



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE NUMBERS 20:1-13 WATER FROM THE ROCK— November 28, 2021

INTRODUCTION:

Chapter 19 talks about the ceremony to make a person clean. Sin is missing the mark. It could be unintentional, intentional, or defiant. "*Unintentional sin*" is impossible to avoid because of the first man Adam sinned which led to death for all. "*Intentional sin*" is doing wrong on purpose and not repenting. "*Defiant sin*" is "blasphemy" which is insulting the honor of God directly and indirectly and not repenting, "*but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven neither in this world and neither in the world to come*" (Matthew 12:31-32). The 19th chapter ends with what to do after touching a dead body because they would be unclean. Then we come to the 20th chapter to speak about water coming from a rock.

LESSON: I. NATIONAL SADNESS NUMBERS 20:1

20:1 Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there. This part of the chapter deals with Moses leading a new generation of children of the Israelites, for their parents had died. Even though the parents died, the children had to suffer these almost 40yrs, but they would still repeat the sins of their parents. Whether you know or not, we are also going through a national sadness knowing that millions of people have suddenly died because of a pandemic—parents, children, the elderly; people we know and don't know. This sadness has touched nations! The whole congregation is coming into the desert of Zin. "*The Wilderness of Zin*" is ¹a desert on the southern border of Canaan, and west of Edom (Numbers 34:1-4). It formed part of the great wilderness of Paran (Numbers 13:26); and in its northeast corner was Kadesh-Barnea. So, they have been in this same place before as they camped while the 12 spies went to spy out the land. Moses said that Miriam died in the desert in Kadesh and was buried in Kadesh. Her age is not mentioned when she died. Her character was strong and unafraid.

- Miriam looked after her baby brother Moses by hiding afar to make sure the basket he was in didn't get lost in the river. She assured (Pharaoh's daughter), the one who found him, that she could find someone (his mother) to nurse him (Exodus 2).
- Miriam was called a prophetess taking the timbrel and danced, leading the women to do the same after Moses brought them from the Red Sea. She said "*Sing ye to the Lord for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea*" (Genesis 15).
- Miriam opposed her brother Moses, the chosen leader of the Israelites, and she was stricken with leprosy by God. Her brother Aaron interceded for her to Moses, and Moses didn't hesitate to cry out to the Lord for her. She was declared unclean for seven days outside the camp and therefore had to go through the purification ceremony before she could come back among the people (Numbers 12).
- Miriam was included as the LORD spoke as one of the ones He had sent to bring the Israelites out of the land of Egypt. "*...I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam*" (Micah 6:4).

II. NATIONAL CRISIS NUMBERS 20:2-9

20:2 And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses

¹ <https://biblehub.com/topical/z/zin.htm>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

and against Aaron. The Israelites find themselves crying because they were thirsty and unable to find water. The animals were tired and desperately needed water. They were frightened that they might quickly die in the desert with no water and began to come against Moses and Aaron, their leaders.

20:3 And the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD!— Interestingly, almost 40 years later the people are still moaning and complaining and quarrelling to Moses: *"Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die of thirst in the desert? If only we had died when our brothers died, we would have been better off. Why did you bring us to this horrible place where there is no water to drink? Surely, you brought us here to kill us."* So, Moses and Aaron are still hearing these same complaints from the people; the lyrics are the same, but by a different choir. They sang the same song. They saw and heard their parents do the same thing.

20:4 And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there?— The complaints continue to come in while they are in the wilderness, even when God has shown them many blessings. They are thinking that they and their cattle will die in the wilderness. They have a complaining spirit. The lies and untruths that tend to filter in, cancels the truth they are unwilling to accept. They have heard and seen the truth that God can and has their answer to every "Why", but sometimes we're not willing to accept God's timing. You can't get to the other side unless you go through the difficulty. Joyce Myers has said *"Complain and remain, Praise and be raised!"* Complaining is like cancer that spreads, so when we complain about what God has brought us out of, and make it look better than what God has brought us into, it makes us very ungrateful! No matter what God has already done, He's able to continue to do exceedingly. Every trial we go through is a battle that's not ours,' but it's the Lord's as we remember His power and strength He provides.

