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Psalm 106

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Bible
at Home

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Psalm 106.

Topics.

- Blessed are they who observe justice and do righteousness at all times.
- Help me that I may look upon the prosperity of your chosen ones.
- Israel rebelled at the Red Sea, yet God saved them for his name's sake.
- Israel forgot the works of God and put God to the test in the wilderness.
- The LORD gave Israel quail for meat and manna for bread.
- The earth swallowed up Dathan and Abiram and burned the wicked.
- Israel made a calf and exchanged God's glory for an ox that eats grass.
- Israel yoked themselves to Baal, and ate sacrifices offered to the dead.
- Phinehas stopped the plague and it was counted as righteousness.
- Israel angered God at the waters of Meribah.
- Israel sacrificed the blood of their sons and daughters to idols.
- God gave Israel over to the nations, who oppressed them.
- God remembered his covenant and relented according to his love.
- Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting.

1

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION

Psalms are songs and prayers offered to God by the nation Israel, they cover the range of human emotion, expressing praise, faith, victory, sorrow, despair, depression, frustration and the troubled heart of a mourner. They contrast the righteous with the wicked, and include the wisdom and the treasure of God's word. Psalms were written at the beginning of the 15th century BC and probably collected in their final form in the 3rd century.

BOOK FOUR (PSALM 90-106)

PSALM 106:1-3

This Psalm covers the history of Israel from their deliverance from the bondage of Israel, through the wilderness, the Promised Land, their seventy years in captivity to Babylon and their return to Jerusalem.

Blessed are they who Observe Justice and Do Righteousness.

- **Psalm 106:1-3:** Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever! ²Who can utter the mighty deeds of the LORD, or declare all his praise? ³Blessed are they who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times!

This is a grim Psalm since it highlights the history of Israel's progressive sin and rebellion against God who not only performed the most breathtaking and awesome miracles to deliver Israel from the oppressive bondage of Egypt and many other wonders to help them, but also only did them good, until their rebellion forced Him to judge them according to their gross wickedness and rebellion against Him. Here we are told that those who observe justice and righteousness at all times will be blessed, throughout the Scriptures it becomes clear that justice and righteousness are two pillars of God's throne and that the foundation of His throne and of God's Kingdom is:

- Love and holiness.
- Righteousness (meaning doing what is right and good).
- Justice and mercy.
- Grace and longsuffering.
- Joy and peace.

These pillars embrace honesty, moral virtue, integrity truthfulness, fairness for all and kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control (Gal. 5:22). These are the foundation and pillars of God's throne which means, all who belong to His Kingdom should do all they can to make them the foundation and pillars of their life.

PSALM 106:4-5

Help me that I May Look upon the Prosperity of your Chosen Ones.

- **Psalm 106:4-5:** Remember me, O LORD, when you show favor to your people; help me when you save them, ⁵that I may look upon the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation, that I may glory with your inheritance.

2

The following verses show that the Psalmist is reflecting back over Israel's past history concerning their unbelief and rebellion during the Exodus, the wilderness, Mount Sinai and at Baal Peor and concerning Phinehas, Massah and Meribah and the pagan god Molech. It appears that God has forsaken Israel (perhaps it is sometime during Israel's seventy years in captivity or some similar situation), but even though they are forsaken the faith of the Psalmist is such that he believes God will again show Israel favour and prosper and save them. He is praying that he will live to see that day and rejoice with the people of God's inheritance when He returns again to favour His people and delivers and save them from their enemy.

PSALM 106:6-12

Israel rebelled at the Red Sea, Yet God Saved Them.

- **Psalm 106:6-12:** Both we and our fathers have sinned; we have committed iniquity; and done wickedness. ⁷Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your wondrous works; they did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love, but rebelled by the Sea, at the Red Sea. ⁸Yet he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make known his mighty power. ⁹He rebuked the Red Sea, and it became dry, and he led them through the deep as through a desert. ¹⁰So he saved them from the hand of the foe and redeemed them from the power of the enemy. ¹¹And the waters covered their adversaries; not one of them was left. ¹²Then they believed his words; they sang his praise.

All the people of Israel held in bondage to Egypt saw the breathtaking power of God working through Moses and Aaron bringing the ten plaques upon the land of Egypt and even after seeing death come upon all Egypt's

firstborn, while it never touched the children of Israel they still did not believe God could deliver them from Pharaoh and his armies when they came to the Red Sea and rather than believe Moses was called to deliver them rebelled against him. Yet God saved them.

