



**MOVEMENT THROUGH THE CONE**  
**Numbers 13-14**

## MOVEMENT THROUGH THE CONE

Philosophers refer to something called “the moment”. It is considered a structure in the universe. “The Moment” is apart from language and is the reason that certain sentences take shape. Suppose we indulge the philosophers and use this kind of language in order to get at a truth from Scripture?

Such a moment would be Kadesh Barnea mentioned in Numbers 13 and 14. Atomic sentences are considered to be very simple. At Kadesh Barnea there were two atomic sentences used that determined or could have determined the future of the Israelite people. In regard to the land of Canaan and the 40 day spy mission there were two different statements made:

**“We cannot do it”**

The sentence “We cannot do it” is language directly attributable to “the nature of the moment”. Ten of the spies reported that the walls were big, the fortifications were strong and the number of combatants constituted a powerful force structure. It was a true sentence! The sentence incorporates certain characteristics about the moment: bigness, multiplicity and exponentiality.

one sentence is dependent upon

**THE MOMENT**

**“We can do it”**

However, Caleb and Joshua uttered a different sentence. They said “We can do it”. But these two men did not appeal to the moment for their language structure but upon the Word of God. Their sentence is equally true!

one sentence is dependent upon

**REVELATION**

Such distinctions in language use occur all the time.

**“Bob has cancer”**

This atomic sentence is reliant upon the moment and it is true.

**“Yes, but God can heal Bob”.**

An equally true sentence yet not leaning upon the moment.


We can use these two sentences in sequence in the same paragraph and not be contradictory. But, something remarkable has taken place. Between the period in the first sentence “Bob has cancer”. and the first word of the next sentence “Yes, but God can heal him” is a divide.

The language base has changed.

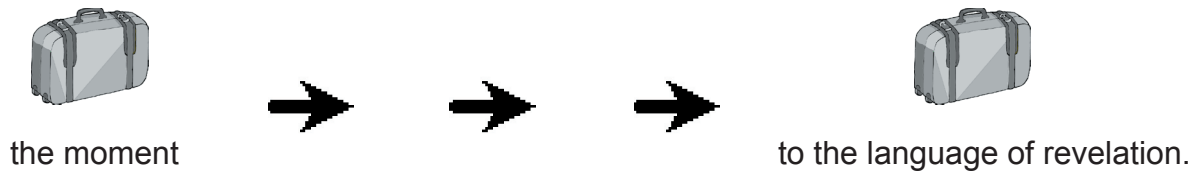
It has moved from **the moment** to  **revelation!**

Both sentences are true but do not have the same base.

Correspondence Theory in linguistics tells us that language must have something to correspond to in the material world. The Scriptures teach us that language must correspond to what has been revealed. "We cannot do it" if it is the only sentence to be believed demands that any correspondence between language and revelation be meaningless. Therefore any shift of the language base from the moment to revelation must be meaningless. The ten spies and the rest of Israel refused to make this conscious language shift. Consequences were extreme for this failure. "We cannot do it" if it is to be believed requires no confidence in any other language base except the experience of the moment.

We could think of language like a suitcase. 

