Dt 4:12, 15, 33, 36; 5:5, 22, 24, 26; 9:10; 10:4). The phrase emphasizes God's acts and the content of personal covenant revelation at Mt. Horeb/Sinai. ([Deuteronomy 9 Commentary](#))

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### **QUESTION - [What is the finger of God?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The phrase *the finger of God* is found four times in the Bible, three times in the Old Testament and once in the New. It is synonymous with the supernatural power of God as it directly impacts events in this world. The first reference to the finger of God is found in Exodus. Moses had just unleashed the third [plague](#) on Egypt in an effort to force Pharaoh to free the Israelites who had been held captive for four hundred years. The Lord instructed Moses to tell Aaron to stretch out his staff and “strike the dust of the earth, so that it may become gnats in all the land of Egypt” (Exodus 8:16). After Pharaoh's magicians tried and failed to replicate the miracle, they said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God” (Exodus 8:19).

The second reference to the finger of God also occurs in Exodus, where the phrase is used about the tablets of stone given to Moses. These tablets contained the covenant law, “inscribed by the finger of God” (Exodus 31:18). Moses relates an account of the same incident in Deuteronomy 9:10. It is not to be supposed that God literally touched the tablets, since God is spirit and has no “fingers”; rather, the phrase *the finger of God* is an [anthropomorphism](#) indicating that God directly caused the commandments to be engraved upon the stone. The 1956 movie *The Ten Commandments* depicts the writing as coming from a finger of fire, which is probably as good a rendering of the actual act as any. However God accomplished it, the letters were devised and formed by Him, the writing was His, and the engraving on the stones was done by His own power.

The New Testament reference to the finger of God is from Jesus Himself. After freeing a blind and mute man from [ademon](#), Jesus said to His critics, “If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Luke 11:20). In a parallel passage, the phrase is *the Spirit of God* rather than *the finger of God* (Matthew 12:28). In both accounts, the meaning is that Jesus performed miracles by the overt power of God, the same power that caused the gnats to swarm and the writing to appear on

the tablets of stone.

The finger of God is a reference to God's unlimited power as He intervenes directly in the affairs of men. The working of the finger of God is unmistakable. No device of man can compete with that power, as even the heathen magicians came to recognize in Moses' day. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**Deuteronomy 9:11 "It came about at the end of forty days and nights that the LORD gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant.**

- **the tables of the covenant:** De 9:9 Nu 10:33 Heb 8:6-10 9:4
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 24:18+ Moses entered the midst of the cloud as he went up to the mountain; and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

Exodus 31:18+ (Fulfillment of the promise of Ex 24:12+ When He had finished speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the **finger of God**.)

**It came about at the end of forty days and nights that the LORD gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant** - Repeats Dt 9:10. The fact that God's commandments were written in stone suggest that they were to be passed down from generation to generation so that the words of His covenant might be treasured and obeyed by the subsequent generations.

**Deuteronomy 9:12 "Then the LORD said to me, 'Arise, go down from here quickly, for your people whom you brought out of Egypt have acted corruptly. They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them; they have made a molten image for themselves.'**

- **Arise:** Ex 32:7-8
- **have acted corruptly:** De 4:16 Dt 31:29 32:5 Ge 6:11,12 Jude 1:10
- **have quickly turned aside** De 9:16 Jud 2:17 Ps 78:57 Ho 6:4 Ga 1:6
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Exodus 32:7-8+ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Go down at once, for your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. 8 "They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf, and have worshiped it and have sacrificed to it and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!'"

Ex 20:3+ "You shall have no other gods before Me.

Ex 20:4+ "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.

## FAIR WEATHER WORSHIPERS!

**Then the LORD said to me, 'Arise, go down from here quickly, for your people whom you brought out of Egypt have acted corruptly** - Apparently 40 days is abruptly brought to a halt. As the **NLT** says "Quick! Go down the mountain!" It is as if God is saying "These are **your** people, not **My** people!" Throughout all the whole series of events connected with the exodus God had referred to them as '**My people**'. Yahweh is repeated stated as the one Who brought them out of Egypt, but here is the sole mention that it was Moses who brought them out.

**John Trapp - Arise]** From off thy knees; the petitioner's posture. St James, they say, {a} had knees as hard as camels' knees, with continual kneeling; and Hilarion was found dead in his oratory with knees bent, eyes and hands lifted up. {b} Father Latimer, during his imprisonment, was so constant and instant in prayer, that oftentimes he was not able to rise without help ([Deuteronomy 9](#))



**NET Note** on **your people** - By giving the people to Moses in this way, God is saying that they have no longer any right to claim him as their God, since they have shared his honor with another. This is God's talionic response to their "*These are your gods who brought you up.*" The use of these pronoun changes also would form an appeal to Moses to respond, since Moses knew that God had brought them up from Egypt.

**McIntosh** has an interesting thought on God using the phrase **your people** - These words contained an implied test: would Moses be willing to shoulder the responsibility of being an intercessor? Would he, like his countryman Jesus, stand between his people and divine judgment? ([Holman Old Testament Commentary](#))

**Bush - Thy people.** A tone of indignation breathes through this language, as if the offending people had forfeited all right to be longer considered God's people, and he had utterly cast them off; 'for thy people have corrupted themselves.'

**Have acted corrupted** (07843)(**shachath**) means to decay, to go to ruin, to corrupt, to destroy (Sodom and Gomorrah = Ge 13:10, Ge 18:28, 31-32), to lay waste (Egypt from swarms of flies -Ex 8:24). Shachath is used of Israelites who worshiped the golden calf (Ex 32:7; Dt 9:12; 32:5, Hos 9:9). God warned He would destroy Israel if they were turned away from following Him (Nu 32:15). Shachath describes Israel's behavior as more corrupt after a judge died (Jdg 2:19). The verb is used literally to describe a girdle irreparably damaged by water (Jer. 13:7), a spoiled piece of clay pottery that it is thrown away (Jer. 18:4), and a well whose water is polluted (Pr 25:26). It is used figuratively to describe human actions so morally corrupt that God always responds in destruction' **Shachath in Deuteronomy** - Deut. 4:16; Deut. 4:25; Deut. 4:31; Deut. 9:12; Deut. 9:26; Deut. 10:10; Deut. 20:19; Deut. 20:20; Deut. 31:29; Deut. 32:5;

**They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them** -Remember how quick Israel was to enter the covenant "Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!" (Ex 24 3±) "Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!" (Ex 24:7±)

**NET Note** on **turned aside** - The verb is a perfect tense, reflecting the present perfect nuance: "they have turned aside" and are still disobedient. But the verb is modified with the adverb "**quickly**" (actually a Piel infinitive absolute). It has been only a matter of weeks since they heard the voice of God prohibiting this.

Note God's adverb **quickly**! This is a veritable understatement! The Hebrew word for **quickly** (**maher**) has the sense always of doing something in a hurry, hastily, even rashly because of being in haste. What a picture of Israel! Israel directly disobeyed the second commandment Ex 20:4+ (Ex 20:23+), which should have been one of the foremost in their mind. But you can forget a lot in 40 days if you are not careful!

**Turned aside** (05493)(**sur**) basically means to change direction, to turn away, to go away, to desert, to quit, to keep far away, to stop, to take away, to remove, to be removed, to make depart. Literally of turning aside or departing from the road a person is traveling (Jdg 18:3, 15) or departing from a road or path by turning aside from the original course (Ex 3:3; Dt. 2:27; Jdg. 18:3; 19:15; Ru 4:1; 1 Sam. 6:12; 1 Ki 22:32; Jer.5:23); to step out of line militarily (1 Ki 20:39); to retreat from a path (Ge 49:10; Ex 8:27; Nu 12:10; 14:9; Dt. 4:9; Jdg. 16:19; 1 Sa 6:3; 16:14)' Used figuratively, it has to do with the moral direction someone is taking; turning from the right road. Israel turned aside from the way of their ancestors walked (Jdg. 2:17) and away from God's commands (Mal 3:7). Israel's leaders exhorted them not to turn aside from the right way (Dt.77:20; Josh. 23:6; 1 Sa 12:20, 21). To stay on course is to turn neither to the right or to the left (Dt. 2:27; 5:32; Josh 1:7; 2 Ki 22:2).

**Sur in Deuteronomy** - Deut. 2:27; Deut. 4:9; Deut. 5:32; Deut. 7:4; Deut. 7:15; Deut. 9:12; Deut. 9:16; Deut. 11:16; Deut. 11:28; Deut. 17:11; Deut. 17:17; Deut. 17:20; Deut. 21:13; Deut. 28:14; Deut. 31:29;

**They have made a molten image for themselves** - The golden calf was made in direct disobedience to the command given about 40 days earlier clearly stating "'You shall not make other gods besides Me; gods of silver or gods of gold, you shall not make for yourselves.'" (Ex 20:23+)

In Dt 9:13 they are called obstinate or stiff-necked and desired a calf to represent God, which is ironic as the calf/bull is a beast of burden, which is well known to stiffen its neck!

**Utley** comments that Israel "wanted a god they could see and touch like the peoples of Egypt and Canaan had." [Deuteronomy 9 Commentary](#)

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## Fast Freeze

Go down quickly from here, for your people whom you brought out of Egypt have . . . quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. —Deuteronomy 9:12

Today's Scripture: Deuteronomy 9:9-16

Thanks to Internet technology, I can watch ice building up on Lake Michigan from my warm office 30 miles away. The changing angle of the sun's rays in winter chills the earth. Frigid temperatures turn surging water into rock-hard ice in a surprisingly short time. Witnessing this rapid transition reminds me of how quickly our hearts can turn cool toward God.