NOTICE: God did not save them for any righteousness on their part, but for His name's sake that His mighty power would be made known. Truly God succeeded in His goal, the story of the Exodus, the ten plagues and the Red Sea is engraved in the minds of every Jew and of every Christian and known worldwide whether people believe in God or not. Throughout history God performed many miracles that defy our laws of nature and stun the human mind, for the following two reasons:

1. So that His name would be remembered throughout all generations since no other god or idol people believe in can perform such wonders.
2. To humble mankind in the hope that they might consider their mortality and feebleness to control their lives and in recognising this reality seek the eternal God who does have the power to control the laws of nature and to give eternal life.

Because God's miracles do defy our laws of nature as we understand them some Christian intellectuals and scientist attempt to explain them in such a way that forces them to fit in with our laws of nature so that the secular world might be more believing in the Christian God, but this is foolishness. The whole reason God performed these miraculous wonders that defy our laws of nature was so that He would be different and separated from every other god that people believe in since no other creature in heaven or on earth has such awe-inspiring power. Without the awesome miraculous miracles God did throughout history on Israel's behalf He would be seen as being no different to every other god people believe in. It is hard to comprehend why people who believe in the God of creation would even consider trying to explain the miracles away especially since all Christians believe God created the universe we live in and every living creature in it. Compared to such an awesome creation the ten plagues; the parting of the Red Sea and the River Jordan; causing a donkey to talk; making water come out of a rock and pouring manna down from heaven and such like things are all trivial acts in comparison to God creating mankind from the dust of the earth and the creation of the heavenly host, the moon, sun and stars; the earth and every living creature that fly's in the air and swims in the oceans.

NOTICE: the floor of the ocean was like a dry desert for Israel to march over, some try to take this to mean that Israel crossed in a naturally shallow place when the sea was at low tide and the people were able to walk through it, but even if this was the case the floor of the ocean would not be dry and it would not explain how the entire army of Pharaoh was drowned when the waves closed in upon them. Added to this it would be pointless for it to be mentioned in the Scriptures if no miraculous wonder was involved and it was after this awesome event that the people of Israel believed in the God Moses. Paul in the following verses refers to Israel walking through the Red Sea and being delivered from all their enemies as a type of water baptism for the entire nation.

- I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, ²and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. (1 Corinthians 10:1-2).

PSALM 106:13-15

Israel forgot God's Works and Put Him to the Test.

- **Psalm 106:13-15:** But they soon forgot his works; they did not wait for his counsel. ¹⁴But they had a wanton craving in the wilderness, and put God to the test in the desert; ¹⁵he gave them what they asked, (bread and meat) but sent a wasting disease among them.

After witnessing ten miraculous and horrific plagues, the Red Sea parting and multitudes of God's amazing wonders year's later Israel forgot the miracles God had done in delivering them from the bondage and slavery of Egypt. How amazing is that Israel forgot! Their own craving for food became more important than what God had done for them in the past and they rebelled. It is understandable that their hunger drove them to crave food that is not the sin, the sin lies in the fact that instead of humbly going to Moses and asking him in faith to pray that God would give them food and believe that God would they aggressively rebelled against Moses and continually complained and murmured against God.

This scenario could be likened to a customer aggressively approaching a store manager who has full knowledge of all its products and aggressively and belligerently speaking to him and demanding he serve them instead of asking him kindly and with courtesy for help, it is unlikely this manager is going to give them his best customer service. Perhaps there is an important lesson for us all to learn from Israel's craving hunger and their grossly wrong response to it: never let the present crisis cancel the memory of God's past blessings in such an overwhelming manner that it causes us to turn from Him and act corruptly.

The Lord Gave Israel Quail for Meat and Manna for Bread.

Manna: was like white coriander seed and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. When the people of Israel were in the wilderness of Sin all of Israel accused Moses and Aaron of killing them with hunger so the LORD said He would rain bread from heaven. The people were to gather manna for six days and not to leave any of it over till the morning. Since there would be no manna on the seventh day (the Sabbath Day) on the sixth day the LORD would give Israel bread for two days so they were to gather twice as much as they gathered on the other days of the week. The extra manna they took for the Sabbath Day (Saturday) would not stink or breed worms as the manna did for the other six days of the week if the people tried to store it up for the next day. The LORD would use the manna to test Israel to see whether they would walk in His law or not. Some of the people of Israel rebelled against the word of the LORD and stored some of the manna for the morning, but it bred worms and stank and on the seventh day some people disobeyed God and went out to get manna on the Sabbath Day, but they found none thus Israel failed the test to obey the word of the LORD.