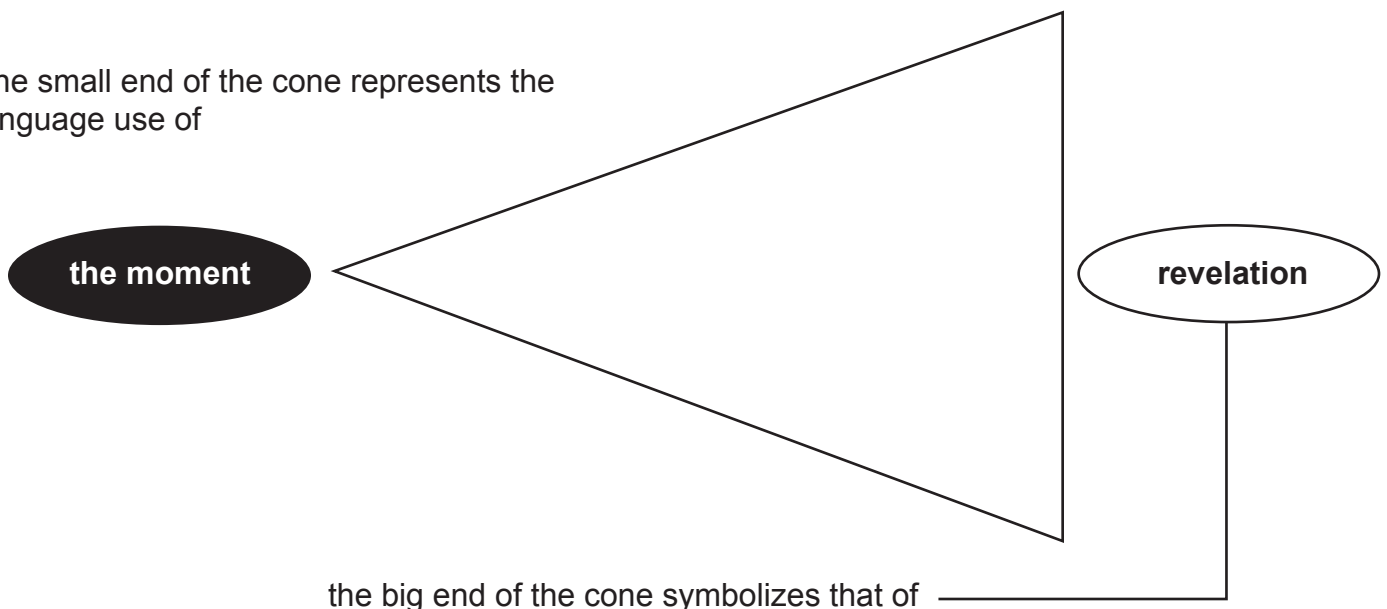
The object would be to pick up the suitcase of language and consciously move it from the language base of..



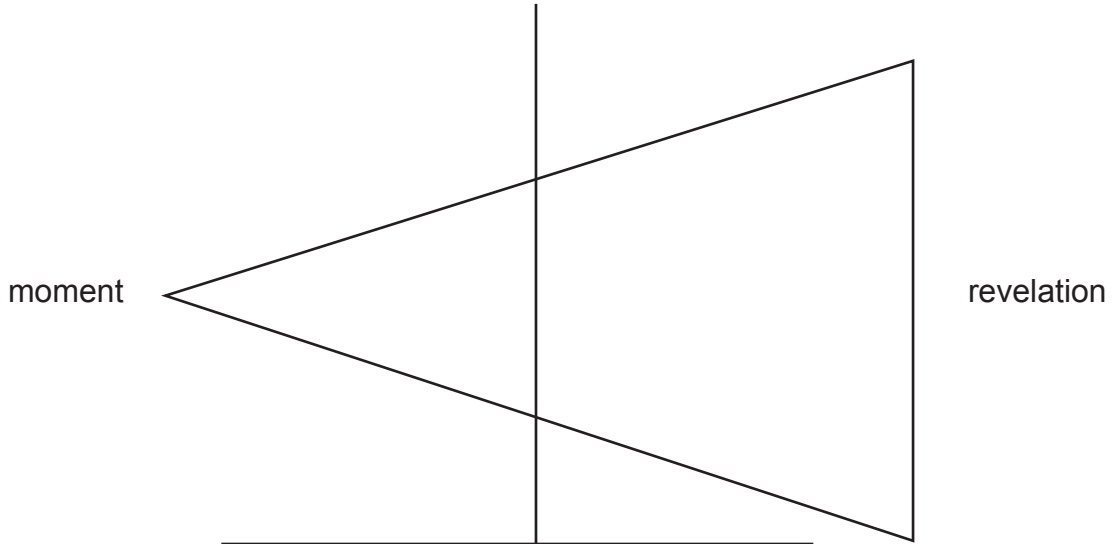
Any search for balance between these two language bases would be fruitless. There can be no such relationship between them. In the world of temporal experience we do use both. But consistent use of both does not indicate a *state of balance* between them.

Let's draw a cone laying on its side.

The small end of the cone represents the language use of



Now draw a line vertically bisecting the cone into two parts.