That happened to the ancient Israelites. After God miraculously rescued them from slavery, they became impatient when Moses climbed Mt. Sinai to meet God and didn't return according to their timetable. So they got together and created their own god (Exodus 32:1). The Lord told Moses to hurry back down the mountain because the people had so quickly turned away (Deuteronomy 9:12).

When situations don't unfold according to our timetable, we might assume that God has lost interest in us. When we no longer feel close to Him, our hearts may grow cold. But God is always with us. As the psalmist wrote, "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?" (Psalm 139:7).

Even when God seems distant, He's not. His presence fills heaven and earth (vv.8-10). There's never a reason to let our hearts freeze over. By: Julie Ackerman Link ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,  
With all Thy quickening powers;  
Kindle a flame of sacred love  
In these cold hearts of ours.  
—Watts

The question is not where is God, but where isn't He?

**Deuteronomy 9:13 "The LORD spoke further to me, saying, 'I have seen this people, and indeed, it is a stubborn people.'**

- **I have:** Ge 11:5 18:21 Ex 32:9,10 Ps 50:7 Jer 7:11 13:27 Ho 6:10 Mal 3:5
- **stubborn :** De 9:6 10:16 31:27 2Ki 17:14
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passage:

Exodus 32:9+ The LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate people.

## GOD SEES ALL

**The LORD spoke further to me, saying, 'I have seen this people'** - This is an [anthropomorphism](#), because the omniscient God sees everything all the time. Notice the phrase is not "My people," but "this people!"

**ESV Note** adds "**This people** is almost a contemptuous description of Israel, continuing God's disassociation from Israel (ED: IN V12 HE HAD SAID "YOUR PEOPLE" TO MOSES).

**NET Note** on **I have seen this people** - This is a bold anthropomorphism; it is as if God has now had a chance to get to know these people and has discovered how rebellious they are. The point of the figure is that there has been discernible evidence of their nature.

**And indeed, it is a stubborn** (stiff-necked - [qasheh](#)) **people** - **And indeed** is better translated "**Behold**" (Dt 9:13KJV) the Hebrew interjection [hinneh](#) which serves to call one to pay special attention to what follows. **Stubborn** is two words in Hebrew, stiff and neck, and is an idiom derived from cattle used as draft animals whose power was concentrated in their neck (Hos 4:16, Jer 5:5) so in the figurative sense whoever resists the yoke is "hard-necked." Hebrew anthropology often portrays the inner will in terms of the heart, neck, and face. They were like a stubborn horse that refuses to respond to the rider's tug on the reins! Cole says obstinate "is a farmer's metaphor of an ox or a horse that will not respond to the rope when tugged." This idiom obstinate ("stiff-necked") occurs

five more times all are in the Pentateuch (Ex. 33:3, 5; Ex 34:9; Dt. 9:6, 13) There is a similar expression "stiffen your neck" usually directed at Israel (Dt. 10:16; 2 Ki 17:14; 2 Chr 30:8; Neh 9:16, 17; Pr 29:1; Jer. 7:26; Jer 17:23). These obstinate/stiff-necked people would not bow under the true and living God's authority (cf. Jer 27:11-12), but readily "bowed down" to an inanimate, lifeless golden calf and worshiped it

Their **stiff necks** were a simply a reflection of the underlying pathology -- their **hard hearts**.

**NET Note** - The Hebrew word translated **stubborn** means "stiff-necked." The image is that of a draft animal that is unsubmitive to the rein or yoke and refuses to bend its neck to draw the load. This is an apt description of OT Israel (Ex 32:9; 33:3, 5; 34:9; Dt 9:13). Compare the equivalent allusion, Is. 48:4, 'Thy neck is an iron sinew,' which would not bend. Jer. 5:5, 'But these (the great men) have altogether broken the yoke and burst the bonds.' Jacob says the image (stubborn) is that of the people walking before God, and when he called to them the directions, they would not bend their neck to listen; they were resolute in doing what they intended to do (Exodus, 943). The figure describes them as refusing to submit, but resisting in pride.

The sad record of Israel's history is one generation of stubborn/stiff-necked men and women after another (Dt 31:27, 2 Ki 17:14, 2 Chr 30:8, 36:13, Neh 9:16, 17, 29, Jer 7:26, 17:23, 19:15). The irony is that this same expression used of Pharaoh who was stiff-necked (his heart was hardened) in refusing to let Israel go to worship Yahweh. Now that they have been delivered to worship Yahweh, they became stiff-necked like Pharaoh!

**Deuteronomy 9:14** **'Let Me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.'**

- **Let me:** Ex 32:10-13 Isa 62:6,7 Jer 14:11 15:1 Lu 11:7-10 18:1-8 Ac 7:51
- **blot:** De 29:20 Ex 32:32-33 Ps 9:5 Ps 109:13 Pr 10:7 Rev 3:5
- **and I will:** Nu 14:11,12
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GOD'S SEEKS TO DESTROY ISRAEL

**Let Me alone** - **NET** = "Stand aside." It means basically "Loosen your grip from Me" and is used in Ps 46:10 ("Be still...").

**ESV Note** - Moses' intercession for the makers of the golden calf is not described until Dt 9:25, though it is alluded to in Dt 9:19, in order to keep the theme of Israel's stubbornness uninterrupted through Dt 9:24 (cf. Ex. 32:9-10, 15).

**McIntosh** has an interesting comment on **Let Me alone** - The words **let me alone** resonate with meaning in this context. They contain the implicit notion that, if Moses should choose to press the case, God would abandon his proposal for the sake of Moses' intercession. So it is with all biblical warnings. If God had determined to destroy Israel, he would not have announced his displeasure with them to Moses; he simply would have executed his purpose. Prophetic warnings carry with them either an expressed or an implied condition: "unless you repent" (cp. Rev. 2:5NKJV). God is someone to whom we can pray, and (from our point of view at least) our prayers make a difference. To Moses' credit, he donned the mantle of the intercessor and pleaded for "his" people. ([Holman Old Testament Commentary](#))

**That I may destroy (shamad) them and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they** - In Ex 32:10+ we have the parallel passage - "Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation." The promise **I will make of you a nation** is promise God had given to Abraham (Ge 12:2+, Ge 18:18). When Israel rebelled in Numbers, God gave Moses a similar, even slightly stronger offer declaring ""I will smite them with pestilence and dispossess them, and I will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they." (Nu 14:12+) And since Moses was a human like all of us, this might have been a tempting and attractive offer, but such did not prove the case for the man Moses of whom God said no one was more humble (Nu 12:3+). Moses was clearly not in it for his glory, but for the glory of God (cf 1 Cor 10:31+)

**Alan Cole** - the people would now bear the tribal name of 'sons of Moses', not 'sons of Israel'. The price was only to abandon his shepherd's calling, and to let Israel go. Their own behaviour had earned their rejection, as he is reminded here. But no true shepherd could do this: so comes the intercessory prayer of Moses (Ex 32:11-13, taken up again in Ex 32:31, 32), reminiscent of the prayer of Abraham (Gen. 18:22-33). ([TOTC-Exodus](#))

**Criswell** - The command of God was a test similar to that given Abraham in Ge 22:2. The fate of Israel was being placed in the

hands of Moses. God could not and would not retract His promise made to Abraham. If in His wrath He destroyed the nation because of their apostasy, He would then fulfill the covenant through the descendants of Moses. Moses could have given up the people who were guilty and exalted himself. However, he passed the test and proved that the preservation of his people was more important to him than the honor of becoming the founder of a new nation.

**Blot out** (wipe)(04229)(**machah**) means to wipe, to wipe out and is often connected with divine judgment as with God wiping out all life in the flood (Ge 6:7, Ge 7:23); Amalek (Ex 17:14+), destroying Jerusalem (2 Ki 21:13); threatening to wipe out Israel's name (Dt. 9:14). Ps. 51:1 = "blot out my transgressions"; Ps. 51:9 = "blot out all my iniquities." Ps 69:28 = " May they **be blotted out** of the book of life." The [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) translates **machah** here with the verb **exaleipho** means literally to completely wipe off. Literally exaleipho means to remove by wiping off, as when a blackboard is erased. The word was applied to the process of obliterating writing on any material. Some of the uses in Scripture retain this literal meaning but most uses speak of a figurative blotting out or wiping off. The idea in all the uses is to cause something to cease by obliterating or eliminating any evidence. Twice in the Revelation God promises He will **wipe away** every tear. A number of uses in both OT ([Septuagint](#)) and the NT use this verb to describe the blotting out or wiping away of sins. **Exaleipho** was used by Thucydides of whitewashing a wall.

**Deuteronomy 9:15 "So I turned and came down from the mountain while the mountain was burning with fire, and the two tablets of the covenant were in my two hands.**

- **I turned:** Ex 32:14,15-35
- **came down from the mountain** De 4:11 5:23 Ex 9:23 19:18 Heb 12:18
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **MOSES RETURNS TO CAMP**

**So I turned and came down from the mountain while the mountain was burning with fire, and the two tablets of the covenant were in my two hands** - Don't miss this scene! Moses had been on the mountain 40 days and it seems very plausible that for 40 days the mountain was burning with fire. Even in the face of such an awesome scene Israel wantonly rebelled against the words they had heard from God on the mountain burning with fire. Forty days had caused them to forget the awesome manifestation of the LORD.

