



REFLECTIONS

February 5, 2017, Refreshed from March 4, 2007

Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."

Numbers 20:12NKJV

Forgiveness & Intolerance

His indiscretion really seemed rather minor. When you read the story, all Moses did was hit a rock with his staff a couple of times. And even if he was disobedient to God's instruction, he might have felt justified by all he had been through. He had been putting up with a disgruntled nation of Israelites for more than forty years! And now they had complained again about the water supply as if God had not always been taking care of their every need. This time, it just got under Moses' skin.

Just think about his frustration. God had chosen him to lead the Israelites out of their enslavement in Egypt. And though reluctantly, Moses obeyed God and took on the task. He engaged in a battle of wills with Pharaoh to get the slaves freed. Then he displayed remarkable faith when the nation he led encountered the Red Sea while being pursued by an angry Egyptian army. But he led the Israelites to safety and to freedom just as God empowered him to do. And what was the reward?

Well, the reward was shepherding about three million people who quickly became discontent with their new life and freedom. All within a matter of a year or so, they grumbled about their food and complained about the water supply. They criticized Moses' leadership; they worshiped golden calves; and forgot the promises they made. Then when Moses led them to the borders of the land God had promised them, ten cowardly and faithless spies persuaded the entire population that the "giants" who possessed the land could not be conquered. So, they kept on wandering in the desert.

Now if I had been Moses I would have wanted to whack a rock a few times too. But no matter how justified Moses felt, he disobeyed God; and God was *intolerant* of it. There were consequences for his sin. Moses was not allowed to enter the promised land.

God sacrificed his Son for the forgiveness of our sins, but He does not tolerate them. There are still consequences. Jesus forgave the adulterous woman, but He was intolerant of the sin. "*Neither do I condemn you: go, and sin no more.*" (John 8:11 KJV)

As we seek to be like Jesus in our daily lives, may we be forgiving of those who sin against us. But let us not confuse our forgiveness of sinners with *tolerance* of the sin.

And about those consequences. Well, those are for God to decide.

For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.
(Hebrews 10:30NKJV)

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

www.reflectingthesavior.org.

Permission is hereby granted for reproduction and redistribution of this edition of *Reflections* provided all applicable copyright laws are properly observed.

Your comments are welcomed and encouraged. Richard may be reached at richard@reflectingthesavior.org.