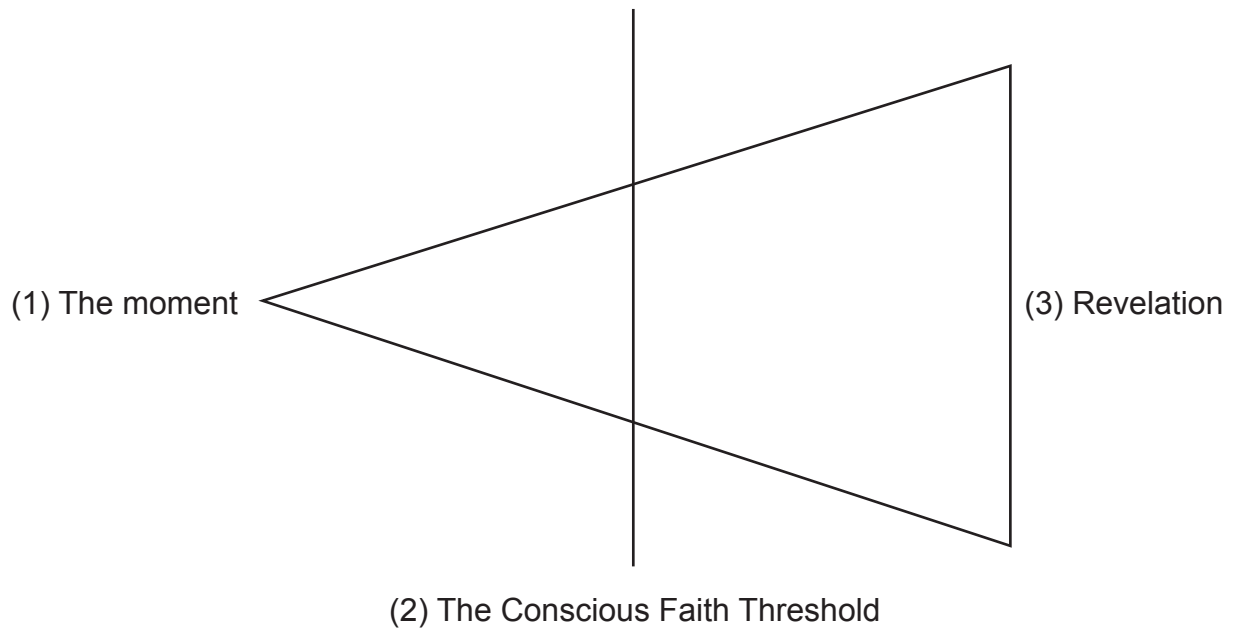


The vertical line represents the conscious act of the language shift.

In all of the passages that were consulted for this piece one notices that this same structure exists.

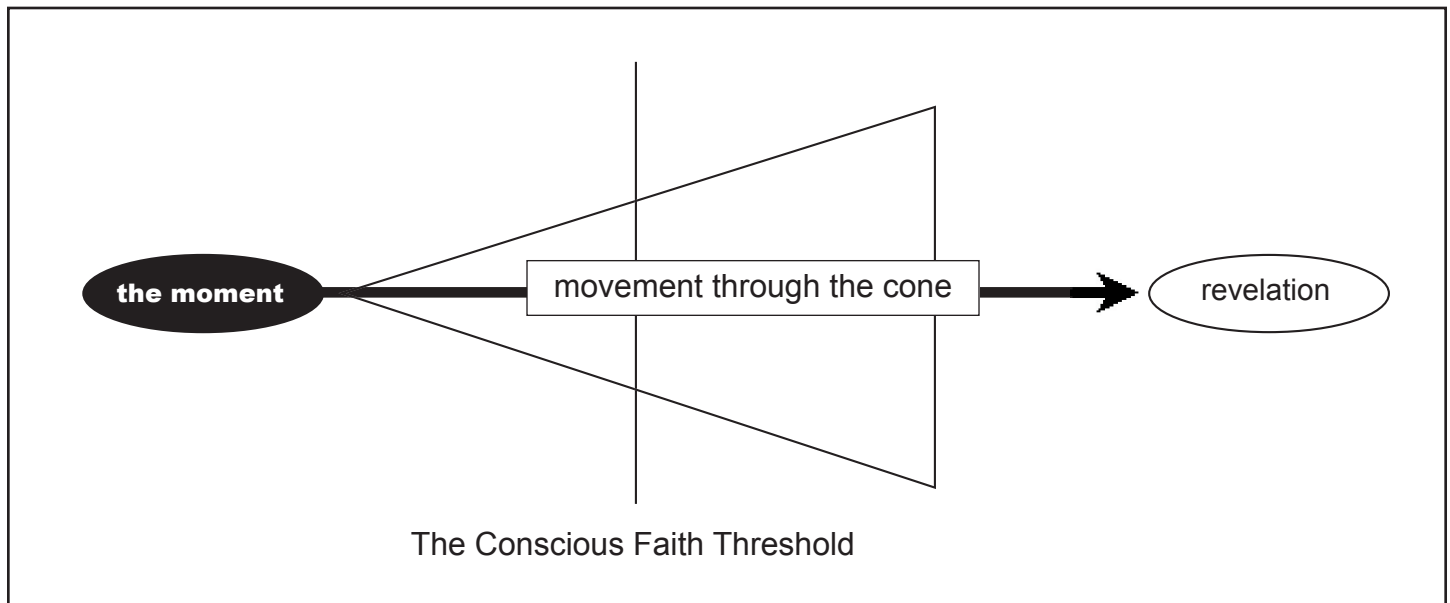
Perhaps it is a revealed language structure.

