

Friday 20th November

Numbers 14:20-38

Key verses 14:32-34

*But as for you, your bodies will fall in this wilderness. Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the wilderness. For forty years—one year for each of the forty days you explored the land—you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.'*

In response to Moses' prayer, God declares that he has forgiven the people (v20). They were spared being instantly wiped out!

Sin may be forgiven but the consequences of that sin still have to be endured. In this case, the Israelites were destined to wander the wilderness for 40 years and die there. God had given them what they wished for (14:2) and the children they feared would be plundered (14:3) would be the first generation to enjoy the Promised Land.

Our country has largely turned it's back on God and his teaching. Some even seek to deny him and blaspheme his name despite their blessings from him. In verse 23 God says, 'No-one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it!' (i.e. the Promised Land). This is a stark warning for Christians and non-Christians alike!!

It was not just this episode of rebellion that sealed their fate. Starting in Ex 14:11, just before God parted the Red Sea, the Israelites grumbled a further 9 times against God up to this time. (v22)

God is making things very clear! He contrasts what they had seen (the miracles) with what they would not see (the promised land). Instead they were destined to pointless wanderings through the desert until they died.

Isn't this a picture of life without belief and trust in God? Chasing after false idols in service of self until death then a bleak eternity.

There is, however, always hope with God as we will see tomorrow!

The 10 spies who were responsible for inciting the rebellion received their punishment. Death by plague! Our sin warrants death but thank God that Jesus died in our place. He became our substitute on whom the wrath of God was poured!

Praise God for his grace.