

PARASHAT EKEV

Deuteronomy 7:12–11:25

Parashat Ekev continues the speeches of Moses to the Israelites. He tells them that, if they maintain their covenant with God by observing all the commandments, God will make them fruitful and victorious over their enemies. Reminding them of their forty years of wandering through the wilderness, Moses tells them: “God subjected you to the hardship of hunger . . . then gave you manna . . . in order to teach you that human beings do not live on bread alone. . . .” He then warns them that after settling in their land and enjoying its fruits, they should not arrogantly assume: “My own power and the might of my own hand have won this wealth for me.” Nor, continues Moses, should they conclude that it is for their virtue that God allows them to defeat their enemies and conquer their land. Rather, it is punishment of the inhabitants for idolatry, and it is God’s fulfillment of the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Moses recalls the disloyalty of the people; how they built the golden calf when he was receiving the Ten Commandments on Mount Horeb; how they rebelled at Kadesh-barnea; and how he intervened with God to save them, granting them another set of the tablets on which the Ten Commandments were engraved. Moses recounts the death and burial of Aaron. He also tells the people that God wants them to “cut away the thickening about their hearts,” observe the commandments, and learn from their history how God freed them from Egyptian slavery and led them through the desert. If you keep the commandments, Moses promises, God will dislodge all nations before you. No one will stand before your power.
