

Daily Devotional, November 1, 2020

“Speak to the Rock”, (Numbers 20:8-12, NKJV)

“Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals.” So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, “Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?” Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank. 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 20:8-12)

This event is the record of Moses’ error at Kadesh. The children of Israel had come to a place in the desert where there was no water. On a prior occasion, perhaps thirty-eight years before, Moses had been commanded in a similar situation to “**strike the rock**” (Exodus 17:6). But this time Moses was commanded to “**speak to the rock.**” Both times, God had His purpose and methodology. The first time, Moses did obey the Lord to “**strike the rock.**” The second time, Moses in his sinful anger struck the rock rather than speaking to it as he was told. Let us learn the following lessons:

1. That the Lord’s directions when He speaks are often very specific, and should be obeyed to the letter.
2. That we ought not to be setting about God’s work in sinful anger, or mix the work of God with any sin of any kind.
3. That we ought not to be taking credit for what God is doing—notice Moses said, “Must we bring water for you out of this rock?”
4. That we might deliberate before serving God, and not act impulsively, ensuring that our chief motive is always to glorify Him.
5. That disobedience to God’s specific commands can often lead to serious long term consequences—like impregnating a young woman during a drunken one night stand at a party would for a young man, and the effects of that decision to partake of relations for a young woman

As a result of this event, neither Moses nor Aaron entered the promised land of Canaan personally in their lifetimes, and so now they must wait until the Messianic Kingdom to do so. It may seem to us that God was harsh in His judgment here, but that cannot be the case. Divine justice is always perfect justice. Let us have a healthy fear of God, even as we enjoy His love, grace, and mercy, and hallow His holy name in all that we say and do.