Quail: every morning Israel had manna to eat and, in the evening, they had quail to eat. Israel ate manna and quail forty years. The day after Israel ate of the produce of the land of Canaan the manna stopped. (Joshua 5:12). (The full story of the manna and the quail is found in Exodus chapter sixteen).

PSALM 106:16-18

Earth Swallowed up Dathan and Abiram and Burned the Wicked.

- **Psalm 106:16-18:** When men in the camp were jealous of Moses and Aaron, the holy one of the LORD, ¹⁷the earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram. ¹⁸Fire also broke out in their company; the flame burned up the wicked.

The story of Dathan and Abiram: Korah, Dathan and Abiram took a number of the chiefs of the congregation and rose against Moses and against Aaron accusing them of exalting themselves above the assembly of the LORD and bringing the children of Israel up out of a land flowing with milk and honey (referring to Egypt), to kill them in the wilderness and making himself a prince over the people. When Moses heard it, he fell on his face and he said, "It is against the LORD that you have gathered together." When Korah, Dathan and Abiram had finished speaking the ground under them split apart and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the people who

belonged to Korah and all their goods so they and all that belonged to them went down alive into Sheol, and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly. (Num. 16:31-35). (Num. 26:9-11).

PSALM 106:19-20

Israel made a Calf and Exchanged God's Glory for an Ox.

- **Psalm 106:19-20:** They made a calf in Horeb (also called Mount Sinai) and worshiped a metal image. ²⁰They exchanged the glory of God for the image of an ox that eats grass.

The story of Mount Sinai and the golden calf: when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from Mount Sinai, they said to Aaron, "Make us gods who shall go before us," so Aaron said to them, "Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of the people and bring them to me." The people did so and Aaron made a golden calf and they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before the golden calf and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD and they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play. (Exod. 32:1-6). The LORD said to Moses, "Go down, your people have quickly turned aside from the way I commanded them and made a golden calf and worshiped and sacrificed to it saying, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" (Exod. 32:7-9).

The story of Jeroboam and two golden calves: when the United Kingdom of Israel split Rehoboam remained King of the land of Judah and of Jerusalem (the two tribes) while Jeroboam became the king over Israel (the ten tribes). Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David. If this people of the ten tribes go up to offer sacrifices in the temple of the LORD at Jerusalem, then their heart will turn again to their Lord, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to him." So Jeroboam made two calves of gold and he said to the people, "You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt," and he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. This became a sin, for the people of Israel (1 Kings 12:26-29). The following verses show that these two golden calves became an ongoing sin for the ten tribes of Israel:

- The LORD will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he sinned and made Israel to sin." (1 Kings 14:16).
- Jehu king of Israel did not turn aside from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin—that is, the golden calves that were in Bethel and in Dan. (2 Kings 10:29).
- Now you (Jeroboam and all Israel) think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David, because you are a great multitude and have with you the golden calves that Jeroboam made you for gods. (2 Chron. 13:8).

PSALM 106:21-23

Moses, stood before God, to Turn Him from Destroying Israel.

- **Psalm 106:21-23:** They forgot God, their Savior, who had done great things in Egypt, ²²wondrous works in the land of Ham (Egypt), and awesome deeds by the Red Sea. ²³Therefore he said he would destroy them— had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him, to turn away his wrath from destroying them.

The Psalmist is now reflecting back upon what has been said concerning Moses and the Exodus, When God saw the people not only worshipping the golden calve, but also offering sacrifices to it He was going to destroy them for their blatant unbelief and rebellion. But Moses stood before God

and the people and said, "The LORD upon seeing you all worship the golden calf said to me, 'I have seen this stiff-necked people therefore let me alone that I may consume them and make a great nation of you.' (Exod. 32:9-10). But I implored the LORD saying, "Why should the Egyptians say, with an evil intent the God of Israel brought the people out of Egypt to consume them from the face of the earth, remember O LORD, Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, who you promised and said, 'I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever,' and the LORD relented from the disaster He had spoken of bringing on His people." (Exodus 32:11-14). This is why God chose Moses to be His servant to lead the people out of the bondage of Egypt. After doing all that Moses had done for the people and then to see them turn to worship a golden calf (copying the gods of Egypt), most men would step aside and say, "Go for it LORD, wipe them out and do as you desire and make of me a great nation," but Moses had the true heart of a shepherd and despite the peoples gross wickedness cared for them and earnestly prayed that God would relent and God responded.

