



**The Oaks
Baptist Church**
Grand Prairie, Texas

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Faithful in Consequences Numbers 14:10-20

Lesson Background and Introduction

From cover to cover, the Bible reveals the devastating consequences of sin. When God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, He clearly told them, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:16, 17). Many are familiar with Paul's declaration in Romans 6:23: "The wages of sin is death." The climax of that death sentence is specified in Revelation. According to Revelation 22:15, sinners will be outside of the holy city, the New Jerusalem, much as the Israelites were left outside of the promised land because of their unbelief. Consider this tragic irony: 12 spies brought back samples of the fruit of the promised land, fruit that could have been enjoyed by them and their fellow Israelites had they possessed the faith that God would give them victory over the land's inhabitants. But they rejected that fruit and ate instead the bitter fruit that results from choosing a path of unbelief and disobedience. Intercessory prayer, such as that which Moses offered on behalf of the rebellious Israelites, remains a vital ministry for Christians today. The person who prays for another stands between Heaven and earth, calling on the Lord to intervene on behalf of a person in need of His mercy. When the prophet Samuel gave what amounted to his farewell address, he said, "Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you" (1 Samuel 12:23). Though his leadership role was changing, Samuel's ministry of intercession for God's people remained the same. The apostle Paul also wrote of the importance of intercessory prayer, particularly for those in positions of authority (1 Timothy 2:1, 2). But intercessions can and ought to be carried out on behalf of anyone (possible exception: 1 John 5:16). How many times have we heard someone describe a problem or a crisis that the person (or someone he or she knows) is going through and we respond by promising to pray for that individual in need? How many times have we then failed to follow through on that promise? To pray for another is one of the most sacred privileges a follower of Jesus has. We must keep our promise to pray! There is so much in our hurting, broken world that needs to be covered by the prayers of faithful Christians. Instead of ceasing to pray, may we "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Belief vs. Unbelief - Moses sent 12 leaders, one from each of Israel's tribes, to investigate Canaan, the land God promised. Only two men, Joshua, and Caleb, returned with a positive report. They refused to see the giants and other obstacles as barriers to what God could do for them. Joshua and Caleb stood on God's Word, but the unbelieving, rebellious nation failed to believe. They picked up stones to silence Joshua and Caleb. They also threatened Moses and Aaron, vowing to appoint another leader to take them back to Egypt. Moses and Aaron prayed while Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes, a sign of deep mourning. Each of them begged the people to believe in the power of God and the faithfulness of His promises rather than focusing on the obstacles.

Consequences - In the midst of this uproar, God showed up in a powerful way. A magnificent bright light appeared in the form of a cloud from the door of the tabernacle. God told Moses and Aaron to step aside so He could bring judgment on His children, wiping them all out. God would then create a new people through Moses to inherit the Promised Land. It would be a nation greater than the present one.

Mercy - Moses humbly responded that the Egyptians would hear of God's children being wiped out and take pleasure in the destruction. Moses imagined their arrogant taunts of surrounding nations against Israel's God—their Deity got them to the gate of the Promised Land but no farther. Moses pleaded for the heavenly Father to show compassion and have patience with His people. God responded by approving Moses as a faithful leader and mediator. The people were not destroyed, though they suffered the consequence of not entering Canaan.

The Lesson - It's a great lesson for us. It's in God's character to be loving, forgiving, and patient with His children. He is longsuffering with us, and He wants the best for us. But He does not always erase a devastating outcome.

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
Although God heals the wounds of sin, scars may remain

POEM FOR THE WEEK:
How blest is he whose trespass Has freely been forgiven, Whose sin is wholly covered Before the sight of heaven. —Psalter

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, And You forgave the iniquity of my sin

(Ps 32:5 NIV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", Apr 11, 1995)

Series: Responding to God's Grace

UNIT: Responses to God's Faithfulness

NEXT WEEK

Obedient Faith

(Deut 4:1-8, 12-13)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

God Proclaims Consequences (Num 14:10-12)

Consequences because of rejection (10-11)

- Rejecting God through ignoring God's advice and not accepting His rebuke (Prov 1:24-26)
- Rejecting God will cause trials and discipline to become heavier (Isa 28:22-23)
- Rejecting God will cause God's anger to burn (Isa 5:24-25)
- Rejecting God through backsliding (Jer 15:6)
- Rejecting God through oppressing and deceiving others (Isa 30:12-13)

Consequences of wrath (12)

- Wrath because it is the punishment for wickedness of man (Rom 1:18)
- Wrath because of man's stubbornness and unrepentant heart (Rom 2:5)
- Wrath because of disobedience (Eph 5:6)
- Wrath because of yielding to our sinful and earthly nature (Col 3:5-6)
- Wrath because of detestable conduct (Ezek 7:8)

Moses' Intercession (Num 14:13-20)

Plea because of God's Name (13-16)

- God's Name sake so that God's power is known (Ps 106:8)
- God's Names sake so that God will get the glory (Ps 115:1-2)
- God's Name sake so that God's Name is acknowledged as great (Josh 7:6-9)
- God's Name sake so that sins are forgiven (1 John 2:12)
- God's Name sake to ensure remembrance of His Name (Ps 20:7)

Plea for God's mercy (17-18)

- God's mercy keeps God from putting an end to the wicked (Neh 9:29-31)
- God's mercy sometimes causes Him to relent (Ps 106:45)
- God's mercy empowers perseverance (James 5:11)
- God's mercy makes Christians a people of God (1 Peter 2:10)
- God's mercy is great (Ps 5:7)
- God's mercy should prompt the wicked to forsake their ways (Isa 55:7)
- God's mercy is saving mercy (Titus 3:5)

Plea for God's pardon (19-20)

- God's pardon means that He will not remember our sins any more (Heb 8:12)
- God's pardon sanctifies (Acts 26:17-18)
- God's pardon rescues from a dominion of darkness (Col 1:13-14)
- God's pardon is through Jesus' blood (Matt 26:28)
- God's pardon is in accordance with His grace (Eph 1:7)
- God's pardon is an example of His love (Ps 86:5)