

Thick and Thin

Numbers 14:20-25

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A. Committed (vs. 20-21):

1. So the Lord said – Because the Lord is committed to sustaining His relationship with Israel, and has the power and authority to all things, He verbally answered Moses' request.
 - a) All of the Israelites' actions were actually a rebellion against the Lord himself, not their leaders (14:9, 11). God's destruction of the people was stopped by Moses' intercession for them (14:11–19), but a forty-year period of wandering in the desert was God's verdict against them (14:20–38), along with a great failure in battle (14:39–45). ^[1]
 - b) I love the interaction that God has with His leader Moses and the respect He provides to those who trust Him. When the Lord completed listening to them His decision was firm.
2. I have pardon; Forgiveness – God who is abundant in lovingkindness and who wiped away (blotted out) all the sins of the obstinate people of Israel has once again committed.
 - a) God forgives, but he does not forget the long history of the wayward-ness of his people and simply exculpates them. God spoke of the Israelites testing him “these ten times,” an expression that denotes consistent action over a long period of time. Though the Babylonian Talmud delineated ten specific occasions of Israelite sedition, the number probably was used figuratively and in contrast to the ten plagues that God brought against the Egyptians. ^[2]
3. I have pardon; Forgiveness - God's heart is not to punish anyone. It is when our rebellious nature rises up against His holiness, He responds justly even though He is slow to anger.
4. Indeed as I live - These words last forever.
5. Filled with His glory of the Lord - The Lord's supernatural presence is so powerful that the whole earth will recognize Him.

B. He is Just (vs. 22-23):

1. All the men who have seen – Because the Lord's works are so powerful and supernatural there is no way everyone did not recognize His presence.
 - a) The people of Israel had a clearer view of God than any people before them; for they had both His laws and His physical presence. Their refusal to follow God after witnessing his miraculous deeds and listening to his words made the judgment against them more severe. Increased opportunity brings increased responsibility. As Jesus said: “When someone has been given much, much will be required in return” (Luke 12:48). How much greater is our responsibility to obey and serve God—we have the whole Bible, and we know God’s Son, Jesus Christ.^[3]
2. My glory and signs – God's glory is a massive cloud over the earth.
3. Performed; To do, Deal - The Lord's magnificent presence was a demonstration of His majestic power.
4. Yet you put me to the test - The Lord was totally committed to Israel while they continuously, in the midst of adversity, were committed to their way of thinking or feeling.
5. Ten times - God does not forget anything because He knows all things. Forgiveness is not forgetting. Forgiveness is still deciding to serve those who were wrong as if they did no wrong, honoring His covenant with Abraham.
 - a) Figuring that at least 1,200,000 people were to die in the next thirty-seven and a half years means that there were approximately eighty-five funerals a day, seven per waking hour. This would be a continuous reminder to Israel of God’s wrath and judgment on sin (14:29). Of course, large numbers of them died during a few days’ time in the rebellion of Korah and the following day’s plague, as well as those who died by the snakes or in the plague following the worship of Baal of Peor.^[4]
 - b) Ten times - ex. 14:10-12; 15:22-24; 16:1-3; 16:19-20; 16:27-30; 17:1-4; 32:1-35; Num. 11:1-3; 11:4-34; 14:3. But "ten times" may also be a way of saying "many times."
6. Listen to my voice – In the midst of adversity, they chose, to not give the Lord their undivided attention with the mindset to come to a full knowledge and understanding of what He wanted them to do.

7. By no means see – Forever the Lord will not allow them to be able to gain an intellectual comprehensive experience of the Promise Land.

a) God will not fight against our will but be careful that He does not release us to it, especially when it is contrary to His will.

8. Which I swore to their fathers - Even though the Lord made an oath and is completely committed to faithfully fulfilling His promise, those who rebelled against Him will never come to a full understanding of all that the Promise Land has to offer. They will only have what the spies told them.

9. Spurned Me see it - Those who will not experience the Promise Land are the ones who with contempt rejected the Lord's instructions.