PSALM 106:24-27

Israel Despised the Pleasant Land, and Fell in the Wilderness.

- **Psalm 106:24-27:** Then they despised the pleasant land, having no faith in his promise.
²⁵They murmured in their tents, and did not obey the voice of the LORD. ²⁶Therefore he raised his hand and swore to them that he would make them fall in the wilderness, ²⁷and would make their offspring fall among the nations, scattering them among the lands.

They despised the pleasant land refers to the wilderness generation refusing to go into the Promised Land because of the negative report the ten spies came back with. Instead of listening to Joshua and Caleb and having faith God would go before them as he promised. The LORD told Moses to send twelve men into the land of Canaan which He was giving to the people of Israel to spy it out so Moses sends them out. They returned to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the people of Israel and ten of the men brought them a bad report saying that the land flows with milk and honey and an abundance of fruit, but they themselves seemed like grasshoppers before the inhabitants and cannot go up against them for they are stronger than they are and their cities are fortified. (The full story is in Numbers chapter thirteen).

Then the whole congregation of Israel said to Moses and Aaron, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt or died in this wilderness let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt." Moses and Aaron upon hearing this fell on their faces before all Israel and Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes and said, "The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. The LORD will give this land flowing with milk and honey to us. Do not rebel against the LORD and fear the people for they are bread for us. God will remove their protection for us, but the entire congregation said to stone Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Caleb with stones.

The glory of the LORD appeared at the tent of meeting to all the people of Israel and the LORD said to Moses, "How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them?" Moses intercedes for the people and the LORD pardons them according to Moses prayer, saying, "Truly, as I live all the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD, but none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers, but Joshua and Caleb. (The full story is in Numbers chapter thirteen).

- None of those who despised me shall see it. ²⁴But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed me fully, I will bring into the land into which he went, and his descendants shall possess it. (Num. 13:23-24-33).

- Not one (of those who grumbled against the LORD) shall come into the land where I swore that I would make you dwell, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. ³¹But your little ones, who you said would become a prey, I will bring in, and they shall know the land that you have rejected. ³²But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness. (Num. 13:30-32).
- The men who brought up a bad report of the land—died by plague before the LORD. ³⁸Of those men who went to spy out the land, only Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive. (Num. 13:37-38).

PSALM 106:28

Israel yoked themselves to Baal and ate Sacrifices for the Dead.

- **Psalm 106:28:** Then they yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor, and ate sacrifices offered to the dead.

Baal of Peor: Peor was the name of a mountain in Moab, where the Moabites idol Baal was worshipped. Its cult follower's practised immoral and lustful types of worship and women gave up their bodies to the most shameless lust. The name Baal-peor is mentioned in connection with the mountain on which Chemosh, the idol of Moab, was worshipped at which time Israel camped on the desert plain at the foot of the mountain (Nu 23:28). The men of Israel began to whore with the daughters of Moab and they invited Israel to the sacrifices of their gods, and they ate and bowed down to their gods so Israel yoked (or joined) themselves to Baal of Peor (or the idol of Baal Peor) and a plague broke out amongst Israel. Zimri a man of Israel brought Cozbi a Midianite woman to his family home (with the intention to sexually lay with her), in the sight of Moses and the whole congregation of the people of Israel, while they were weeping in the entrance of the tent of meeting.

When Phinehas saw it he left the congregation and took a spear in his hand and went after the man of Israel into the chamber (bedroom) and pierced both of them and the plague on the people of Israel was stopped nevertheless, those who died by the plague were twenty-four thousand. Phinehas turned back God's wrath from the people of Israel, because he was jealous with the LORD'S jealousy among Israel, so the LORD did not consume the people of Israel in His jealousy. God gave to Phinehas and his descendants His covenant of peace of a perpetual priesthood because of his zeal and passion for God's Holy name and because he made atonement for the people of Israel. (The full story is in Numbers chapter twenty-five).

