

Psalms 106:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.

Analysis

This verse explains Moses's failure at Meribah. 'Because they provoked his spirit' shows the people's quarreling agitated Moses's spirit (ruach, רוּחַ). 'So that he spake unadvisedly with his lips' describes Moses's angry, rash words: 'Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?' (Numbers 20:10). 'Spake unadvisedly' (bata, בָּטָא) means to speak rashly, thoughtlessly, or hastily. Though provoked, Moses's response was sinful—he spoke in anger rather than representing God's character accurately. This teaches that provocation doesn't excuse sinful response. Leaders especially must guard their words and responses, even when provoked, since they represent God to the people.

Historical Context

Moses's rash words and actions at Meribah marred an otherwise exemplary life of faithful leadership. Despite leading Israel for 40 years through incredible hardships, this one incident of frustrated anger cost him the Promised Land. It demonstrates that God holds leaders to high standards, especially in public representation of His character. Moses's failure also shows that even the most faithful servants can stumble, pointing to the need for a perfect Mediator—Christ.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How should leaders respond when provoked by those they serve?
2. What does God's judgment of Moses teach about the responsibility of spiritual leadership?
3. How can we guard against speaking 'unadvisedly' when frustrated or angry?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	הֵמָּר ו	אֶת	רוּחַ ו	אֵל יִבֹּט א
H3588	Because they provoked	H853	his spirit	so that he spake unadvisedly
	H4784		H7307	H981

בְּשִׁפְתָּיו:

with his lips

H8193

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 78:40 (Parallel theme): How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert!

Psalms 107:11 (Parallel theme): Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High:

Psalms 39:1 (Parallel theme): I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.

Job 2:10 (Parallel theme): But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

James 3:2 (Parallel theme): For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

