

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XXII

November 11, 2012

No. 46

Why Moses and Aaron Missed The Promised Land

(Jerry Fite)

Moses, at Mt. Hor witnessed the death of his brother Aaron. Now, he climbed to a “high place” (Pisgah) of Mount Nebo to view the promised land. What a sobering moment for him to hear Jehovah say, *“This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it unto thy seed’: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither”* (Deuteronomy 34:4). Aaron and Moses did not “go over thither” when a new generation of God’s people inherited the promise of God. Why? Did Moses know why he was not allowed into the promised land?

Aaron and Moses both knew why. Earlier, from Mount Hor, Jehovah said, *“Aaron shall be gathered unto his people; for he shall not enter the land which I have given unto the Children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the waters of Meribah”* (Numbers 20:24). Both Aaron and Moses failed as godly leaders. They “rebelled against” God’s word.

God gathered Aaron and Moses together with clear instruction to supply water for the people. *“Take the rod...and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes, that it gave forth its water...”* (Numbers 20:8). Instead of speaking to the rock with the rod in hand, Moses speaks to the people, and with rod in hand, strikes the rock.

God said “speak” to the rock. Moses “struck” the rock. In disobedience, Moses and Aaron as leaders did not “sanctify God before the people”. In disobeying God’s clear directive, they both manifested a “disbelief” in God. In disobeying God’s command they both would not enter into the promised land. How do we know all this was connected with Moses striking the rock? Listen to Jehovah: *“And Jehovah said unto Moses and Aaron, ‘Because ye believed not in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them”* (Numbers 20:12).

Uncontrolled anger contributed to Moses not entering the land of Canaan. Exasperated and angry, Moses let loose a tongue lashing, *“Hear now ye rebels, shall we bring you forth water out of this rock”* (Numbers 20:8). In anger Moses *“spoke inadvisedly with his lips”* (Psalms 106:33). Yes, water came forth from the rock even though Moses did it his way. Yes, God was angry with His people (Psalms 106:32). But *“it went ill with Moses for their sakes”* (Psalms 106:32), because he allowed his temper rage out of control. Is it not ironic for Moses in exasperation to call out his people as “rebels”, when he was moments away from “rebelling” against God’s word? We must remember *“the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God”* (James 1:20).

The Holy Spirit equated the missing of the promised land with the possibility of us missing Heaven (Hebrews 4:1). The reason is disobedience which manifests disbelief in God’s way (Hebrews 3:18-19). Also, do not let your wrath keep you from Heaven (Galatians 5:20-21).