They ate sacrifices offered to the dead: some say this refers to cultic feasts which were kept in honour of the dead, but most agree and it is certainly far more likely considering the context that it means they ate sacrifices offered to dead idols, in the sense that idols are lifeless they cannot speak, see or hear nor do they have any power to do anything so in this sense they are dead. In contrast to the true and living God who not only sees, hears and speaks, but holds the entire universe in the palm of His hand. It is right and proper to refer to sacrifices offered up to lifeless statues made of wood or stone by man's hands and believed to be gods as the dead, especially when they are held up before the light of the living God who has existed from everlasting to everlasting meaning He has no beginning and no end.

He is the eternal One who made the stone and the wood that foolish man shapes into idols and then bows down to it and worships it as a god. When speaking of idols the Living Bible says, "O foolish man you chop down a tree and use some of the wood to build your homes, some to cook your food, some to warm your hands and some you carve into an idol and bow down before it to worship it, can't you see it's just a block of wood. If people choose a false way of worship, they will choose to worship a false god. It is common for cultic religions to be heavenly laden with ritualism since a heavy focus or adherence to ritual and ceremony often has a close

connection with reverence and the adoration of false gods. These rituals may involve candles, occultist symbols, mystical rites, drinking the blood of bull, chicken-beheading, prayers, songs and such like things, but the most seductive is sexual ritual that involves all sorts of sexual immorality since this type of ritual appeals to the lowest level of the flesh (i.e., the lower nature of mankind).

PSALM 106:29-31

Phinehas Stopped the Plague, it was Counted as Righteousness.

- **Psalm 106:29-31:** they provoked the LORD to anger with their deeds, and a plague broke out among them. ³⁰Then Phinehas stood up and intervened, and the plague was stayed. ³¹And that was counted to him as righteousness from generation to generation forever.

Midian (called Midianites) had become confederate with Moab (Num. 22:4). Through the counsel of Balaam the men of Israel began to whore with the daughters of Moab, and bow down and sacrificed to Baal of Peor and their gods. God's anger was kindled, and He told Moses to hang all the Chiefs of Israel, so the people of Israel killed each chief that had worshipped Baal of Peor, but Zimri (an Israelite) brought one of the Midianite women (Cozbi) to his family home (with the intention to sexually lay with her), in the sight of Moses and the entire congregation. For further information see the notes following (v28) above.

The plague: a sudden and deadly disease that threatened to run through the entire camp killed twenty-four thousand. Israel's new sins brought on them a disease new to their tribes. Phinehas executed judgment and the plague was stayed. God has his champions willing to stand up for God's Holy name and His honour even in the worst times. Phinehas righteous indignation moved him to a quick execution of two open offenders. His honest spirit could not endure such immorality being openly practised at a time when a fast had been proclaimed. Such daring defiance of God and of all law he could not tolerate and with his sharp javelin he killed the two guilty parties in the very act. It was a holy passion which inflamed him, and not enmity to either of the persons whom he slew. The sin was so flagrant and so defiling to God and Israel that Phinehas whole nature was ablaze with zeal for God's glory that his actions were not only acceptable to God, but proof that there were still some sincere believers in Israel and because of this the deadly plague went no further. Phinehas slaying of Zimri and Cozbi involved no personal ambition, or private revenge, or selfish passion, or even fanatical prejudice, racism or narrow-mindedness, he was solely driving by his zeal for God and his indignation at open immorality during a time of weeping and fasting.

Phinehas act was counted to him as righteousness to him: (v31) although Phinehas action might seem severe and allowing the couple no space for repentance, it was nevertheless accepted and rewarded by God as an act of justice and reverence, agreeable to His mind, and proceeding from a sincere zeal for His honour, and for the good of his people; and God gave a public testimony of his approval of it, to be recorded to all generations. The expression "Phinehas was counted righteousness," does not mean that he was counted righteous for eternal life, but that it was approved and rewarded by God with a perpetual priesthood to him and his descendants from generation to generation. Phinehas zeal for God clearly shows he was already a faithful man of God and therefore would have been saved in the same way as David and all the other faithful men and women of old were, which means that the righteousness spoken of was not justifying righteousness to be rewarded with eternal life; for no one particular act of works can be taken for complete justification to eternal life. The following verses show that not even Abraham could be justified by works:

- For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. (Rom. 4:2).

