

## Don't Slack Off!

<sup>9</sup> So let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we don't give up. (Gal 6:9, TLV)...And you brothers who are doing what is good, don't slack off! (2 Th. 3:13, CJB)

<sup>1</sup> In the first month, the entire community of Bnei-Yisrael arrived at the wilderness of Zin. The people stayed at Kadesh. There Miriam died and was buried. <sup>2</sup> Now there was no water for the community, so they assembled against Moses and Aaron. <sup>3</sup> The people quarreled with Moses saying, "If only we had died when our brothers died before Adonai! <sup>4</sup> Now why have you brought the community of Adonai into this wilderness, for us and our livestock to die here? <sup>5</sup> Why have you brought us from Egypt to bring us to this evil place—a place without grain, fig, grapevine or pomegranate—and there's no water to drink!" <sup>6</sup> So Moses and Aaron went from before the assembly to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting and fell on their faces. Then the glory of Adonai appeared to them. <sup>7</sup> Adonai spoke to Moses saying, <sup>8</sup> "Take the staff and gather the assembly, you and your brother Aaron. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will give out its water. You will bring out water from the rock, and you will give the community something to drink, along with their livestock." <sup>9</sup> So Moses took the staff from before the presence of Adonai, just as He had commanded him. <sup>10</sup> Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly in front of the rock. He said, "Listen now, you rebels! Must we bring you water from this rock?" <sup>11</sup> Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with the staff. Water gushed out and the community and its livestock drank. <sup>12</sup> But Adonai said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in Me so as to esteem Me as holy in the eyes of Bnei-Yisrael, therefore you will not bring this assembly into the land that I have given to them." <sup>13</sup> These are the waters of Meribah where Bnei-Yisrael contended with Moses, and where Adonai showed Himself holy among them." (Nu 20:1-13)

At UF's EE, the most dreaded characteristic for a student is to be labeled a slacker. We did not want slackers in our MIL lab. This is actually a Biblical term: "*The slacker's soul craves, yet has nothing, but the diligent soul will be satisfied...*" <sup>4</sup> A *slacker* will not plow in season, so at harvest he looks but finds nothing" (Prov. 13:4, 20:4). The Bible labels lazy people slackers. We can never afford to slack off. Especially for us who are supposed to be leaders in this end time revival called Messianic Judaism. How are ten others going to hang on to our *tzitzit* if we do? (Zech. 8:23)

*Parashat Chukat* was Ian's and my *Bar Mitzvah* reading in July of 1997. Each time I re-read these verses I am reminded that we cannot slack off. Why? As we read in Numbers 20 firstly we see that the entire community gathered together not to bless but to complaint (one more time). Why is it so hard to be thankful for what God has already done for us? He has brought us out of the land of Egypt, which represents the carnal world, the land of sinfulness. Isn't that by itself an amazing miracle? This is so sad. A second reason for sadness is that when they realized that they had a real need (water), instead of turning to the Lord for provision they looked back at Egypt through rose-colored eyes. Instead of seeing Egypt as the land of slavery (in our case, the slavery of sin) they saw a place where water was plenty. Didn't the Lord already demonstrate He could bring water in the desert? Sometimes we truly forget the reality of our former state. Do you want to return to slavery?

A third reason to be saddened is that they failed to see that where they were was a blessing! The Lord had delivered them, and brought them out, but instead of seeing their blessing they saw the Lord's deliverance as a curse (no figs, grapes, pomegranates or water). A fourth reason to be saddened is to realize that instead of looking to the Lord for provision they complained against the men whom God had placed as leaders over them. Neither Moses nor Aaron acted on their own accord. Who was really leading the people? Was it not the Lord?

The Children of Israel arrived at *Kadesh* (the same Hebrew root as *kadosh*) and their reactions and responses were not good. As I meditated on today's Word, I reviewed my life to see how I have reacted and responded to life's uncertainties and challenges in my walk with the Lord. I concluded that I have often (in my 39 years as a Believer) reacted in very similar ways. Scripture shows me how much of a complainer I can be!

However, my greatest source of sadness is not what the people said, or what Moses said, but what the Lord said to Moses: "*Because you did not trust in Me so as to esteem Me as holy in the eyes of Bnei-Yisrael...*" Moses got angry and he lost his chance. The truth is that when we fail to demonstrate faith (trust) in God it affects those around us because our actions diminish other people's understanding of whom God is. We make God seem weak and ineffective. Our sin does that when we miss the mark. You could almost hear God speaking to our hearts and saying: "*Because you did not trust in Me...*" It is hard for me to imagine a sadder statement could be spoken to us: <sup>17</sup> For it is better to suffer for doing good (if it is God's will) than for doing evil (1 Pet 3:17).