

Numbers 14:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.

Analysis

God threatens: 'I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.' This recalls God's earlier threat after the golden calf (Ex 32:10). The Hebrew 'nakah' (smite/strike) and 'yarash' (disinherit/dispossess) indicate total destruction. God's offer to make Moses into a greater nation tested Moses' heart - would he accept personal exaltation if it meant Israel's destruction? Moses' intercessory response (v.13-19) demonstrated his shepherd's heart, preferring Israel's preservation over personal greatness. This foreshadows Christ who could have called legions of angels (Matt 26:53) but chose the cross for our sake. True leaders value those they serve above personal advancement.

Historical Context

This crisis followed Israel's rejection of Caleb and Joshua's faithful report, with the congregation ready to stone them and choose new leadership to return to Egypt (v.1-10). God's patience reached its limit - persistent rebellion despite continuous miracles warranted destruction. Moses' intercession appealed to God's reputation among nations (v.13-16) and His revealed character of mercy (v.17-19), successfully averting immediate destruction though not preventing judgment (forty years of wilderness wandering, v.26-35). The incident demonstrates that intercessory prayer based on God's character and promises can change divine actions, though not violating His justice.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. When offered personal advancement at others' expense, do you choose like Moses to intercede for them instead?
2. How does Moses' successful intercession encourage you to pray boldly for others based on God's character and promises?

Interlinear Text

אֶת־	בְּךָ־	וְאֹרֶשׁ־	וְאֶשְׁתָּה־	אֶת־
I will smite	them with the pestilence	and disinherit	them and will make	
H5221	H1698	H3423	H6213	H853
לְגֹויִ	נֶתֶן־לְךָ	עַצְמָה־	מְקֹם־	
nation	of thee a greater	and mightier		H4480
H1471	H1419	H6099		

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 32:10 (Parallel theme): Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.

Numbers 25:9 (Parallel theme): And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.

2 Samuel 24:1 (Parallel theme): And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.

