

### Volume 06, Issue 14: Radical Love

Looking at the history of the children of Israel today left me amazed once again by God's love. God doesn't exist in time. He sees all that will happen before it happens. He knew the children of Israel were going to rebel and reject him even as he made the first step to rescue them from Egypt. He chose to love them and rescue them even knowing that they would turn away from him.

After leaving Egypt, the children of Israel took God's wonders for granted, forgot his great and wonderful love. They were barely beyond the Red Sea when they defiled the Most High God. At the very place he saved them, the place he revealed his amazing power.

He rebuked the Red Sea so that it dried up on the spot and paraded them right though, no one so much as got wet feet. He saved them from a life of oppression, pried them loose from the grip of their enemy. Then the waters flowed back on their oppressors; there wasn't a single survivor. At this, they believed his words were true and broke out in songs of praise.

But it wasn't long before they forgot the whole thing, wouldn't wait to be told what to do. They only cared about pleasing themselves in that desert, provoked God with their insistent demands. He gave them exactly what they asked for – but along with it they got an empty heart.

They cast in metal a bull calf at Horeb and worshiped the statute they had made. They traded the Glory for a cheap piece of sculpture; a grass-chewing bull! They forgot God, their very own Saviour, who turned things around for them in Egypt, who created a world of wonders and gave that stunning performance at the Red Sea.

Fed up, God decided to get rid of them – except for Moses, his chosen one. But Moses stood in the gap and deflected God's anger, preventing it from destroying them utterly.

They went on to reject the blessed land, didn't believe a word of what God promised. They

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found fault with the life they had and turned a deaf ear to God's voice. Exasperated, God swore that he'd lay them low in the desert.

Then they linked up with Baal Peor, attending funeral banquets and eating idol food. That made God so angry that a plague spread among their ranks; Phinehas stood up and pled their case and the plague was stopped.

They angered God again at Meribah Springs; this time Moses got mixed up in their evil; Because they defiled God yet again, Moses exploded and lost his temper.

To top it all, they didn't wipe out those godless cultures as ordered by God. Instead they intermarried with the heathen, and in time became just like them. They worshiped their idols, were caught in the trap of idols.

They sacrificed their sons and daughters at the altars of demon gods. They slit the throats of their babies, murdered their infant girls and boys. They offered their babies to Canaan's gods; the blood of their babies stained the land. Their way of life stank to high heaven.

And God was furious – a wildfire anger; he couldn't stand even to look at his people. He turned them over to the heathen so that the people who hated them ruled them. Their enemies made life hard for them; they were tyrannized under that rule. Over and over God rescued them, but they never learned, until finally their sins destroyed them.

Still, when God saw the trouble they were in and heard their cries for help, he remembered his covenant with them, and, immense with love, took them by the hand. He poured out his mercy on them while their captors looked on, amazed.

What radical love! And in the same breadth God chose to have the penalty for our rebellion paid. God is not confined to time. He saw each day of our lives before we were born. Jesus chose to travail on the cross for us, knowing that just like the children of Israel, there would be days when we would reject him. He could have walked away from the cross, but he chose to go all the way, even seeing the days when we would trash his sacrifice.

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God pursues us, with power and glory, unstoppable love that never ends. He is unrelenting with passion and mercy for us. God's love never fails, his love never runs out.

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