**Guzik** explains that "The burning fires on Mount Sinai were physical representations of the glory of God and His holy presence. The mountain began to burn when Israel first came to Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:18). Those fires had burned for 40 straight days, and they burned at the very time Israel made a golden calf and began to worship it. ([Deuteronomy 9](#))

**Utley** - Burning fire or bright light was a symbol of God's presence (cf. Dt 1:32-33; Isa. 66:15) [Deuteronomy 9 Commentary](#) See Utley's [Special Topic Fire](#).

**Deuteronomy 9:16 "And I saw that you had indeed sinned against the LORD your God. You had made for yourselves a molten calf; you had turned aside quickly from the way which the LORD had commanded you.**

- **I saw that you had indeed sinned against the LORD your God** Ex 32:19 Ac 7:40-41
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **Related Passages:**

Exodus 32:4+ He took this from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool and **made it into a molten calf**; and they said, "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt."

Exodus 32:8+ "They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. **They have made for themselves a molten calf**, and have worshiped it and have sacrificed to it and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!'"

Exodus 32:19+ It came about, as soon as Moses came near the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing; and Moses' anger burned, and he threw the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the

mountain.

## MOSES SEE THEIR SINFUL MOTEN CALF

**And I saw that you had indeed sinned against the LORD your God- Indeed** is better translated "**Behold**" (Dt 9:16KJV "And I looked, and, behold, ye had sinned against the LORD your God") the Hebrew interjection [hinneh](#) which serves to call one to pay special attention to what follows. All sin is ultimately against the LORD. Recall that Israel had agreed to obey in Exodus 24 and now they had directly disobeyed...

"Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, "**All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!**...Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "**All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!**" (Exodus 24:3, 7+)

**You had made for yourselves a molten calf** - Called a "molten image" in Dt 9:12 and simply "the calf" in Dt 9:21. **Kalland** adds that this "was probably made in the likeness of a contemporary bull-calf idol of the Goshen area of Egypt or of Canaanite Baal worship or a blending of the two fertility cults." (Ibid)

**You had turned aside quickly from the way which the LORD had commanded you- Quickly** was about 40 days after they had heard a command from the LORD (on a smoking mountain!) not to do this. This is bold-faced, presumptuous sin by Aaron and the people of Israel

**J Vernon McGee** - At the very moment when God was giving them the Commandments, they were turning from Him -- yet they were saying they would obey Him. People can be more phony in religion than in anything else. It seems to be something that is characteristic of the human nature. Even people who are really sincere are as phony as can be. We all need to pray the prayer of the psalmist, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23-24). Every child of God needs to pray this. Paul has this admonition for the believers: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2Cor. 13:5). Check whether you are in the faith or not. I believe and I preach the security of the believer, my friend. I believe that the believer is secure. But I also believe and preach the insecurity of the make-believer. There are a lot of make-believers. We need to search our hearts, every one of us. ([Deuteronomy 9 Mp3's](#))

**Deuteronomy 9:17 "I took hold of the two tablets and threw them from my hands and smashed them before your eyes.**

- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MOSES BREAKS TABLETS OF COVENANT WHILE ISRAEL BREAKS COVENANT

**I took hold of the two tablets and threw them from my hands and smashed them before your eyes** - Just a reminder that here Moses says **your eyes** but most of the second generation would not have been there. What is sadly ironic is that the very day this covenant was written, it was broken both literally and figuratively!

**Matthew Poole** writes that Moses broke the tablets, "Not by an unbridled passion, but in zeal for God's honour, and by direction of God's Spirit, to signify to the people, that the covenant between God and them contained in those tables was broken and made void, and they were now quite cast out of God's favor, and could expect nothing from him but fiery indignation and severe justice."

**Wiersbe** - They had accepted that law and twice promised to obey it (Ex. 24:3, 7), and yet they broke the first and second commandments by making and worshiping an idol, and the seventh commandment by engaging in lustful revelry as a part of their "worship." ([Be Equipped](#))

**Deuteronomy 9:18 "I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all your sin which you had committed in doing what was evil in the sight of the LORD to provoke Him to anger.**

- **I fell down:** De 9:9 Ex 32:10-14 34:28 2Sa 12:16 Ps 106:23

- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Exodus 34:28+ So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; **he did not eat bread or drink water.** And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

## MOSES SECOND 40 DAY FAST

**I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and nights-** Note **as at the first** indicating this is Moses' second 40 day fast in a very short period of time. Clearly, this would have necessitated supernatural enablement to accomplish this otherwise impossible task.

**Kalland** on the timing of these events - Moses did not mention here how he went back up the mountain for the second period of forty days and nights. Neither did he mention the remonstrance made at the time on Sinai when the Lord told him that the people had sinned and that he would destroy them. Moses spoke of the second period of forty days and nights and also referred to two prayers on their behalf (Dt 9:18, "as at the first"; Dt 9:19, "the LORD listened to me that time also"). **The two prayers are telescoped**, a reference to the destruction of the calf-idol being at the end of the narrative. **So the narrative is not in strict chronological order** but rather in an order that emphasizes the peoples' wrongdoing. ([The Expositor's Bible Commentary – Volume 3: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel](#))

**McIntosh** clearly thinks this intercession occurred not during the first 40 days, but during the second 40 days writing "Moses acted at Horeb in the role of a priest. Just as he had represented God before men at the base of the mountain, so he turned and once again represented men before God in prayer. He fell prostrate before the Lord for forty days and forty nights. Although he had not eaten for an identical period earlier, he endured a second sustained fast because of Israel's sin. Grieving over the sin of others is a mark of godly character. ([Holman Old Testament Commentary](#))

Persistence in prayer brings results that casual prayer does not.

--McIntosh

**THOUGHT** - My father prayed for my salvation for 20 years before I was saved at age 39. I prayed for the salvation of my youngest son and daughter for 20 years (during which time they were both addicted to drugs and alcohol) before they were saved.

**Wiersbe** - We can't help but admire Moses as the leader of God's people. He spent forty days on the mountain, learning how to lead the people in their worship of God; and then he spent another forty days fasting and praying, interceding for a nation that complained, resisted his leadership, and rebelled against the Lord. But leaders are tested just as followers are tested, and Moses passed the test. He showed that his great concern wasn't his own fame or position but the glory of God and the good of the people. In fact, he was willing to die for the people rather than see God destroy them (Ex. 32:31-34). A true shepherd lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11). ([Be Equipped](#))

**I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all your sin which you had committed in doing what was evil in the sight of the LORD to provoke Him to anger** - He is fasting because of the magnitude of the sin of Israel. Moses was proving that man does not live by bread alone but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God.

**Deere** has an interesting comment - In the Old Testament it was normal for people to fast in times of repentance (cf. Judges 20:26; 2 Sa. 12:16; 1 Ki 21:27; Neh. 1:4). His fasting demonstrated his unity with the nation and his horror at their sin. ([Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

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**J Vernon McGee** - I want you to notice that Moses knew God. The psalmist says, "He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel" (Ps. 103:7). The children of Israel saw the mountain smoke, they saw the judgment of God, they saw His glory, but they did not know Him. Moses knew Him! Moses knew His ways.

Moses understood two things about God which are revealed here. They are paradoxical, but they are not contradictory.

Moses knew that God hates sin. May I say to you that we today do not have the faintest conception of how God hates sin and how He intends to punish it. Moses went down on his face before God and fasted and cried out to God for forty days and forty nights! Why? Because Moses knew the ways of God. He knew how God hates sin.

The average Christian today does not seem to realize how God hates sin in his life. My friend, God never ignores a sin we commit.

God will deal with sin in your life and in my life. I have been a pastor for a long time, and I have observed church people over the years. I want to say to you that I have watched people in the church play fast and loose with God. I have seen them cut corners and put up a front. The days melt into years, and then I have seen the hand of God move in judgment on their lives. Sometimes the judgment has been extremely severe. I can especially remember a man who came to me and actually dropped down on his knees and cried out that he just could not stand what God was putting him through. He had lost his children, lost his family. I can remember him as a young upstart, a young married man, who thought he could play fast and loose with God. God hates sin. God punishes sin.

Moses also knew the mercy of God. Moses comes to God because he trusts in His mercy. God will punish sin, but, my friend, we do not comprehend how wonderful He is. He is so gracious. He extends mercy to the sinner. He has extended His mercy to you, I am sure. I know He has to me.

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**Praying Hyde** - Not long ago a little book by Bruce Wilkinson captivated the attention of the world, landing atop not only the Christian bookstore list of best-sellers, but that of the New York Times as well. The Prayer of Jabez explained how the petition of an obscure Old Testament figure had gained Bruce's attention many years ago. He read how Jabez prayed, "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain" (1 Chr. 4:10). Bruce began to offer this prayer to God each day and saw answers repeatedly, just as God had answered Jabez so long ago.

The prayer of Jabez in fact has borne fruit many times. A missionary by the name of John Hyde noticed it and was stimulated to pray more earnestly. He was so successful at it that during his life he became known as "Praying Hyde"; his prayers were much coveted by people around the world.