This verse shines a spotlight upon the truth that all the works of righteousness done by the best of men cannot justify them before him, much less a single action. Phinehas was counted righteous carries the idea that his righteous action was expressive of true zeal for God and because of it God gave to Phinehas and his offspring the covenant of an everlasting priesthood unto all his generations for evermore by which his action had eternal honour put upon it. This covenant that God made with Phinehas continued in the line of Zadok (a priest in his line) and continued until the Messiah came who is a Priest forever. (Ezek. 44:15). There is no legacy that a man can leave his family that holds more valuable than the fact that he himself loved God and kept His laws. (The full story of Phinehas is in Numbers chapter twenty-five).

PSALM 106:32-33

Israel Angered God at the Waters of Meribah.

- **Psalm 106:32-33:** They angered him at the waters of Meribah, and it went ill with Moses on their account, ³³for they made his spirit bitter, and he spoke rashly with his lips.

Massah and Meribah: (Exodus 17:1-7) Moses was told to smite the rock at Rephidim, not long after they'd crossed the Red Sea before they'd reached Mount Sinai (Num. 33:15). Meribah comes from the Hebrew word (*M^eriybah*) and means quarrel, provocation and strife. Massah comes from the Hebrew word (*Maccah*) it means to be tested or tempted by a trial or hardship of God and in this context carries the idea of complaining against God because of a trial or hardship.

The Story: not long after Israel had crossed the Red Sea and before they'd reached Mount Sinai (Num. 33:15) they camped at Rephidim in the wilderness. There was no water for the people to drink, so they quarrelled with Moses and said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us with thirst? Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?" Then Moses cried to the LORD, "What shall I do with this people they are almost ready to stone me." The LORD said He would stand on the rock at Horeb (Mount Sinai), and told Moses to take the staff that he struck the Nile with and strike the rock and water will flow out, Moses struck the rock in the sight of the elders of Israel and water flowed out, he named the place Massah meaning tempting and Meribah because of the striving of the children of Israel and because they tempted God. Israel tested God by saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?" They had seen the mighty and awesome miracles and extraordinary wonders of the LORD and should have had faith that He would provide. (Exodus 17:1-7).

Forty years later we read of a similar story: Moses is told to speak to the rock at Kadesh just before Aaron dies (Num. 20:22) Aaron death is recorded in (Num. 20:22-29) (Num. 33:36-39). The people committed the same sin once again, when they thirsted. They grumbled against Moses saying, "Why, have you brought us into this wilderness, that we should die here?" This time the LORD commanded Moses to speak to the rock to show His glory to the people, but Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it, nevertheless water flowed out, but Moses and Aaron were forbidden to enter the Promised Land.

- The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them." ¹³These are the waters of Meribah, where the people of Israel quarreled with the LORD, and through them he showed himself holy. (Numbers. 20:12-13)

Since the smiting of the rock happened before the covenant was established at Sinai some say that it symbolized Christ being smitten to establish the new covenant. While the speaking to the rock at the end of the forty years wanderings was to represent Christ's return to redeem the

world, but Moses ruined the intended symbolism by smiting the rock. After having said this it should be highlighted that Moses was not punished for ruining a symbolism, but for striking the rock instead of speaking to it.

PSALM 106:34-39

Israel Sacrificed the Blood of their Sons and Daughters to Idols.

- **Psalm 106:34-39:** They did not destroy the peoples, as the LORD commanded them, ³⁵but they mixed with the nations and learned to do as they did. ³⁶They served their idols, which became a snare to them. ³⁷They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons; ³⁸they poured out innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was polluted with blood. ³⁹Thus they became unclean by their acts, and played the whore in their deeds.

After forty-years the wilderness generation died off and their offspring crossed the River Jordan and entered the Promised Land, but they continued to rebel against God. They not only married foreign women and joined their cultist religions and worshipped their idols and gods, but even worse they sacrificed their own sons and daughters to these pagan gods. They played the whore in their deeds carries the following two ideas:

1. They committed adultery and all sorts of sexual immorality amongst themselves and amongst those of the surrounding nations.
2. They committed spiritual adultery against God, instead of being faithful to the One God the LORD their God and worshipping him only, they worshipped many gods and idols of all sorts.

For further information concerning Israel sacrificing their own sons, see the title: "Molech" in, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

PSALM 106:40

The Anger of the LORD was Kindled, He Abhorred His Heritage.

