

What is the significance of Kadesh Barnea in the Bible?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Kadesh-Barnea.html>

Kadesh Barnea is a region located in the Desert of Zin that is mentioned numerous times in the Old Testament. It was located somewhere along the border of Edom and Israel, southwest of the Dead Sea. Kadesh Barnea, sometimes simply called Kadesh, is connected to many significant events in Israel's history, specifically in the Pentateuch. The name Kadesh Barnea is thought to mean "the holy place of the desert of wandering."

Kadesh Barnea served as a place of combat in the book of Genesis when Abraham fought the alliance of kings there (Genesis 14:7). It is ironic that the very place where Abraham experienced victory over the Amalekites is where the Israelites later failed to believe that God would give them victory in acquiring the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 9:23). The account in Genesis also includes Hagar's meeting with the Angel of the Lord "between Kadesh and Bered" after she was mistreated by Sarah (Genesis 16:14).

Kadesh Barnea seems to have been a regular camping spot for the Israelites throughout their years of desert wandering (Numbers 13:26; 20:1, 14; 33:36). It was at Kadesh that Miriam died and was buried (Numbers 20:1).

Two significant events that occurred at Kadesh Barnea were the Israelites' faithless refusal to possess the Promised Land (Numbers 13:32-33) and their opposition to Moses at not having enough water (Numbers 20:2-5). These two events, marked by unbelief, grumbling, and disobedience, directly affected Moses, Aaron, and the Israelites.

The men who had left Kadesh Barnea to scout out the Promised Land, except for Caleb and

Joshua, failed to believe that God could give them possession of Canaan (Numbers 14:30; Joshua 14:7). Instead, they insisted that the people of Canaan, who included the Nephilim, were too powerful for them to fight. The ten scouts bringing the evil report persuaded the people that the land would be impossible to acquire (Numbers 13:32-33). Because of their failure to believe, the Israelites had to wander in the desert for another 38 years, waiting until all those who were 20 years and older died, so that the next generation could take possession of the land (Numbers 14:29; Deuteronomy 2:14).

Years later, Moses and Aaron were also denied entrance into the Promised Land because of their disobedience to God at Kadesh Barnea. God had instructed Moses to speak to the rock to bring forth water for the grumbling Israelites, but he disobeyed by striking the rock twice (Numbers 20:12). Because the Israelites had failed to believe and obey the Lord, their arrival into the land “flowing with milk and honey” was postponed until Joshua led the younger generation out of the wilderness by the command of the Lord.

In the desert of wandering, the Israelites experienced plagues, death, and testing. The Israelites failed the tests that took place in Kadesh Barnea, and that remained etched in their memory forever. Their unbelief led to the postponement of entering Canaan and claiming God’s blessings (Psalm 95:8-11; Hebrews 3:7-19). May we not follow the unbelief of those who did not trust God to fulfill His promises. When times of testing come, may we display the faith that Joshua and Caleb had in trusting God at Kadesh Barnea.