

Deuteronomy 4:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Furthermore the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, and
sware that I should not go over Jordan, and that I should not
go in unto that good land, which the LORD thy God giveth
thee for an inheritance:

Analysis

Furthermore the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, and sware that I should not go over Jordan...

Moses reveals the deeply personal cost of leadership: God's wrath fell upon him 'for your sakes' (biglalkem, בְּגַלְלֶכֶם), meaning 'on your account' or 'because of you.' At Meribah, provoked by Israel's complaints, Moses struck the rock twice instead of speaking to it as commanded (Numbers 20:10-12). His sin was not merely impatience but a failure to sanctify God before the people, treating divine commands as optional under pressure.

The Hebrew qatsaph (קָצַף, 'was angry') denotes burning wrath, and God's oath (nishba, נִשְׁבָּה, 'sware') made the judgment irrevocable. Moses would not enter 'that good land' (ha'arets hatovah)—the very inheritance he had labored forty years to secure for others. This demonstrates that leaders bear greater accountability (James 3:1) and that proximity to God's work does not exempt one from God's standards.

Yet Moses does not blame Israel or harbor bitterness. His transparency about personal failure serves the people's instruction, warning them that even the greatest servant of God faces consequences for disobedience. Grace does not

eliminate discipline; faithfulness in service does not guarantee immunity from judgment.

Historical Context

Moses recounts God's anger with him for the sake of the people, referencing the incident at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh (Numbers 20:10-12) where Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it. This occurred approximately 40 years after the Exodus, shortly before Israel would enter Canaan without their leader who had guided them since Egypt.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Moses' acceptance of God's discipline without bitterness challenge your response to consequences for your own failures?
2. What does it mean that spiritual leaders bear greater accountability, and how should this shape your prayers for those in authority?

Interlinear Text

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|-------------------------|-------------------|---------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| וְשָׁבַע | דְּבָרֶיךָ | עִלִּי | בִּי | הַתְּאַנֵּף | יְהוָה |
| and swear | with me for your | sakes | | was angry | Furthermore the LORD |
| H7650 | H1697 | H5921 | H0 | H599 | H3068 |
| וְלִבְלֹתִי | הַיַּרְדֵּי | אֶת | עֲבָרִי | לִבְלֹתִי | |
| | Jordan | | that I should not go over | | |
| H1115 | H3383 | H853 | H5674 | H1115 | |
| אֲשֶׁר | הַטּוֹבָה | הָאֶרֶץ | אֶל | בָּא | |
| | in unto that good | land | | and that I should not go | |
| H834 | H2896 | H776 | H413 | H935 | |
| נַחֲלָה: | לָב | נָתַן | אֱלֹהֶיךָ | יְהוָה | |
| thee for an inheritance | | giveth | thy God | Furthermore the LORD | |
| H5159 | H0 | H5414 | H430 | H3068 | |

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 1:37 (References Lord): Also the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither.

Numbers 20:12 (References Lord): And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

Deuteronomy 3:26 (References Lord): But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter.

Deuteronomy 31:2 (References Lord): And he said unto them, I am an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in: also the LORD hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan.