

**December 15, 2019 - Deut. 9:1-29 - Israel's Rebellions**  
**Torah Reading: Deuteronomy 9:1-29 - Israel's Rebellions**  
**Psalm 119:1-24**  
**Haftarah: Joshua 1:9-18**

### **Review of Israel's Murmuring**

**Deuteronomy 9:1-2** - "Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven, A people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak!"

This was the opinion of the spies (**Numbers 13:31**).

### **Spiritual Rebellion**

"Fenced up to heaven" on the surface just means their fortifications were really high and formidable (see also **Deuteronomy 1:28**). Nomadic shepherds would think it impossible to assault even a small town with 40-foot walls, often positioned on impregnable rocky cliffs.

But a similar phrase was used to describe the Tower of Babel:

- **Genesis 11:4** - "And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

The Canaanites and the giants are here both linked to the same spiritual rebellion that built the Tower of Babel. That same spirit is in operation even now.

- **Ephesians 6:12** - "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

"high places" = *epouranios* - existing above the sky, the heavenlies, heavenly regions, also used to refer to stars and heavenly beings like angels. Warfare on earth was pictured as reflected by angelic battles in the heavenlies:

- **Daniel 10:13** - "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia." ("Prince" here means "angel." Michael is the guardian angel of Israel)

- **Daniel 12:1** - "At that time Michael, the great prince who stands watch over your people, will rise up. There will be a time of distress such as never has occurred from the beginning of nations until then."

- **Ephesians 2:2** - "As for you, you were dead in your trespasses and sins, Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

"air" = *aēr* - the air, particularly the lower and denser air as distinguished from the higher and rarer air; the atmospheric region.

According to Jewish tradition, the prince of the power of the air is prince of the demons, which were believed to fill the realm of air.

It points to a similar aspiration to rise to be equal with God:

- **Isaiah 14:12-15** - "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit."

This is the spirit that "now worketh in the children of disobedience" which would include the Canaanites, the Anakim. This spirit will be broken by the Lord's return:

- **1 Thessalonians 4:17** - "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air (*aēr*): and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

This chapter of Deuteronomy is a warning to Israel not to be seduced by that same spirit of rebellion and wanting to rise above God which caused their fathers to die in the wilderness.

The command to dispossess the Canaanites from the Promised Land is also a command to dispossess the spirit of rebellion from within ourselves.

### **Not Our Own Righteousness**

**Deuteronomy 9:4** - "Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee."

**Deuteronomy 9:5** - "Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

**Deuteronomy 9:6** - "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."

*He says "Not for thy righteousness" three times!*

- **Isaiah 48:4**- "thou art obstinate, thy neck is an iron sinew" - the figure is of an animal refusing to turn in the direction his rider desires.

Neither is our righteousness able to save us:

- **Isaiah 64:6** - "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

Paul reformatted this for believers in Christ:

- **Ephesians 2:8** - "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not by works, so that no one can boast..."

### **Review of Israel's Rebellion**

For this new generation, many of whom were born during the wilderness wanderings, needed to hear the story of their parents' rebellion and unbelief, and to heed the warning.

**Deuteronomy 9:7** - "Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD."

### **Golden Calf Incident - Deuteronomy 4:8-21**

**Deuteronomy 4:18** - "And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger."

Rashi - And I fell down before the Lord, as before, forty days: As it says, "And now I will go up to the Lord, perhaps I will atone [for the golden calf]" (Exod. 32:30). At that ascent, I stayed there forty days; consequently, these ended on the twenty-ninth of Av, since he [Moses] ascended on the eighteenth of Tammuz. On the same day, God was reconciled with Israel and He said to Moses, "Hew for yourself two tablets" (Exod. 34:1). He [Moses] remained there another forty days; consequently, these ended on Yom Kippur [the tenth of Tishri]. On that very day, the Holy One, blessed is He, was joyfully reconciled with Israel, and He said to Moses, "I have forgiven according to your words" (Num. 14:20). Therefore [Yom Kippur] was designated [as a day] for pardon and forgiveness. And from where do we know that [God] was reconciled [with Israel] in complete acceptance? Because it says referring to the forty [days] of the later tablets, "And I remained on the mountain as the first days" (Deut. 10:10). Just as the first [forty days] were with [God's] good will, so too, the last [forty days] were with [God's] good will. We may now deduce that the intermediate [forty days] were with [God's] anger. —

[Seder Olam , ch. 6]

**Deuteronomy 9:20** - "And the LORD was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time."

Rashi - This refers to the destruction of [his] children. "So I prayed also for Aaron": And my prayer succeeded to atone for half, thus [only] two [of his sons] died, and two remained [alive].

**Deuteronomy 9:22** - "And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibroth-hat-ta'avah, ye provoked the LORD to wrath."

Taberah - 'Burning-place,' because fire broke out on them there (**Numbers 11:1-3**)  
 Massah — 'Proof,' for there they put God to the proof (**Exodus 17:7**)  
 Kibroth-hat-ta'avah - 'Graves of Lust' by despising the manna, and lusting for flesh to eat (**Numbers 11:31-34**)

They provoked the Lord at Massah by murmuring for water, before they provoked him at Taberah, by complaining about their journeying; (Massah came before they arrived at Sinai, and Taberah after they departed. Kibroth-hattaavah.— The first encampment named after Sinai.

**Deuteronomy 9:23** - "Likewise when the LORD sent you from Kadeshbarnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you; then ye rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and ye believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice."

This was when the spies gave n "evil report" of the Promised Land.

**Deuteronomy 9:24** - "Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you."

**Moses' Intercession - Deuteronomy 9:25-29**

**Deuteronomy 9:25** - "Thus I fell down before the LORD forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first; because the LORD had said he would destroy you."

Rashi - These are the same [forty days] mentioned above (verse 18). And it is repeated here because now the content of his prayer is written, as it is stated [in the next verse], "O Lord God, do not destroy Your people, etc."

**Deuteronomy 9:26** - "I prayed therefore unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, destroy not thy people and thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand."

**Moses here is a type of Christ as intercessor:**

- **Romans 8:34** - "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

- **Hebrews 7:25** - "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

- **1 John 2:1** - "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"