- **Psalm 106:40:** Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against his people, and he abhorred his heritage.

How tragic is this after all God had done for His people, they become so wicked and rebellious that they repulsed Him. Consider for a moment, God had previously said of His chosen people:

- Israel was his son who he called out of Egypt and he loved them when they were a child (Hosea 11:1).
- He gave birth to Israel and carried them from the womb even to their old age. (Isaiah 46:3-4).
- Israel is his allotted heritage (Deut. 32:9) and the apple of his eye (Deut. 32:10).
- Israel is a people holy to him (Deut. 7:6) and his treasured possession (Deut. 14:2).

John in his letters wrote:

- Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:8).
- God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. (1 John 4:16).

These verses shine a brilliant spotlight upon the truth God is a God of love. An earthly father desires only to do-good to his children and see them grow in health and prosperity. Likewise, God would have longed and loved to exalt His children and blessed them in every way possible, but instead they by their rebellion and gross wickedness forced Him to judge them, how His heart must have broken.

God gave Israel over to the Nations, who Oppressed Them.

- **Psalm 106:41-43:** he gave them into the hand of the nations, so that those who hated them ruled over them. ⁴²Their enemies oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their power. ⁴³Many times he delivered them, but they were rebellious in their purposes and were brought low through their iniquity.

Eventually Israel set their hearts diamond hard against the word of God's prophets they rebelled against the LORD they turned to other gods and entered into gross sin so the LORD used Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon (who He called His servant (Jer. 25:9) to bring the curses of the covenant upon them. The curses of the Covenant are found in (Deut. 28:15-68) and the blessing of the Covenant in (Deut. 28:1-14). The fierce armies of Babylon invaded the land of Judah, laid their farm land waste, attacked Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) and pillaged the temple. Zedekiah was blinded and carried to Babylon, and the great bulk of the population was taken in chains there with him (around 587 B.C.). Later Babylon conquered Assyria who had previously taken Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) captive. They went into captivity to the Empire of Babylon as two rebellious nations who had turned from God to idols and who were even sacrificing their own children to pagan gods and were under Babylonian rule for the next seventy years. Archaeologists have found that all of the cities of Judah were completely destroyed at this time, thus ended the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon. Observers would have said that the Hebrew nation was annihilated, and indeed, the other nations conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians did cease to exist. But the prophets proclaimed a better hope for the chosen people. "A remnant shall return" Isaiah had said, and in time this remnant, purged and returned, became the basis on which a new Israel would be built.

PSALM 106:44-46

God Remembered His Covenant and Relented According to Love.

- **Psalm 106:44-46:** Nevertheless, he looked upon their distress, when he heard their cry. ⁴⁵For their sake he remembered his covenant, and relented according to the abundance of his steadfast love. ⁴⁶He caused them to be pitied by all those who held them captive.

Now here is the good news, while in captivity to Babylon God moulded them like a master potter moulds a beautiful clay jar, Israel and Judah went into Babylon as two unfaithful nations that had turned away from the LORD to idols and other gods. Seventy years later, Cyrus (King of Persia) who the LORD called His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) and took by His right hand (Isaiah 45:1) to conquer the Empire of Babylon gave written permission for Israel to return to Jerusalem. Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel and Judah back to their beloved city Jerusalem as one united nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Israel never turned to idols or pagan gods again). Multitudes of Jewish families who had been scattered throughout the nations returned to Jerusalem and the land of Israel with triumphant joy and rejoicing. When the temple of God was completed their faith was once again established and a time of prosperity and peace followed. Sadly, Israel as a nation never recognised their Messiah the Christ when he came, but even this was in the LORD'S sovereign will. The prophet Zechariah tells us when, the Lord returns in glory:

- God will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn (Zech. 12:10-14).

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, Forever.

- **Psalm 106:47-48:** Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise. ⁴⁸Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! And let all the people say, "Amen!" Praise the LORD!

How patient God is with His people, He constantly showed mercy and forgave Israel, but they fell so far that He was repulsed by them. God forgives Israel many times, but when they sacrificed their sons to pagan gods, they went too far the cup of iniquity was not only full it was overflowing. God was forced to intervene and judge and punish the children He longed to bless and do-good for. The LORD answered the Psalmist prayer in the most spectacular manner through Cyrus the king of Persia and will fully and perfectly answer it when Israel's Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory as King of kings and Lord of lord to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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