

The long-lost cousins approach Edom and ask in a diplomatic and friendly way if they could walk across the Edomites' lawn. No. Please? No. Please? No.

This had to be discouraging. The shortest route to the PL has been refused.

IV. Verses 22-29: Aaron is taken _____.

Moses should have been comforted to know where Aaron was going to spend eternity. *Gathered to his people* is special OT language that meant God accepted Aaron despite his sin, and despite the fact that he would not enter the PL.

Aaron:

- Was Moses' partner in leadership.
- Was Moses' brother.
- Was the 1st high priest.
- All priests descended from him.
- Pleaded with Moses for the people in the plague.
- Was part of the golden calf incident.
- Challenged Moses' leadership with his sister.

Point: Aaron's life shows that the office is more important than the man himself. As a man he was not always worthy of respect, but as high priest he was worthy of honor.

Moses was going through a hard time...his sister had just died. And as the leader, he was dealing with contentious people...and in anger, he partially obeyed God. We have the rest of the Bible (more than Moses wrote) to strengthen our walk:

James 1:19: *So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; ²⁰ for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

If we can make verse 19 a habit in normal days...could that become our "go-to" in harsh times?

What did God develop in you today? As you are walking with God, consider:
How can we ruin (harm) the picture of the work of Christ?

Series: The Life and Times of Moses
Text: Numbers 20

Title: The Dark Chapter
Topic: Keep on keeping on

Review: The last chapter dealt with laws of purification. God wanted the people to have a method of cleaning themselves up after dealing with dead bodies. The ashes of a red heifer mixed into water and specifics of getting sprinkled were included.

We also noted how God was pointing to Christ in this purification process. Mankind has always needed to be cleansed from defilement (sin). Through Christ we are cleaned once for all time.

Lesson:

Overall outline of travels:

1. First travel narrative is Exodus 13-18 – begins with the crossing of the Red Sea and ends at Mt. Sinai.
2. The stay at Sinai -- from Ex 19- Numbers 10:10.
3. Second travel narrative in Numbers 10:11-14:45 – begins at Sinai and ends at Kadesh.
 - a. Meeting with God at Sinai.
 - b. Setting out towards the PL.
 - c. The spies going in and their defeatist reporting.
 - d. Rebellion against Moses, grumbling, rejecting, refusing to believe.
 - e. God saying "Not one of you gets in...except Joshua and Caleb."
4. A glimpse into desert life in Numbers 15:1-20:13.
 - a. Silence on their wanderings through the wilderness.
 - b. Back at Kadesh again, now with the younger generation complaining.
5. Third travel narrative of the 2nd and final approach to the PL – Numbers 20:13-Joshua 2:24.

I. Verse 1: Miriam's death

Kadesh is where they first left the will of God...

Application to us today:

"Where you leave the will of God will be the place where you get back on track. Jonah fled from Nineveh. He got back on track by returning to Nineveh. The Prodigal Son left home for the wrong reasons and got back on track by returning to

his father. Peter denied the Lord and came full circle when he preached at Pentecost. The area of disobedience becomes the entrance ramp to further future growth. If you get out of the will of God and stop doing things like giving, praying, church attendance, or reading the Word, then the area of neglect is the place where you must obey to be what God wants you to be and do His will. God's people here have come full circle, but they are still failing in some areas as before." Mattoon

About Verse 1: The message from God is that the privilege of going into the PL is no small thing. It comes at no small price. The fulfillment of God's judgment is crystal clear in the death of Miriam. The generation that refused to enter Canaan would die in the wilderness. No exceptions! Even if you were related to Moses...

Today: Do people think they have a special exemption from God, believing they are a special case, with their own arrangement with the Lord?

II. Verses 2-13: We arrive at two _____.
Contention #1:
the children of Israel contended with the LORD.

- Content...satisfied, not displeased.
- Contention...a struggle, debate, controversy.
- Contentious...quarrelsome.
- Contend...to struggle in rivalry.

The younger generation is displeased. They are quarrelsome with leadership.

Digging deeper: Exodus 17: 5 *And the LORD said to Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. 6 "Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink."* And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 *So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"*

Massah means tempted.
Meribah means contention.

Previously God did tell Moses to _____ the rock. Now in Kadesh God said to _____ to the rock. God wanted the people to see that the word of God could bring forth life-giving water.

The younger generation is now in charge, and they sound just like their forefathers. His sister has just died. And Moses slips up.

Contention #2:

Moses walks right out of church where he met with God and yells at the people in anger. He lectures the nation with an attitude in his heart he has not shown before. Moses has a bitter heart. He strikes the rock...twice.

- He _____ did what God said. A momentary loss of self-control changed everything. This is of course the act that keeps Moses and Aaron out of the PL.
- Moses allowed his attention to shift to the behavior of others rather than focusing on the activity of God.
- **Then and now:** No one is righteous enough to enter the PL. Thankfully we have the eternal fountain of life in Christ. John 7:38 & John 4:10-15...
- Oddly enough, in the face of this contentious people God gives them the water! Despite the sinful attitudes and action God still provided...abundantly.

HMMM#1: Moses' attitude, anger, words, and actions made God look no different than an angry man or one of the temperamental pagan gods.

HMMM #2: God uses imperfect instruments...the fact that God uses someone is not evidence that that someone is really right with God or that they are actually ministering according to God's heart.

III. Verses 14-21: Brother refuses _____.

Digging deeper: Gen 36:6-8: *"Then Esau took his wives and his sons and his daughters and all his household, and his livestock and all his cattle and all his goods which he had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to another land away from his brother Jacob. 7 For their property had become too great for them to live together, and the land where they sojourned could not sustain them because of their livestock. 8 So Esau lived in the hill country of Seir; Esau is Edom."*

The use of brother in Numbers 20:14 refers back hundreds of years (Esau/Jacob).