20:5 And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink. This sounds like "*deja vu.*" The level of our faith in them has not had a chance to grow, which is really their trust level. They had not replaced the true miracles of "*GOD CAN*" to settle within them. They are still ready to regress backward to old familiar things. They can't even see the big picture. They can't even see the next step. They are still babies on milk wanting figs and pomegranates. They were rescued out of the bondage of Egypt, their familiar place. It's time for them see that God is their only provider of water again, for He's already did it before, if they can just believe.

20:6 And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them. Yes, we can get exhausted like Moses by people if we don't take time out for God. Moses had heard these complaining words many times, and this time Moses and Aaron left the assembly and went to the door of the tabernacle and fell on their faces before God, and the glory of the Lord appeared to them. The leader humbles when people grumble.

NOTE:

We don't want to be outside the God's Will. The Lord had led the Israelites here because He loved them and desired to reveal Himself in His inexhaustible resources, that is, if they would only believe. We always have to: 'Believe: Everything is A Test', which keeps us humble in the test!

20:7 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,— God speaks to Moses.

PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

20:8 Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. God's instruction to Moses: **1)Take the rod—2)Gather** the Israelite congregation and Aaron, his brother—**3) and Speak to the rock** before their eyes. **Why? To see the miracle working power of the Lord God**— It would yield water for the entire congregation and their animals. It's very clear if you're listening and not distracted. You see in Exodus 17:5-6 God told Moses to strike the Rock. Here in Exodus 20:8 God told Moses to speak to the Rock. When Moses struck the Rock, the elders saw it. However, when Moses was to speak to the Rock, the congregation was to see it.

20:9 And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. Moses took the rod, as the Lord commanded. However, everything else must have gone out the other ear and became a blur.

III. PERSONAL DISOBEDIENCE NUMBERS 20:10-13

20:10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?— Moses took the rod, and Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation before the rock, and said to the Israelite people, "*You rebels...*" He called them wicked men in chapter 16 when he told the people to get away from their tents and touch nothing of theirs lest they be consumed in all their sins (v.26). now he's escalated to rebels

- **(FIRST MISTAKE) – Moses insults the people:** "*You rebels*" (you protestors; you agitators; you sinners). In Moses' mind they have sinned by complaining that the Lord would not provide for them. In his mind he's saying: *Hasn't God provided for all of your needs so far? Hasn't the Lord been faithful to us? Hasn't the Lord performed many miracles right before your eyes and yet you had no faith that the Lord would provide water for you to drink; so you complain and moan?* He's really agitated!
- **(SECOND MISTAKE) – Moses exalts himself:** "*Must we bring you water out of this rock?*" Moses put himself first, before God.

Therefore, the result happened from his mistakes from his mouth, his own hand, and heart:

1. **Anger.** "*Hear now, ye rebels...*" Moses' anger overshadowed his hearing God's instructions which reverted his ability to think straight. *Moses said to the people, "Listen, you rebels, and it was not in a likeable tone.*
2. **Pride.** "*Must we fetch...*" Perhaps Moses thought he was doing this in his own strength instead of depending upon God. Moses and Aaron were the ones who gathered the congregation together. Moses was the instrument God used. The Word says in Prov.16:18 "*Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall, and unbelief was the fall.*" **Must we** bring you water out of this rock?" It wasn't, "*Must GOD bring water from the rock again, it was, must WE bring water from the rock (Moses and Aaron). He took credit for God's work. I believe this was unintentional.*

20:11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. God had instructed Moses to speak—speak to the rock! But Moses' disobedience was costly. God is very meticulous in His instructions. And He was compassionate to them; still willing to give the entire Israelite community plenty of water to drink from the Rock.*

- **(THIRD MISTAKE) Moses raised his hand** and struck the rock twice with his rod, and water abundantly gushed out of the rock. God told Moses to speak to the rock, not strike it.

PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

3. **Disobedience.** "*Smote the rock twice...*" This brought Moses into the place of disobedience, like the people he was to lead. Moses dishonored God's **direct command**. **Moses did not do what God told him to do.** And anytime we disobey the Lord we imply that our way is better. We make it seem that God's way is inferior to us. We make it appear that God is incompetent and needs our correction. That's not just true with Moses; it's true in our lives too. Any compromise with sin is an erosion of character. **Disobedience is an act of arrogant defiance.**

NOTE:

*The "**Rock**" represents Jesus Christ, who only needed to be struck once for our sins, once and for ALL. And Moses broke the resemblance or parallel by striking the rock twice. It was an offense to God!