Dr. J. Wilburn Chapman once explained in a letter to a friend how Hyde and his prayers had impacted Chapman's life and ministry. He had been holding a series of evangelistic meetings in England, but his ministry was—at least to all appearances—bearing little fruit. Crowds were small, and there were few professions of faith.

Chapman then received word that John Hyde was coming to pray for him and his ministry. He wrote of Hyde: "He came to my room, turned the key in the door, and dropped to his knees, and waited five minutes without a single syllable coming from his lips. I could hear my own heart thumping, and his beating. I felt hot tears running down my face. I knew I was with God. Then with upturned face, down which the tears were streaming, he said, 'O God!' Then for five minutes at least he was still again; and then, when he knew that he was talking with God, there came from the depths of his heart such petitions for me as I had never heard before. I rose from my knees to know what real prayer was."

Hyde's prayer for Chapman's work bore dramatic fruit. In the next meeting, the crowd was much larger, and fifty people professed faith in Christ. God's blessing continued for many months, and Chapman attributed much of the results of these meetings to the intercession of Praying Hyde.

**Deuteronomy 9:19 "For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure with which the LORD was wrathful against you in order to destroy you, but the LORD listened to me that time also."**

- **For I:** De 9:8 Ex 32:10-11 Ne 1:2-7 Lu 12:4,5
- **But the:** De 10:10 Ex 32:14 Ex 33:17 Ps 99:6 106:23 Am 7:2,3,5,6 Jas 5:16,17
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passage:**

Exodus 32:10+ "Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation."

**MOSES' INTERCEDED FOR ISRAEL  
OUT OF FEAR GOD WOULD DESTROY THEM**

**For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure with which the LORD was wrathful against you in order to destroy (shamad) you** - Moses displayed a holy fear/dread/terror at the thought of Yahweh's exercise of righteous wrath! Moses knew the holiness of God (he had just been in His presence for 40 days! cf Ps 103:7 He knew "His ways") and so he clearly realized the brazen, presumptive, bold-faced heinousness of Israel's sin in the face of having just been commanded not to commit this sin from the mouth of Jehovah Himself with a fearful background of a burning, smoking mountain! And Moses had a right to be in sheer terror for we know that while not all Israel was killed, 3000 did die at this time. (Ex 32:28+)



**Kalland** - This prayer of Moses (Dt 9:19-20) is one of the most critical interventions in Israel's history (Exod 32:9-14). Another prayer of the same dimension was Samuel's at Mizpah (1 Sam 7:5, 8-9). The Lord reminded Jeremiah of these extraordinarily efficacious prayers when he told him that his heart would not go out to Judah in the last days of the empire (Jer 15:1). ([The Expositor's Bible Commentary – Volume 3: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel](#))

The Hebrew word for **afraid** is a rare verb (**yagor**) meaning to be exceedingly afraid, stricken with terror and is translated in the Septuagint with the adjective **ekphobos** which means intensely afraid, stricken with fear, in dread, terrified (in Mk 9:6+, Heb 12:21+).

**I was afraid** (03025)(**yagor**) basically means "to fear something with great dread" The root primarily describes "fear" of God's discipline when one has disobeyed, or thinks he has disobeyed, God's ways (Deut 28:60; Job 9:28; Ps 119:39). Moses "fears" when the golden calf is built (Deut 9:19). After receiving the two tablets of the Covenant at Horeb, Moses left the mountain to discover the Israelites involved in the idolatrous worship of a golden calf. After smashing the stone tablets, he began a miraculous forty-day fast, when he neither ate nor drank anything. During this fast, he pleaded for both Aaron, the chief conspirator in this episode, and the whole nation of Israel, being fearful that God in his wrath and anger would destroy them. In the curses in the second half of Deut. 28, Yahweh warns Israel that if they break their side of the Covenant He has established with them, then various calamities will befall them. One of these will be that they will fall prey to the "diseases of Egypt" which they feared during their sojourn and oppression there (Deut. 28:60). After suffering the loss of his health, family and possessions, Job cursed the day that he was born and exclaimed that what he most feared had happened to him (Job 3:25), sufferings which he still dreaded and feared in his later statement in Job 9:28. The psalmist, while asking for guidance, direction and an understanding of God's Word, asks for relief from the disgrace and reproach he fears (Ps. 119:39).

Used in 5v afraid(3), dread(2). Deut. 9:19; Deut. 28:60 = "He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt of which you were **afraid**"; Job 3:25; Job 9:28; Ps. 119:39 = " Turn away my reproach which I **dread**, For Your ordinances are good."

**But the LORD listened** ([shama](#)) **to me that time also** - Clearly this indicates that Moses was praying during the 40 days (the contents of his prayer is found in Dt 9:26-29) See the pattern of [Moses' intercessory prayer above](#). In Exodus 32:14+ we read that "the LORD changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people." O, to have such intimacy and boldness in prayer to the LORD! Amen.

**McGee** - God did not hear the prayer of Moses because of who he was. God heard his prayer because He is merciful. Paul makes this clear in Romans 9:15, "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." God is sovereign, and He sovereignly extends His mercy. How wonderful He is. You and I do not fully comprehend those two attributes of God: His hatred of sin and His mercy. ([Deuteronomy 9 Mp3's](#))

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**Question:** [Does God change His mind?](#)

**Answer:** Malachi 3:6 declares, "I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed." Similarly, James 1:17 tells us, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." Numbers 23:19 is clear: "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should change His mind. Does He speak and then not act? Does He promise and not fulfill?" Based on these verses, no, God does not change. God is unchanging and unchangeable. He is also all-wise. So He cannot "change His mind" in the sense of realizing a mistake, backtracking, and trying a new tack.

How then do we explain verses that seem to say that God does change His mind? Verses such as Genesis 6:6, "The LORD was grieved that He had made man on the earth, and His heart was filled with pain." Also, Exodus 32:14 proclaims, "Then the LORD relented and did not bring on His people the disaster He had threatened." These verses speak of the Lord "repenting" or "relenting" of something and seem to contradict the doctrine of God's immutability.

Another passage that is often used to show that God changes His mind is the story of Jonah. Through His prophet, God had told Nineveh He would destroy the city in forty days (Jonah 3:4). However, Nineveh repented of their sin (verses 5–9). In response to the Assyrians' repentance, God relented: "He had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction He had threatened" (verse 10).

There are two important considerations involving the passages that say God changed His mind. First, we can say statements such as "the LORD was grieved that He had made man on the earth" (Genesis 6:6) are examples of anthropopathism (or anthropopatheia). Anthropopathism is a figure of speech in which the feelings or thought processes of finite humanity are ascribed to the infinite God. It's a way to help us understand God's work from a human perspective. In Genesis 6:6 specifically, we

understand God's sorrow over man's sin. God obviously did not reverse His decision to create man. The fact that we are alive today is proof that God did not "change His mind" about the creation.

Second, we must make a distinction between conditional declarations of God and unconditional determinations of God. In other words, when God said, "I will destroy Nineveh in forty days," He was speaking conditionally upon the Assyrians' response. We know this because the Assyrians repented and God did not, in fact, mete out the judgment. God did not change His mind; rather, His message to Nineveh was a warning meant to provoke repentance, and His warning was successful.

An example of an unconditional declaration of God is the Lord's promise to David, "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever" (2 Samuel 7:16). There is no qualification expressed or implied in this declaration. No matter what David did or did not do, the word of the Lord would come to pass.

God tells us of the cautionary nature of some of His declarations and the fact that He will act in accordance with our choices: "If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it. Now therefore say to the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, 'This is what the Lord says: Look! I am preparing a disaster for you and devising a plan against you. So turn from your evil ways, each one of you, and reform your ways and your actions'" (Jeremiah 18:7– 11). Note the conditional word if: "If that nation I warned repents [like Assyria in Jonah 3] . . . then I will relent." Conversely, God may tell a nation they will be blessed, but "if it does evil in my sight [like Israel in Micah 1] . . . then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do."

The bottom line is that God is entirely consistent. In His holiness, God was going to judge Nineveh. However, Nineveh repented and changed its ways. As a result, God, in His holiness, had mercy on Nineveh and spared them. This "change of mind" is entirely consistent with His character. His holiness did not waver one iota.

The fact that God changes His treatment of us in response to our choices has nothing to do with His character. In fact, because God does not change, He must treat the righteous differently from the unrighteous. If someone repents, God consistently forgives; if someone refuses to repent, God consistently judges. He is unchanging in His nature, His plan, and His being. He cannot one day be pleased with the contrite and the next day be angry with the contrite. That would show Him to be mutable and untrustworthy. For God to tell Nineveh, "I'm going to judge you," and then (after they repent) refuse to judge them may look like God changed His mind. In reality, God was simply staying true to His character. He loves mercy and forgives the penitent. "Has God forgotten to be merciful?" (Psalm 77:9). The answer is, no.

At one time we were all enemies of God due to our sin (Romans 8:7). God warned us of the wages of sin (Romans 6:23) in order to cause us to repent. When we repented and trusted Christ for salvation, God "changed His mind" about us, and now we are no longer enemies but His beloved children (John 1:12). As it would be contrary to God's character to not punish us had we continued in sin, so it would be contrary to His character to punish us after we repent. Does our change of heart mean that God changes? No, if anything, our salvation points to the fact that God does not change, because had He not saved us for the sake of Christ, He would have acted contrary to His character. (Source: [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org))

**Deuteronomy 9:20 "The LORD was angry enough with Aaron to destroy him; so I also prayed for Aaron at the same time.**

- Ex 32:2-5,21,35 Heb 7:26-28
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passage:**

Exodus 32:21-22+ Then Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you, that you have brought such great sin upon them?" Aaron said, "Do not let the anger of my lord burn; you know the people yourself, that they are prone to evil.

