

Ye shall know my breach of promise (34). RV 'alienation.' It is to be feared that the AV translation of the Hebrew word tenuah as 'breach of promise' might give the impression that God would go back on a promise which He had made. Actually tenuah simply means 'opposition' or 'hostility.' The ancient Greek LXX translated it 'purpose of wrath;' the Latin Vulgate as 'revenge.'

e. The unsuccessful repentance (xiv.39-45)

This is one of the most tragic passages in the Bible. When the people heard the divine decision, they wept. They were greatly stirred by the death of the ten spies whose advice they had accepted. Now that the opportunity for immediate possession of the Promised Land was denied them, and they were told that they must wander forty years in the wilderness, the temper of the people completely changed. They confessed their sin (40), and declared that they would now go up to the place that the Lord had promised. Moses told them that the opportunity was gone. To attempt now to take the land would be only a further step of disobedience, and would accomplish nothing. However, the people took things in their own hands, and undertook in their own strength to do what they had previously feared to undertake with God helping them. The attempt failed at its beginning. Driven back by the Canaanites, frustrated and despondent, nothing remained but the forty years of wilderness wandering to which God had doomed them. Hormah (45). See notes on Dt.1.44.

X. LAWS AFTER THE CRISIS. xv. 1-41

Chapters xv to xx encompass a period of about thirty-eight years, most of which is passed over in silence. There is no indication of the exact time of the events from xv.1 to xx.13. The condemnation at Kadesh-barnea was fulfilled. Nearly forty years were spent in the wilderness, and an entire generation passed away. It had been made clear that Israel was not yet ready for the Promised Land.