20:12 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them. And God spoke to Moses and Aaron saying, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow My name (make My Name Holy) before the eyes of the children of Israel, you will not bring this people into the Promised Land, which I have given them."

- **(FOURTH MISTAKE) Moses did not sanctify the Lord** before the very people who were to see it, which meant that his heart wasn't there.

4. **Unbelief.** "*Because ye (Moses) believed me not...*" God hit the nail on the head. What's on the inside comes will come outwardly and only God knows our motives. And God knew all about Moses. This was to be in the presence of His people and was not to be taken lightly. He calls us to allow others to see His Holiness! He did not honor God as holy.

When you don't do what God say do, or when you don't ask God what to do, and He tells you and you still don't do what He says do, then you've taken the place of God. The thing God said in the 12th verse was: 'you didn't believe or trust Me enough to sanctify Me, honor me, hallow Me in the eyes of; in the sight of the congregation. That's very important to God. You can't share His Glory. Glory only goes to Him. If it's not in His Word, if it's not in His Law; if not in His fulfillment of man, you're fulfilling your own words, your own laws, or your own rules, and God is not in it. For God to be in it, you must follow Him—His Word—His Way—His Truth—His Life wherever He leads and do whatever He says do. The Word says, "If God be for you, who can be against you!" Rom.8:31.

POINT:

God presents three indictments against Moses.

Moses did not do what God told him to do.

He did not honor God as holy.

This was no private sin. It was a public sin. These things happened in the sight of the Israelites.

Moses was a great man. Leaders pass away, but the Lord's work advances. Often **our troubles** result from our own disobedience or lack of faith. God is not the blame and God did not let Moses off lightly because of his great responsibility to His people. This chapter opened with Miriam's death and closes with Aaron's death (v.29).

20:13 This is the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the LORD, and he was sanctified in them. God told Moses that this place would be called the waters of Meribah. "**Meribah**" means **quarreling**. This was the place where the people of Israel contended with God, and He showed:

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

indicated His holiness among them. God is faithful even when we are not. He blessed the end even though He did not approve of the means when Moses struck the rock. Moses' error at Kadesh (the site of the first spy mission that ended in disaster); and the place where Miriam died and was buried, brought a failed and lost opportunity for Moses to enter the Promised Land at that time, but God did not forget His promise to Israel (with a New Generation). The promise was fulfilled! However, at that time Moses only saw the Promised Land from a distance but was able to visit fourteen centuries after his death (Mat.17:3) on the Mount of Transfiguration; but would not see the promise fulfilled at that time.

SUMMARY:

Moses and the children of Israel, even the whole congregation came to the desert of Zin which was near the southern boundary of Canaan in the first month. They dwelt in Kadesh where Miriam, Moses' sister died, and was buried (20:1).

There is a new generation, and we find them thirsty and unable to find water, and they came against Moses and Aaron, their leaders. So, Moses and Aaron had heard these people complain for a long time. They should have *died when their brethren died before the LORD?* *They were brought into this wilderness, that their cattle should die there. They were made to come out of Egypt, to be brought into an evil place. There's no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink.* Moses and Aaron left the assembly and went to the door of the tabernacle and fell on their faces before God. And the glory of the Lord appeared to them. God speaks to Moses and gives three instructions. 1)Take the rod—2)Gather the Israelite congregation and Aaron, his brother—3)Speak to the rock before their eyes. Moses took the rod, as the Lord commanded (20:2-9).

Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, "*Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?*" And Moses lifted up his hand and with the rod he struck the rock twice, and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their beasts drank. The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron for He was not pleased. Moses didn't believe God to sanctify Him in the eyes of the children of Israel. therefore, God would not allow Moses to bring this congregation into the Land which He had promised them. This place where the people of Israel contended with and challenged the LORD, this is the water of Meribah. "*Meribah*" means "*quarreling, water of strife.*" However, this is also where He showed and vindicated His holiness and mercy among them (20:10-13).

APPLICATION:

Although Moses had committed a sin that cost him to suffer consequences in this life, he still avoided eternal consequences through his faithfulness to God (Hebrews 11:23-29). If you have sin stirring in your emotions, or if you have not yet become a child of God, will you do so before it is too late? Your sins can be forgiven, and you can still enter heaven, if you sincerely repent.