### **MOSES ALSO INTERCEDES FOR AARON**

**The LORD was angry ([anaph](#)) enough with Aaron to destroy ([shamad](#)) him; so I also prayed for Aaron at the same time-** The only specific prayer recorded is that describe above - see [Moses' intercessory prayer](#). Thus this is the only OT reference that Moses actually prayed for Aaron, undoubtedly saving his life.

**McIntosh** - The lives of people he loved dearly were hanging in the balance when Moses retired to Sinai to intercede for them. Moses prayed for Israel at large, but he **prayed for Aaron** too. Intercessors carry within them a set of conflicting impulses. On the one hand, because they love the Lord, they sense his righteous anger and the depth of his offended holiness. On the other hand, they love the very sinners who have provoked him, and who are so spiritually needy. These are rarely held in such tension as Moses held them. Most of us who pray feel intensely enough the dangers in which sinners find themselves; but few appreciate the painful nature of the offenses themselves. Moses' power in prayer was no doubt connected to his deep realization of both these matters. ([Holman Old Testament Commentary](#))

The believer who feels the agony caused by rebellion will grow to become the best intercessor.

-- McIntosh

**BSB** - [Moses' intercessory prayer](#) kept the wrath of God not only from the people, but also from Aaron, upon whom their responsibility for this contemptible sin rested (Ex. 32:21-22+). Even the priests, the men who were most prominently holy (cf. Isa. 43:27), were dependent upon God's mercy.

**Guzik** - This shows both the prevailing power of Moses' prayer and the great love in the heart of Moses. [Deuteronomy 9](#)

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### **McIntosh - The LORD was angry enough with Aaron to destroy him**

Aaron, Moses' brother and the first high priest of Israel, acted unfaithfully and stupidly in fashioning the golden calf (see Exod. 32:1-6). In his defense, he may have considered the calf a vehicle for worshiping the true God (cp. Ex 32:5), but he should have known better.

Discipline of believers to the point of death is not an uncommon subject in Scripture. The apostle John spoke of a category of sin that could lead to death: "If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that" (1 John 5:16NKJV). (**ED**: SEE RELATED RESOURCE BELOW)

One believer at Corinth began an affair with his stepmother. When Paul heard of it, he determined to end this public embarrassment and "deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 5:5NKJV+).

When other Christians in Corinth began to drink excessively as part of their observance of the Lord's Supper, God was not amused. He began to afflict them bodily in various ways. Initially, the offending believers began to experience weakness. When they still failed to repent, God sent sickness among them. Some were so obstinate in their participation in drunkenness at the Lord's Supper that he took their lives (1 Cor. 11:20-22,27-30+).

The solution to this problem was and is repentance born of self-judgment: "If we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment" (1 Cor. 11:31+). Had Aaron considered what he was about to do, he would have resisted the will of the crowd and refused to cooperate in their idolatry. As it was, he narrowly escaped death, and then only by Moses' intercession. Christian intercessors can save the physical lives of disobedient believers. ([Holman Old Testament Commentary](#))

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### **Related Resource:**

- [What is the sin unto death? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Deuteronomy 9:21** "I took your sinful thing, the calf which you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it, grinding it very small until it was as fine as dust; and I threw its dust into the brook that came down from the mountain.

- **I took:** Ex 32:20 Isa 2:18-21 30:22 31:7 Ho 8:11
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **Related Passages:**

Exodus 17:6+ "Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

**MOSES BURNS, GRINDS AND**

## SCATTERS THE IDOL IMAGE

This is also what the godly king Josiah did (2Ki 23:6,12,15)

**I took your sinful thing** (a [metonymy](#)), **the calf which you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it, grinding it very small until it was as fine as dust** - NET = "As for your sinful thing that you had made, the calf, I took it, melted it down, ground it up until it was as fine as dust." In Exodus 32:20+ Moses added some detail describing that he "took the calf which they had made and burned it with fire, and ground it to powder, and scattered it over the surface of the water and **made the sons of Israel drink it**." (Ingested gold is not absorbed and thus is not toxic). In the re-telling, Moses does not speak of the drinking of pulverized idol in the water (click here for thoughts on why Moses made them drink the idol polluted water). Also in the re-telling Moses called the calf **your sinful thing** (a [metonymy](#)). Notice that no one attempted to stop Moses from destroying their "god!" Moses came down from Mt Sinai with the authority of a man who had been with God for 40 days and Israel did not try to deny it. In burning and grinding the calf, scattering the ashes on water and making the people drink it there was a strong symbolism showing Moses' repudiation of Israel's idolatry.

**And I threw its dust into the brook that came down from the mountain**- Dt 9:21 describes "the surface of the water" in Exodus 32:20+ as water that "came down from the mountain." The question is whether this is the water that flowed from the rock from which water came forth in Ex 17:6?

**Guzik** - Moses burnt the idol, ground it up, and sprinkled it in the people's drinking water for three reasons. To show this god was nothing and could be destroyed easily. To completely obliterate this idol. To make the people pay an immediate consequence of their sin ([Deuteronomy 9](#))

**Walter Kaiser** - Not only were the stone tablets broken, symbolizing the breaking of God's covenant by the people, but Moses quickly broke up the calf and the festivities, bringing an end to the people's covenant with carnality. ([EBC](#))

**THOUGHT** - Is this not an attitude that God wants all His children to have concerning idols? Utter destruction is called for. No compromise! Half measures will not do. God wants no competing "suitsors" either for His Wife Israel or His Bride the Church.

**TSK** - This was the stream which flowed from the rock that Moses smote with his rod, (Ex 17:6,) and to which the Psalmist alludes in Ps 78:16-20; Ps 105:41.

Josiah one of the last kings (and actually the last good king) of Judah instituted a restoration in which he mimicked Moses' actions...

He brought out the Asherah from the house of the LORD outside Jerusalem to the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and ground it to dust, and threw its dust on the graves of the common people....15 Furthermore, the altar that was at Bethel and the high place which [Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin](#), (HE MADE NOT ONE BUT TWO GOLDEN CALVES - read 1 Ki 12:28 = "behold your gods, O Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt.") had made, even that altar and the high place he broke down. Then he demolished its stones, ground them to dust, and burned the Asherah. (2 Kings 23:6, 15)

**Deuteronomy 9:22 "Again at Taberah and at Massah and at Kibroth-hattaavah you provoked the LORD to wrath.**

- **Taberah:** Nu 11:1-5
- **Massah:** Ex 17:7
- **Kibroth-hattaavah:** Nu 11:4,34
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Numbers 11:1-5+ Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the hearing of the LORD; and when the LORD heard it, His anger was kindled, and the fire of the LORD burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp. 2 The people therefore cried out to Moses, and Moses prayed to the LORD and the fire died out. 3 So the name of that place was called **Taberah**, because the fire of the LORD burned among them. 4 The rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, "Who will give us meat to eat? 5 "We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic,

Exodus 17:7+ He named the place **Massah** and Meribah (quarreling) because of the quarrel of the sons of

Israel, and because they tested the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us, or not?"

Numbers 11:4+ The rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, "Who will give us meat to eat? (ANSWER IN PASSAGES BELOW)

Numbers 11:31-35+ Now there went forth a wind from the LORD and it brought quail from the sea, and let them fall beside the camp, about a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp and about two cubits deep on the surface of the ground. 32 The people spent all day and all night and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers) and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. 33 While the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the anger of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very severe plague. 34 So the name of that place was called **Kibroth-hattaavah**, because there they buried the people who had been greedy. 35 From Kibroth-hattaavah the people set out for Hazeroth, and they remained at Hazeroth.

**The story of the sending of the quail is a good example of [poetic justice](#), or [talionic justice](#).** God had provided for the people, but even in that provision they were not satisfied, for they remembered other foods they had in Egypt. No doubt there was not the variety of foods in the Sinai that might have been available in Egypt, but their life had been bitter bondage there as well. They had cried to the LORD for salvation, but now they forget, as they remember things they used to have. God will give them what they crave, but it will not do for them what they desire.

Psalms 78:27-31 (DESCRIPTION OF GOD'S WRATH AT [Kibroth-hattaavah](#)) When He rained meat (QUAIL) upon them like the dust, Even winged fowl like the sand of the seas, 28 Then He let them fall in the midst of their camp, Round about their dwellings. 29 So they ate and were well filled, And their desire He gave to them. 30 Before they had satisfied their desire, While their food was in their mouths, 31 **The anger of God rose against them And killed some of their stoutest ones, And subdued the choice men of Israel.**

**McGee** - This is a summary. There never was a day when these people were really found faithful to God. What a picture! We tend to point to them in criticism, but what about the believer today? I am afraid there are many of us, even in conservative churches, who are not faithful to God for a single day. We boast that we are sound in the faith -- sound all right -- sound asleep! ([Deuteronomy 9 Mp3's](#))

**Again at Taberah** - See passage above. Only three days away from Mt Sinai (Nu 10:33) they begin to complain of adversity (exactly what is not stated) and God's anger consumed some of those on the outskirts of the camp until Moses interceded resulting in the divine fire dying out. Interesting that they had just left the mountain burning with fire!