C. He is Full of Grace and Mercy (vs. 24-25; 18; Exodus 34:6-7):

1. Servants – How Caleb responded to all that he saw, how he with deep conviction was committed to do all that God called him to do, and his willingness to seek to lead the people in the ways of the Lord caused God to call Caleb someone who has sincerely surrendered his will to the Lord's will.

a) The exceptions were Caleb (Num. 14:24) and Joshua (v. 30) because they obeyed the Lord without reservation. Not even Moses is mentioned, for the omniscient Lord foresaw his future disobedience regarding the rock and water (20:12).^[5]

b) Up until this time, only Moses had been afforded this prestigious honor by having the Lord bestow upon him the epithet "My servant." A true servant of God is one who believes in God and trusts his word implicitly, who speaks of God and for God's words of deliverance and hope to the peoples and who carries out the will of God even in the face of a world that denies and defies him. The text literally reads, "But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit within him, and he remained loyal to me, so I will bring him into the land wherein he entered, and his seed will inherit it."^[6]

2. He had a different spirit - Caleb demonstrated a different attitude to how he approved the challenge of going into the Promise Land with the descendants of Anak present. His countenance and manner of thinking was different than anyone.

a) Caleb seems to be singled out; perhaps the words of vv.7-9 were his, and he was joined to them by Joshua. Caleb's ultimate

vindication came 45 years later (13:22) and Joshua (vs. 14:10).
(NASU study Bible notes)

3. Followed Me fully - The Lord viewed Caleb as following Him to the fullest. He was completely surrendered to go beyond the limit of what should be expected of someone when faced with overwhelming circumstances.
 - a) It also means “to overflow” or “to do anything in abundance without holding back,” whether for evil or for good (Job 16:10). Caleb abandoned himself completely to God, who in turn ‘abundance’ Caleb by “filling his hand” to do His divine will. A perfect example of consecration! His seed shall possess it. This promise was faithfully fulfilled. See Josh 14:6-15.^[7]
4. I will bring – Because of Caleb's spirit and full surrender to the will of God, the Lord will comprehensively fulfill His promise towards he and his family.
 - a) No one can ever stop God's purposes. They can be a part of it or be removed from it, but God will accomplish His purposes.
5. Shall take possession – The Lord established a legal obligation to Caleb and his family so that they invaded the land and possessed it.
 - a) The fulfillment of this verse is recorded in Joshua 14:6–15 when Caleb received his inheritance in the Promised Land. Caleb followed God with all his heart and was rewarded for his obedience. Are you wholehearted in your commitment to obey God?^[8]
 - b) WE WANT GOD’S BLESSINGS BUT WE DO NOT NECESSARILY WANT TO TRUST AND OBEY GOD’S WORD.
6. Live - The Amalekites and the Canaanites permanently reside in the Promise Land.
7. Turn tomorrow - Because the Amalekites and Canaanites permanently reside in the land God commands Moses to physically move the people in a completely different direction. The children of Israel are not going to win a war against them (14:39-45), because of their rebellious disobedience, so the nation of Israel must turn back to God.
8. By the way - When the nation goes by the way of the Red Sea they would be in the divine will of God and therefore under His powerful protection once again.

^[1] Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). *Tyndale concise Bible commentary* (p. 62). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

- ^[2] Cole, R. D. (2000). [Numbers](#) (Vol. 3B, p. 233). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.
- ^[3] [Life Application Bible Notes](#). (2007). (p. 224). Tyndale.
- ^[4] Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). [Tyndale concise Bible commentary](#) (p. 62). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
- ^[5] Merrill, E. H. (1985). [Numbers](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 231–232). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.
- ^[6] Cole, R. D. (2000). [Numbers](#) (Vol. 3B, p. 233). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.
- ^[7] Pfeiffer, C. F. (1962). [The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: Old Testament](#) (Nu 14:23). Chicago: Moody Press.
- ^[8] [Life Application Bible Notes](#). (2007). (p. 224). Tyndale.