

STUMBLING BLOCK

Joe Slater

"They angered Him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses on account of them, because they rebelled against His Spirit so that he spoke rashly with his lips" (Psalm 106:32-33).

The incident mentioned in the passage above took place in Numbers 20. By no means was this the first time the Israelites had complained. Even before leaving Egypt, they had told Moses to just leave them alone and let them serve the Egyptians (Exodus 14:12). Despite seeing God's power in the ten plagues, and despite being released from centuries of cruel bondage, they had murmured and griped almost continuously for forty years. "We want water! We want food! We don't like the food! We want new leadership! We want a god we can see!"

Now, after forty years, they were still moaning that they would have been better off had they stayed in Egypt! Is it any wonder that Moses blew a gasket? God told him to speak to the rock, and it would bring forth water for all the people. Instead, Moses spoke rashly: "*Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?*" Then, rather than speaking to the rock, he stuck it twice with his rod (Numbers 20:7-11).

The Lord held Moses and Aaron accountable: "*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*" (20:12). Truly, Moses and Aaron sinned – but the Israelites certainly were a stumbling block to them!

Do you realize that your sins can be a stumbling block to others, inciting them to sin as well? "*But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea*" (Mark 9:42). Don't be a stumbling block!

"Look At My Hands"

A little girl was once admiring her mother. She spoke of her eyes, her hair, her face, and then stopped to add: "But your hands . . ."

The mother's hands were drawn and misshapen. She felt it was time to explain to her daughter the reason for this disfigurement. She told of a fire in her house about ten years earlier. Her baby was upstairs in its cradle, and she had rushed up the stairs and into a room, which was ablaze, snatching the infant up into her arms. In doing so, she suffered severe burns on her hands, leaving them scarred for life.

The little girl, listening intently to her mother's words, now looked with reflection and deep affection upon her mother's hands. Finishing her statement earlier begun, she added, "But I love your hands best of all!"

Another scene transpired on the day of our Lord's resurrection. He appeared to His disciples behind closed doors and, at first, it greatly frightened them – thinking He was a spirit. However, when He showed them His nail-pierced hands and the hole in His side made by the soldier's spear, they rejoiced.

One of the apostles, Thomas, was not there that evening to see the Lord. When the others told him about it, he averred that he would not believe until he saw "in His hands the print of the nails." A week later, Christ again appeared to the group, and this time Thomas was present. Again, as before, the resurrected Jesus appeared. He especially addressed Thomas, saying, "Reach your finger here, and look at my hands . . ." (John 20:7).

To the believer's eye, surely no set of hands could be so beautiful as those that were pierced for our redemption!

I shall know Him; I shall know Him

And redeemed by His side I shall stand.

I shall know Him; I shall know Him

By the print of the nails in His hands."

--Hershel Dyer (deceased) via Old Paths

Instructions From A Child

Once when my son Daniel was three, I walked in and found him, much to my horror, standing in a chair, writing in my Bible with a pen. Images of thin paper being ripped to shreds rifled through my mind as I said, "Daniel, stop!" He stopped and said, "Daddy, me marking your Bible." I raced to the chair, expecting the worst. Fortunately, the Bible was not harmed (save for a few ink marks). I lowered him to the ground, and he went happily on his way.

I'm currently sitting on an airplane, watching a young mother entertain a toddler slightly younger than Daniel was at that time. Daniel, now sixteen, is sitting beside me and playing a game as we travel toward our destination. The hands of time slow for no one, and if things continue as they are, Daniel will be off to school and gone from the nest in the blink of an eye.

From time to time, I think back on the Bible incident and what took place shortly after. Later, as I surveyed the damage, I discovered a large loop drawn around this particular passage: "*Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven*" (Matt. 19:14). I was stunned almost beyond words. Since then, I've made every effort to set the proper examples and to provide instruction in righteousness to both of my children.

The alternative is unthinkable.

--Kenny Westmorland (Celina, TN)