**NET Note** on **Taberah**. By popular etymology this derives from the Hebrew verb בָּעַר (ba'ar, "to burn"), thus, here, "burning." The reference is to the LORD's fiery wrath against Israel because of their constant complaints against him (Num 11:1-3).

**Wiersbe** - "Taberah" means "burning," and the name should remind all of us that it's a sin to complain (Phil. 2:14-15+; 1 Cor. 10:10+). ([Be Equipped](#))

**And at Massah** - ([see map](#)). **Massah** refers to the Israel's "no water test" in the Sinai desert when Moses struck the rock to obtain water (Exod 17:1-2). The complaining Israelites (who God was "testing" by allowing the "no water" situation) had themselves "tested" the LORD, which gave rise to the naming of the place Massah. They specifically tested Him by asking "Is the LORD among us, or not?" (Ex 17:7)

Deuteronomy 6:16 (see commentary notes) "You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested Him at **Massah**.

Deuteronomy 33:8 (Of Levi he said, "Let Your Thummim and Your Urim belong to Your godly man, Whom You proved at **Massah**, With whom You contended at the waters of Meribah;

Psalms 95:8 Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, As in the day of **Massah** in the wilderness, (See [Spurgeon's note below](#))

**Massah** (04532) [massah](#) from [nasah](#) = to test by trial, to prove) means testing. The [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) translates the proper name with the noun [peirasmos](#) which **BDAG** defines as "an attempt to learn the nature or character of something." Sadly, Israel was not sincerely seeking to learn the nature or character of God, but to put His character to their test! Massah - 5x - Exod. 17:7; Deut. 6:16; Deut. 9:22; Deut. 33:8; Ps. 95:8

**NET Note**- The place name **Massah** (מַסָּה, massah) derives from a root (נָסָה, nasah) meaning "to test; to



try." The reference here is to the experience in the Sinai desert when Moses struck the rock to obtain water (Ex 17:1–2). The complaining Israelites had, thus, "tested" the LORD, a wickedness that gave rise to the naming of the place (Ex 17:7; cf. Dt 9:22; Dt 33:8).

**And at [Kibroth-hattaavah](#) you provoked the LORD to wrath** - See this episode of lusting for meat [recorded above](#). The Hebrew name means "graves of craving, lust, gluttony." "Although God had only shortly before dealt with Israel over the events at Taberah, they again put him to the test by their complaining. They craved meat, so he miraculously provided quail, and along with it a dose of severe discipline." (McIntosh)

**Wiersbe** explains [Kibroth-hattaavah](#) - God sent flocks of quail over the camp of Israel and all the people had to do was knock the birds down, dress them, cook them, and eat them. It was the old "Egyptian appetite" asserting itself again, the flesh rebelling against the Spirit. While the people were eating the meat, God's judgment fell and He sent a plague to the camp. "So he gave them what they asked for, but he sent a plague along with it" (Ps. 106:15NLT). Sometimes God's greatest judgment is to let us have our own way (Ro 1:22-28). ([Be Equipped](#))

**NET Note - Kibroth-Hattaavah.** This place name means in Hebrew "burial places of appetite," that is, graves that resulted from overindulgence. The reference is to the Israelites stuffing themselves with the quail God had provided and doing so with thanklessness (Nu 11:31–35).

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#### **QUESTION - [What is the significance of Meribah \(Massah\) in the Bible?](#)**

**ANSWER - Meribah** was a site that the Israelites passed through in their desert wanderings. Being a place of testing for the Israelites, it also had a major impact in the lives of Moses and Aaron. Apparently, based on the biblical text, **there are two sites named Meribah** (W. A. Elwell and B. J. Beitzel, "Meribah," *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, volume 2, Baker, 1988, p. 1,442). One of the sites called Meribah was located near Rephidim in the Desert of Sin (Exodus 17:1). At this location it was also called **Massah**, which differentiates it from the other Meribah mentioned in Scripture (Deuteronomy 6:16; Dt 9:22; Dt 33:8; Psalm 95:8). The other site named Meribah was located in Kadesh Barnea, and therefore was referred to as Meribah Kadesh (Numbers 27:14; Deuteronomy 32:51; Ezekiel 47:19; 48:28).

Central to both locations is a miracle of water coming from a rock. At **Meribah/Massah**, the Israelites were extremely thirsty and quarreled with Moses about the lack of water (Exodus 17:2). Because of their thirst, they grumbled against Moses and asked, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?" (Exodus 17:3). Moses brought this problem to the Lord, and the Lord enabled Moses to strike the rock so that the Israelites would have water and know that God was with them (Exodus 17:4–7). Because of their grumbling and testing of God, Moses called the place **Meribah**, which means "testing," and **Massah**, which means "quarrelling" (John Hannah, "Exodus," *Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, John Walvoord and Roy Zuck, ed., Victor, 1983, p. 135). Not only did the Israelites demonstrate doubt in God's provision, but they also tested Him because of their complaints and distrust.

Toward the end of the Israelites' forty years of wandering, a similar situation occurred at **Meribah Kadesh**. Complaining about a lack of water for their livestock and themselves, the "people gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron. They quarreled with Moses and said, 'If only we had died when our brothers fell dead before the Lord! Why did you bring the Lord's community into this wilderness, that we and our livestock should die here? Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to this terrible place? It has no grain or figs, grapevines or pomegranates. And there is no water to drink!'" (Numbers 20:2–5). Appealing to the Lord at the tent of meeting, Aaron and Moses were told by God to speak to the rock, which would bring forth water (Numbers 20:6–7). Instead of demonstrating God's glory and provision in speaking to the rock as the Lord had instructed, Moses struck the rock and claimed he and Aaron would bring forth water for the Israelites (Numbers 20:10–11). The Lord still kept His promise in providing water but told Aaron and Moses that they would not enter the Promised Land because of their failure to obey Him (Numbers 20:12). It is clear from the rest of Scripture that God tested the Israelites, including Aaron and Moses, at Meribah Kadesh to gauge their obedience and faithfulness (Psalm 81:7; 106:32).

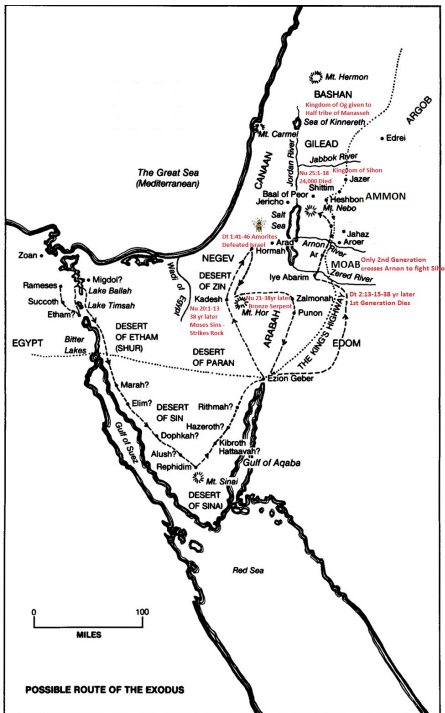
Another place Meribah is directly mentioned in the Bible is in the book of Ezekiel. In the future allotment of the land of Israel in the millennial kingdom, Meribah Kadesh will serve as a border for the section allotted to the tribe of Gad (Ezekiel 47:19; 48:28). As Meribah served to remind the Israelites following Moses of their lack of trust in the Lord, so also will it in the millennial reign of Christ.

Being a place of strife and testing, Meribah is worthy of remembrance. As Psalm 95:8 warns, "Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness" (cf. Hebrews 3:4). The Israelites' disbelief at Kadesh Barnea resulted in their inability to enter the Promised Land for another generation, and Aaron's and Moses' disobedience at Meribah Kadesh kept them from entering the Promised Land as well. Disobedience and unbelief have enduring consequences that can affect the rest of one's life. [GotQuestions.org](#)



**Deuteronomy 9:23** "When the LORD sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, 'Go up and possess the land which I have given you,' then you rebelled against the command of the LORD your God; you neither believed Him nor listened to His voice.

- **Likewise:** De 1:19-33 Nu 13:1-33
- **rebelled:** Nu 14:1-4,10-41 Isa 63:10
- **believed:** De 1:32,33 Ps 78:22 106:24,25 Heb 3:18,19 4:2
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



CLICK TO ENLARGE  
(Source - Modified from Bible Knowledge Commentary)

"When the LORD sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, 'Go up and possess (yarash) the land which I have given you,' - See notes on : De 1:19-33 and notes on Nu 13:1-33. To obey these two commands Israel needed to believe in the sovereignty (in full control) of God and His trustworthiness (faithfulness to fulfill the promise to give them the land) and then then had to move out. Genuine belief is invariably linked with obedience. (See [Relationship of faith and obedience - Covenant](#) and [Obedience of faith](#) - Ro 1:5, 16:26)

**Why should Israel have been willing to obey these commands?** What had they witnessed with their own eyes from the moment they were delivered out of Egypt? They had continually witnessed God at work in their behalf day after day -- He was guiding them with the Shekinah, feeding them with manna from Heaven and providing water to drink from a rock! Now all they had to do was march from Kadesh-Barnea into the Promised Land. They had to believe that God had promised it to them. They had to walk by faith, not by sight. But once the 10 spies caught sight of the giants and the walled fortresses, their report spread like leaven through the entire camp and Israel was no longer willing to walk by faith. Fear of great giants gripped them. Faith in their great God eluded them. The upshot was they refused to obey God's commands! They rebelled against Him.