If so then it consists of three parts.



If this be so then one must remember that there is a whole cone and not just half of one. Israel acted on half the cone at Kadesh Barnea. There must be natural moments and there are certainly Biblical moments. Such moments like David and Goliath, the Red Sea crossing, manna, water from the rock and others.

To continue this graphic we will add a horizontal line running longitudinally through the cone from the small end to the big end.



This arrow symbolizes movement through the cone. Joshua and Caleb moved through the cone in just this same way. They had the experience of the moment along with the rest of the spies but they moved from the moment as language base across the faith threshold and came to base their language on the Word of God. These two great men of faith left the natural moment behind. They employed both but they came to rest upon the revelation of the Lord. One complete New Testament example of moving through the cone in this fashion is found in Matthew 4. Jesus during His temptation moved through this cone like structure as He dealt with the Devil. The Lord used the language of the moment we He admitted that He was hungry but The Savior didn't stop there but moved across the faith threshold and based His language for the whole circumstance on revelation. Is it worth considering that the proper response to all temporal situations is the move through the cone?! Would such conscious representational movement be the answer to fear, discouragement, cowardice, faithlessness and the like? It would seem that unless one responded in this fashion to the various moments of life that one would be prone to all of the above. If we ask what is the right response to the moment? the Scripture indicates it is movement through the cone.

**So the issue is or the question is: will I or will I not consciously move through the cone?**

Can we handle matters of health? —————  
 economics?  
 jobs?  
 persecution?  
 relationships  
 \_\_\_\_\_ or anything else this way? **4**

Joshua and Caleb practiced an induced reduction at Kadesh Barnea. Essentially they encouraged their fellow Israelites to ignore any complexity in the situation. To these two minds there was only one issue. That issue was movement through the cone. Complexity had no place in their thinking! That is remarkable. Ignoring complexity is considered to irresponsible, unrealistic and dangerous or even worse. Movement through the cone is so highly reductive that the mind takes no note of the natural complexity of any situation. Joshua and Caleb said to the camp that day long ago something unique. They said “don’t worry about the enemy or their fortifications, don’t worry about tactics or strategies that our enemies might use against us, don’t consider all of the probabilities nor the possibilities, let’s just move through the cone”. Israel refused. Let’s consider the contemporary world. As believers how do we deal with the various moments of life? This idea of movement through the cone is a generalization from the text of Scripture. It is a way of thinking about the world of the moment. Do remember how we are using that term “moment”. What if a student in school listened to lectures and said “I know from which side of the cone all of these words are coming”. What if a businessman constructed true sentences about his business from dependence on the moment and then pushed on through the divide to the revealed language base? For instance he might say “We really need more accounts receivable” or “there’s not enough income to pay all of the salaries” or other such sentences but to stop there would be to indulge the moment. If this businessman consciously crossed the fault line of faith and moved his language suitcase to the base of revelation would he not be acting in faith?

Movement through the cone in just this way would be considered impractical by the world. Such a response to the moment might be looked upon in the same way by folks in the church.

### QUESTION

Does that perspective on the moment represent a type of corruption of language and thought?

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