**Deuteronomy 10:10-11**

[*https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/deut/deut-10/deuteronomy-1010-11/*](https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/deut/deut-10/deuteronomy-1010-11/)

*Moses reminds the Israelites that the LORD listened to his intercessory prayer and relented from destroying them. The LORD then asked Moses to continue to lead the people to go in and possess the land He swore to their fathers to give them.*

As Moses concluded the story of the molten calf incident at Mount Sinai, he reminded the people of God of the positive effects of his intercessory prayer on their behalf. As leader and covenant mediator, Moses felt the responsibility to pray and fast on behalf of the Israelites when they sinned with the molten calf. Moses’ purpose in praying for the people was to ask God to spare their lives. He reminded Israel that he *stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights*in order to intercede for them. Moses had done this before, the *first time* he ascended Mount Horeb, or Sinai, and now he has done it again ([Deuteronomy 9:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+9.25&t=NASB95)). Israel sinned against the LORD during the time of Moses’ original forty days of fasting on Mount Sinai, now Moses prayed and fasted on behalf of the people for the same amount of days he was on the mountain before, petitioning God to relent from destroying them as the consequence for their actions.

Moses’ intercessory prayer was successful. He stated, *The LORD listened to me that time also*. The LORD agreed to do just what Moses had asked for: to spare the lives of the Israelites. Moses said, *The LORD was not willing to destroy you.*After granting Moses’ request, the LORD commanded him, saying, *Arise, proceed on your journey ahead of the people, that they may go in and possess the land which I swore to their fathers to give them*. God relented from destroying Israel and starting over with Moses, and now it was time to get back to work. God has a job from Israel, to *go in and possess the land.*Oftentimes, part of the reward for answered prayer is additional responsibility.

God still disciplined the people for their disobedience ([Exodus 32:30-35](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+32.30-35&t=NASB95)). But he did not *destroy*them and start over with Moses to fulfill His promises to Abraham. God *swore to their fathers to give them*the land, but could have honored that promise through Moses’ seed. Now God relents, and immediately asked Moses to return to his assigned leadership responsibility.

The addition of this material here was important to Moses and to the audience he is addressing. For, although God had already decided not to destroy the stubborn Israelites ([Exodus 32:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+32.14&t=NASB95)), He could have delayed entry into Canaan until the next generation, as He did to the old generation of Israel who rebelled against His command to go up and possess the land ([Deuteronomy 1:26-33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+1.26-33&t=NASB95); [Numbers 13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+13&t=NASB95)). Instead, the Suzerain (Ruler) God asked Moses and this generation to *proceed* on their *journey*so that they may conquer the land of Canaan.

The Suzerain God made lasting promises to Abraham because of his loyal service rendered. For instance, in [Genesis 15:18-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+15.18-19&t=NASB95) God made an unconditional grant of land to Abraham’s descendants as a reward for Abraham’s faithful service, that they might *possess the land which*God*swore to their fathers to give them*. God’s grant of land to Abraham was irrevocable and permanent even if his descendants (as vassals) did not properly fulfill the expected obligations of the Suzerain ([Romans 11:29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+11.29&t=NASB95)). This is the case here with the Israelites, the ones who would enjoy the privilege of living in the Promised Land. God could have started over with Moses and still fulfilled this promise, but the Suzerain God answered Moses’ petition to spare the Israelites, and now is asking the forgiven Israelites to proceed to *go in to possess the land*.

Their obedience will begin to fulfill God’s promises to Abraham: “To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates” ([Genesis 15:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+15.18&t=NASB95)). The blessing was already granted, but it was left to them to go and possess it through obedience. This is also a pattern throughout the Bible. In the New Testament, God unconditionally grants believers spiritual gifts, but obedience to the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, is required in order to gain the practical benefit of those gifts. Israel had been granted the land, but now had to *go in,*in order to *possess*the land.

God is always faithful to His word. God also made promises that were conditioned on ongoing obedience ([Genesis 17:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+17.1-2&t=NASB95)). To this point Moses is reminding Israel of God’s faithfulness as well as the adverse consequences they have suffered for disobedience. The primary purpose of Deuteronomy is to set forth the covenant conditions spelling out what behavior is required in order to receive continued blessing when Israel conquers the land. Much of it will be pragmatic cause-effect. When people treat one another honestly, avoid envy and work hard, society flourishes. But God also promises to intervene with His sovereign hand to discipline as well as protect His chosen people.

**Biblical Text:**

**10I, moreover, stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights like the first time, and the Lord listened to me that time also; the Lord was not willing to destroy you. 11Then the Lord said to me, ‘Arise, proceed on your journey ahead of the people, that they may go in and possess the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.**