**THOUGHT** - Every believer and every Christian ministry, whether it be a local church or a parachurch ministry, must trust God to meet their needs a day at a time. If we complain along the way, we're only giving evidence that we don't trust God but think we know more than He does about what's best for us. When we come to those "Kadesh-Barnea" places in life, when we must claim what God has planned for us and move forward by faith, we must not rebel against God and refuse to trust and obey. If we do, we may find ourselves wandering through life, failing to accomplish what God has planned for us. Claiming our inheritance in Christ is one of the major themes of the Book of Hebrews, and the writer uses Israel as the main illustration (Heb. 3-4). (from Warren Wiersbe - [Be Equipped](#))

**Then you rebelled (marah; Lxx = apeitheo = disobeyed) against the command of the LORD your God** - The commands were clear to **Go up and possess**. So first Israel refused to obey this command. And after they learned of their punishment, they had a change of heart and said they would go into the land. And so they rebelled again, Moses recording "So I spoke to you, but you would not listen. Instead you rebelled against the command of the LORD, and acted presumptuously and went up into the hill country.."

(Dt 1:43+)

**You neither believed ([aman](#)) Him** (Dt 1:32, Nu 20:12 2Ki 17:14 Ps 78:22,32 Ps 106:24 Isa7:9 Lu 16:31 Jn12:37 Heb 3:9,10, 12, Heb 3:16-19; Heb 4:1-2, 6 11:6 1 Jn 5:10) Moses records the lament from Yahweh "How long will this people spurn Me? And **how long will they not believe in Me**, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst?" (Nu 14:1+) The result of course of their unbelief was that they were not allowed to go into the Promised Land but had to wander for 40 years. It is notable that Yahweh made a similar declaration "to Moses and Aaron, "Because **you have not believed Me** (BY STRIKING THE ROCK INSTEAD OF SPEAKING TO IT), to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." (Nu 20:12+)

**Nor listened ([shama](#)) to His voice** - NET version has "would neither **believe** nor **obey** Him." This recalls the question of the writer of Hebrews which asks "And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were **disobedient ([apeitheo](#))**? 19 So we see that they were not able to enter because of **unbelief**." (Heb 3:18-19+) Notice how **unbelief** equates with **disobedience** as described here in Dt 9:23.

**Deuteronomy 9:24 "You have been rebellious against the LORD from the day I knew you.**

- De 9:6-7 Dt 31:27 Ac 7:51
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Deuteronomy 31:27+ "For I know your rebellion and your stubbornness; behold, while I am still alive with you today, you have been rebellious against the LORD; how much more, then, after my death?"

### ISRAEL - REBELS FROM THE GETGO!

[Getgo](#) means from the very beginning.

**You have been rebellious ([marah](#)) against the LORD from the day I knew you**- First word in Hebrew for emphasis is [marah](#) - "rebels ye have been with Jehovah" (Dt 9:24YLT) NLT = "Yes, you have been rebelling against the LORD as long as I have known you." **Have been rebellious ([marah](#))** speaks of willful, volitional, known disobedience! It is translated in the Septuagint with the verb ) [apeitheo](#) which means to disobey or disbelieve and here is in the present tense speaking of continual disobedience! Moses essentially repeats what he had said earlier "Remember, do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness; **from the day that you left the land of Egypt until you arrived at this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD.**" (Dt 9:6+).

**Deuteronomy 9:25 "So I fell down before the LORD the forty days and nights, which I did because the LORD had said He would destroy you.**

- De 9:16,18
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### MOSES' PROLONGED INTERCESSION

This last section could also be subtitled "Standing in the Gap!" Don't miss this simple but crucial point - intercessory prayer by a man of God saved Israel from destruction! Had Moses not interceded, God would have used his lineage to fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant. Never underestimate the powerful prayers of a prostrate pray-er especially for 40 days and nights! James says

The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. (James 5:16b+).

**Jack Deere** - The content of Moses' intercessory prayer is placed here rather than at verse 19 where at first glance it would seem more appropriate. ([Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**Kline** - More than once judgment had been averted through the intercession of Moses. In this aspect of Moses' ministry, more

remarkably than in any other, his mediatorship prefigured the antitypical mediatorship of Christ, who also "made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa 53:12). When at Sinai God threatened to blot out Israel and offered to exalt Moses' descendants as a new covenant nation (Deut 9:14; cf. Ex 32:10), Moses faithfully fulfilled his mediatorial office in behalf of Israel rather than grasp at the opportunity to be a second Abraham. In fact, he offered himself as a second Isaac on the altar. Moses pleaded that if there must be a blotting out, rather than being made the one exception to the judgment, he might be blotted out as a means of securing forgiveness for the others (Ex 32:32). He "stood before him in the breach to turn away his wrath lest he should destroy them" (Ps 106:23). The intercession referred to in Deut 9:18, 19, 25-29 (cf. 10:10) was offered during Moses' second forty days on the mount. ([Wycliffe Bible Commentary on Deuteronomy](#))

**So I fell down before the LORD the forty days and nights-** Imagine how grieved and weary Moses have been. Hebrew - "I prostrated myself." The Septuagint uses the verb [deomai](#) indicating more specifically what Moses was doing by falling prostrate "in the face of" Yahweh -- he was pleading, begging!

**Merrill on I fell down** - The force of the verb (Hithpael of napal) is to the effect that Moses threw himself down or prostrated himself. This lends greater intensity to Moses's intercession.

**Which I did because the LORD had said He would destroy**([shamad](#); Lxx - [exolothreuo](#) = utterly destroy) **you** - Here Moses again alludes to the Golden Calf debacle!

**Deuteronomy 9:26 "I prayed to the LORD and said, 'O Lord GOD, do not destroy Your people, even Your inheritance, whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand.**

- **prayed:** Ex 32:11-13 34:9 Nu 14:13-19 Ps 99:6 106:23 Jer 14:21
- **inheritance:** 1Ki 8:51
- **redeemed:** De 9:29 32:9 Ps 74:1,2 Isa 63:19
- **brought:** De 7:8 13:5 15:15 21:8 26:7,8 Ex 15:13 2Sa 7:23 Ne 1:10 Ps 77:15 107:2 Isa 44:23 Mic 6:4 Tit 2:14 Heb 9:12 Rev 5:9
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 32:11-13+ Then Moses entreated the LORD his God, and said, "O LORD, why does Your anger burn against Your people whom You have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12 "Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, 'With evil intent He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your burning anger and change Your mind about doing harm to Your people. 13 "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'"

## ISRAEL'S GREAT DELIVERANCE

**I prayed to the LORD** - In v25 Moses was prostrate before Yahweh. Moses interceded in light of Yahweh's threatened destruction of Israel.

**McIntosh** - Moses appealed to God as well on the strength of the personal investment that God had made in the people of his chosen nation. They were his own inheritance, people whom he personally had redeemed by expressions of great power. ([Holman Old Testament Commentary](#))

**And said, 'O Lord GOD, do not destroy Your people, even Your inheritance, whom You have redeemed**([padah](#)) **through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty** (strong) **hand** - Moses appeals to the Lord's great deliverance, asking mercy upon Israel because of God's past faithfulness to them as those He had redeemed. Note that Moses refers to Israel as Your people, that they belonged to Him even though they were not acting like it! Earlier God had called them Moses' people - "'Arise, go down from here quickly, for **your people** whom you brought out of Egypt have acted corruptly.'" (Dt 9:12)

**ESV Study Bible on Your people** - Moses counters the Lord's disowning of Israel in Dt 9:12-14.

**Merrill** - Israel's history of rebellion was so blatant and their future so much in jeopardy as a result that Moses felt compelled to

implore God with all his heart and soul for mercy and forgiveness. As he had been in the presence of Yahweh for 40 days of glorious theophany (cf. Dt 9:9), so also he had fallen prostrate before the Lord for 40 days of abject humiliation (see Dt 9:25). Fully cognizant of his own unworthiness and of God's transcendent glory, he had addressed Him as "**Sovereign Lord**" (Dt 9:26; 'adonay yhwh, "lord Yahweh"), an epithet altogether appropriate in this covenant connection. Those who know they are addressing the God of the universe find it easy—indeed, necessary—to fall on their faces before him. In that posture, one does not demand but only implores....The basis of Moses's plea was that Israel was God's possession or property, an entity of priceless value since they were ransomed by Yahweh at the cost of every firstborn of Egypt (cf. Exod 13:11-16). Such "effort" (lit., "by your strong hand") by Yahweh would, in a sense, go to waste should Israel go by the board. ([Cornerstone Biblical Commentary](#)) (Have you ever prayed to God flat on your face?)

