

Numbers 32:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land.

Analysis

Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea (כה עשו אבttיכם)—Moses invokes Israel's darkest hour: the spy report that triggered forty years of wilderness wandering (Numbers 13-14). The parallel is devastating: that generation chose visible obstacles over God's promise; this generation chooses visible pasture over God's inheritance. The phrase 'your fathers' distances them from patriarchal faith (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) while connecting them to faithless rebels.

Kadesh-barnea represents the perpetual temptation to stop short of God's purposes when the cost appears too high. The spies saw giants and walled cities (Numbers 13:28); Gad and Reuben see prime cattle land. Both groups made 'reasonable' assessments that contradicted divine intention. Moses' rhetorical strategy is brilliant: by naming the sin, he forces them to see themselves in their fathers' failure.

Historical Context

Kadesh-barnea (meaning 'holy wilderness') was the southern staging area for Canaan invasion, approximately 50 miles southwest of Beersheba. The spy mission occurred in year two of the Exodus; Moses' rebuke comes 38 years later, addressing a new generation tempted to repeat the old sin.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What 'Kadesh-barnea moments' in your spiritual journey tempted you to abandon God's promises?
2. How do you respond when leaders connect your current choices to past failures in your family or community?
3. What role does historical/spiritual memory play in avoiding repeated cycles of disobedience?

Interlinear Text

מִקְדֵּשׁ שְׁאָתָם בְּשַׁלְחָנִי אֲבָתִיכֶם עָשָׂה כֵּה

H3541

Thus did

H6213

your fathers

H1

when I sent

H7971

H853

H0

בְּרֵגָע

them from Kadeshbarnea

H6947

לְרֹא וְתָ

to see

H7200

אֶת הָאָרֶץ

the land

H853

H776

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