

Deuteronomy 9:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people.

Analysis

Moses declares bluntly: 'Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people.' The term 'stiffnecked' (Hebrew *qesheh-oref*, literally 'hard of neck') describes stubborn resistance to guidance, like an ox refusing the yoke. Moses doesn't soften the indictment—Israel is rebellious, stubborn, and undeserving. Yet God gives them 'this good land' anyway. This stark juxtaposition of human unworthiness and divine grace pervades Scripture, culminating in the gospel—Christ dying for ungodly sinners (Romans 5:6-8).

Historical Context

Israel's stiffnecked nature appeared repeatedly: the golden calf (Exodus 32), refusal to enter Canaan (Numbers 14), Korah's rebellion (Numbers 16), complaints about manna (Numbers 11), and grumbling about water (Exodus 17; Numbers 20). Moses himself called them rebellious (Deuteronomy 9:7, 24). Despite this, God preserved them, provided for them, and brought them to Canaan's threshold—demonstrating patient, pursuing grace.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Moses' blunt assessment of Israel as 'stiffnecked' challenge modern emphasis on self-esteem?
2. What evidence of God's gracious patience with your own stubbornness can you identify?

Interlinear Text

Understand	H3588	H3808	it for thy righteousness	therefore that the LORD	
	H3045		H6666		H3068
thy God	giveth	H0	H853	land	thee not this good
H430	H5414		H776		H2896
to possess	H3588	people	H7186	for thou art a stiffnecked	H859
H3423		H5971		H6203	

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 10:16 (Parallel theme): Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.

Acts 7:51 (Parallel theme): Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

Deuteronomy 9:13 (References Lord): Furthermore the LORD spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people:

Deuteronomy 31:27 (References Lord): For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the LORD; and how much more after my death?

Exodus 32:9 (References Lord): And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people:

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