**Redeemed** (06299)(**padah**) means to redeem, ransom, buy and so to cause the freedom or release of a person from bondage or ownership, often implying a delivering or rescue of a person in distress. Padah is not used in Ruth. The basic meaning of the Hebrew root is to achieve the transfer of ownership from one to another through payment of a price or an equivalent substitute. **Padah** is used to depict God's act of redeeming; He redeemed His people with a mighty hand from Pharaoh and the slavery they were under in Egypt (Dt. 7:8; Mic. 6:4). Egypt was literally the house of slavery and became the symbol of slavery and oppression from which Israel was delivered (Dt. 9:26; 24:18). **Padah in Pentateuch** - Exod. 13:13; Exod. 13:15; Exod. 21:8; Exod. 34:20; Lev. 19:20; Lev. 27:27; Lev. 27:29; Num. 3:46; Num. 3:49; Num. 3:51; Num. 18:15; Num. 18:16; Num. 18:17; Deut. 7:8; Deut. 9:26; Deut. 13:5; Deut. 15:15; Deut. 21:8; Deut. 24:18 Note that all 6 uses in Deuteronomy refer to Yahweh bringing the Israelites out of Egypt and relative to freeing them from the slavery of Egypt.

**Mighty hand** - Ex 32:11; Dt. 4:34; Dt. 5:15; Deut. 6:21; Deut. 7:8; Deut. 7:19; Deut. 9:26; Deut. 11:2; Deut. 26:8; 1 Ki. 8:42; 2 Chr. 6:32; Ezek. 20:33; Ezek. 20:34; Da 9:15; 1 Pe 5:6

**Utley** - "**with a mighty hand**" This phrase and "outstretched arm" of v. 29 have both been found in Egyptian texts referring to the Egyptian king. Moses chose phrases that Israel had heard before in relationship to Pharaoh. YHWH was their true king! ([Deuteronomy 9 Commentary](#))

**NET Note** - Heb "**Lord LORD**" (יהוה יְהוָה, 'adonay yéhvih). The phrase is customarily rendered by Jewish tradition as "Lord GOD" (יהוה אֱלֹהִים, 'adonay 'elohim). See also the note on the phrase "Lord GOD" in Deut 3:24. Heb "Lord LORD." The phrase יהוה יְהוָה ('adonay yéhvih) is customarily rendered by Jewish tradition as "Lord GOD." Cf. NIV, TEV, NLT "Sovereign Lord."

**NET Note** - "**your inheritance**"; NLT "your special (very own NRSV) possession." Israel is compared to landed property that one would inherit from his ancestors and pass on to his descendants.

**Kline** - Difficulty has been found in the fact that the content of Moses' prayer, Dt 9:26-29, corresponds to that recorded in Ex 32:11-13, for it has been assumed that the latter refers to Moses' first forty days before God. Actually, Ex 32:11-14 is an introductory summation of the following account, which embraces the second period of forty days. The immediate chronological sequence is from Ex 32:10 to Ex 32:15, as is reflected in Deut 9:14, 15. The Exodus narrative from Ex 32:30-34:29 possibly all refers to the second forty days and their sequel, not to preceding events; the arrangement, as often in Hebrew narrative (cf. Deut 9 itself), subordinates strict chronological sequence to topical interests. ([Wycliffe Bible Commentary on Deuteronomy](#))

**McGee** - Moses knew how to pray. I wish I knew how to pray like that! Remember that back in verse 12 God said, "For thy people which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt have corrupted themselves." Now imagine Moses saying to God that He has made a mistake! Moses says, "They are not my people; they are Yours. I didn't bring them out of Egypt; You did. They belong to You." Moses reminds God that the people in the land would think He was unable to bring Israel into the land -- that He was able to bring Israel out of Egypt, but He was not able to bring them into the land. That kind of praying moves the hand of God. Here Israel stands, ready now to enter the land which reveals that Moses knew how to pray! ([Deuteronomy 9 Mp3's](#))

**Deuteronomy 9:27** **Remember** Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; do not look at the stubbornness of this people or at their wickedness or their sin.

- **Remember:** Ex 3:6,16 6:3-8 13:5 32:13 Jer 14:21
- **look:** Ex 32:31,32 1Sa 25:25 Ps 78:8 Pr 21:12 Isa 43:24,25 Jer 50:20 Mic 7:18,19
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**MOSES APPEALS TO**

## PROMISE TO ABRAHAM

**Remember** ([zakar](#)) **Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob** - Here Moses appealed to the certainty Yahweh's promises in the Abrahamic Covenant.

**Guzik** - Moses asked for mercy upon Israel because of God's past faithfulness to the patriarchs. ([Deuteronomy 9](#))

Moses is basically asking God to forgive Israel's sin and he bases this request on two reasons - (1) the pagans are watching (Dt 9:28) and (2) the people are His peculiar possession (Dt 9:29, cf Ex 19:5+).

**THOUGHT** - God hears prayer. Prayer is one of the basic laws of the universe established by God. Prayer has been chosen by God to be one of the basic laws that stir Him to act as He governs the universe. Prayer is an act of man that arouses God to move and act in behalf of man. As stated, God answers prayer (cf Mt 7:7, Mk 11:24, Jn 15:7, 1 Jn 3:22, Ps 91:15). ([Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Deuteronomy](#))

**Do not look at the stubbornness of this people or at their wickedness or their sin** ([chattat/chattath](#)) - NLT is not a good paraphrase here for it has "Please overlook..." More literally it reads "do not turn the face to" or "do not look back to." Moses is not asking God to ignore their sin! What an appeal! Asking God not to look at the sullied character of Israel - stubborn, wicked, sinful! And this is Who the LORD redeemed from slavery! **Stubbornness** is a Hebrew word used only here (qeshi from [qashah](#)- stiffen, harden) and in the Septuagint is the noun sklerotes which literally means hardness and figuratively describes a resistant attitude and unreceptivity to instruction ([sklerotes](#) is only in Ro 2:5+) and gives us our English arteriosclerosis. Israel in effect had a serious case of "spiritual arteriosclerosis!"

**Deuteronomy 9:28** 'Otherwise the land from which You brought us may say, "Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which He had promised them and because He hated them He has brought them out to slay them in the wilderness."

- **the land:** Ge 41:57 Ex 6:6-8 1Sa 14:25
- **Because:** De 32:26,27 Ex 32:12 Nu 14:15,16 Jos 7:7-9 Ps 115:1,2 Isa 43:25 Isa 48:9-11 Jer 14:7-9 Eze 20:8,9,14 Da 9:18,19
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## EGYPTIANS MIGHT QUESTION GOD'S CHARACTER

**Otherwise the land from which You brought us may say, "Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which He had promised them** - Moses says the Egyptians (as implied by **the land from which You brought us**) would say Yahweh was not powerful enough to bring Israel into the promised land and that is why He had to destroy them.

**Utley** paraphrases Moses - God, because of Your reputation and worldwide purpose of redemption, spare Israel. Another phrase used in the same sense is, "for God's namesake" (cf. Isa. 48:9-11; Ezek. 20:9, 14, 22, 44; 36:21-23; Dan. 9:17-19). ([Deuteronomy 9 Commentary](#))

**And because He hated them He has brought them out to slay them in the wilderness**- Egyptians would see it as judgment on Israel.

**Merrill** - Most important is the reputation of Israel's God, the one who committed himself by covenant pledge. Should God destroy Israel, the Egyptians, among others, could draw at least two conclusions: (1) God, having brought his people out of Egypt, was powerless to see them all the way to Canaan; or (2) with cruel treachery he brought them out, all the while planning to destroy them. The one deduction would reflect negatively on God's power, the other on his character. To Moses's way of thinking, neither was a tolerable prospect. To sum up as well as to reemphasize the heart of his argument, Moses "reminded" Yahweh that the people whose plight was so tenuous in light of the impending divine wrath were, after all, God's people, the ones he had redeemed at great price (Dt 9:29). ([Cornerstone Biblical Commentary](#))

**Deuteronomy 9:29** 'Yet they are Your people, even Your inheritance, whom You have brought out by Your great power and Your outstretched arm.'

- **Yet they:** De 9:26 4:20 1Ki 8:15 Ne 1:10 Ps 95:7 100:3 Isa 63:19

- **whom you:** De 9:26 4:34
- [Deuteronomy 9 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MOSES APPEALS TO THE GLORY OF GOD

**Yet they are Your people, even Your inheritance, whom You have brought out by Your great power and Your outstretched arm.'** - Since Israel was God's people, His inheritance, the ones He delivered, it was His glory which was on display and to destroy them would be to sully His glory before the watching pagans.

**Guzik** - Moses asked for mercy upon Israel because they were God's people. . We can seek the mercy and power of God through prayer by praying with the same heart and by pleading the same reasons before the Lord. Prayer on solid reasons like these is far more effective than merely casting wishes up towards heaven. Because of God's past faithfulness to us. Because of His past faithfulness to our forefathers. Because of His own glory and reputation among the nations. Because we are His people. Keeping these things in mind is also a way to refine our prayers. When we pray only for the things consistent with God's glory, we have our hearts set on the right things. ([Deuteronomy 9](#))

**McIntosh** says it this way "The glory of God is the purpose around which all history moves. There can be nothing greater than the expression of his glory, and nothing worse than calling it into question. All of human redemption is subsidiary to the glory of God (Eph. 1:14). Moses longed for it and recognized that there could be no higher appeal. The glory of God would be diminished if Israel were destroyed, for they were his people, his inheritance." ([Holman Old Testament Commentary](#))

**Outstretched arm** - Exod. 6:6; Deut. 4:34; Deut. 5:15; Deut. 7:19; Deut. 9:29; Deut. 11:2; Deut. 26:8; 1 Ki. 8:42; 2 Ki. 17:36; 2 Chr. 6:32; Ps. 136:12; Jer. 27:5; Jer. 32:17; Jer. 32:21; Ezek. 20:33; Ezek. 20:34