

DISREGARDING THE DIRECTIVE Sunday School- August 16, 2009

Unifying Topic: **MOSES DISOBEYS**

Lesson Text

I. The Israelites Complain Again (Numbers 20:1-6)

II. Moses Rebels Against God (Numbers 20:7-13)

The Main Thought: 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. (Numbers 20:12 KJV).

Unifying Principle: Even great leaders may fail to heed higher authority. Why do people disregard authority? Moses disobeyed God because he did not trust God to provide for the people.

Lesson Aim: The goals of this lesson are to lay out the details of God's command and Moses' disobedience; to explore levels of authority and leadership and issues of obedience; and to challenge students to make a commitment to support their leaders in prayer.

Life aim: Believers should trust God to know what is best in all the circumstances of their lives. Lack of faith may lead to disobedience and disobedience invites God's judgment.

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- 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.
- 20:2 And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron.
- 20:3 And the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD!
- 20:4 And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there?
- 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.
- 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.
- 20:7 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
- 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.
- 20:9 And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him.
- 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?
- 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.
- 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.
- 20:13 This is the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the LORD, and he was sanctified in them.

HISTORY:

At the end of Numbers Chapter 14, God condemns the Israelites to wander in the wilderness for forty years. Not anyone that was twenty and older entered the Promised Land. God says, "They will pay for their faithlessness, until every last one lies dead in the desert." Since the spies were in the land for forty days, they must wander in the wilderness for forty years; a year for each day. Then the ten spies who had incited the people to rebel against the Lord were struck dead before the Lord. Caleb, Joshua, and those below the age of twenty were the only ones to go into the Promised Land. When the Israelites realized the severity of this they said, "we have sinned" and tried to enter the Promised Land on their own, while Moses is telling them "it's too late, and the Lord will not be with you." God didn't confuse their admission of guilt with true repentance, because He knew their hearts. They were attacked by the Amalekites and the Canaanites and chased them as far as Hormah. Rebellion and complaints are still going on in the camp against Moses and Aaron. And God is still punishing; instructing about His ordinances and rituals.

POINT:

God honored the faith of Caleb, because he had another spirit and followed Him fully.

God with them, they could not be defeated. Without God, they were already defeated.

Numbers 20:1-6 The Israelites Complain Again

The Bible skips to the first month of the 40th year after they had come out of Egypt; from the time of the spies until the occurrences of this chapter was 38 years, of which nothing is recorded. This tells us that unbelief is a cause of delay.

Moses told of the death of his sister Miriam but did not say when during the 38 years that Miriam died, so we don't know how old she was when she died. We do know that sometime during the 38 year period in the desert Miriam died in Kadesh and was buried in Kadesh.

This is a new generation and we find them thirsty and unable to find water. The children were crying because they were thirsty. The animals were tired and desperately needed water. They were frightened that they might quickly die in the desert with no water.

So the Israelites gathered together against Moses and Aaron. Interestingly, 38 years later they are still moaning and complaining and saying the same kinds of things 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.'

Imagine how many times Moses heard these words and he must have been exhausted. Nevertheless, Moses and Aaron left the assembly and went to the door of the tabernacle and fell on their faces before God. The glory of the Lord appeared to them.

NOTE:

When we are outside the will of God, it will be many days, weeks, months, or even years of our lives wasted. The Lord had led them here because He loved them and desired to reveal to them His inexhaustible resources, that is, if they would only believe. It is the same with us, 'Believe: Everything is A Test!' How will we respond?

Numbers 20:7-13 Moses Rebels Against God

God instructed Moses to gather the Israelite congregation together and right before their eyes Moses was to take the rod and gather the people and **speak to the rock** and it would yield water for the entire congregation and their animals.

Moses took the rod, Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation before the rock, and Moses said to the Israelite people, "You rebels have sinned by complaining that the Lord would not provide for you. 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 complained and moaned. Must we bring you water out of this rock. Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his rod and water abundantly gushed out of the rock. The entire Israelite community had plenty of water to drink."

God had instructed Moses to speak to the rock*, but Moses hit the rock. Moses disobeyed God's instructions. God spoke to Moses and said, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow My name before the eyes of the children of Israel, you will not bring this people into the Promised Land, which I have given them."

This place was called the waters of Meribah. Meribah means quarreling.

POINT:

The Character of Moses' Sin.

1. Anger. "Hear now, ye rebels..." v10

2. Unbelief. "Because ye believed me not..." v12

3. Pride. "Must we fetch..." v10 Perhaps Moses thought if they saw him as the supplier they would quit complaining.

God presents three indictments of Moses and Aaron.

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1. *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. Disobedience is an act of arrogant defiance.*

2. *He did not honor God as holy. Moses said to the people, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" Did you get that? It wasn't, "Must GOD bring water from the rock again, it was, must WE bring water from the rock. Not only did Moses disobey God, He took credit for God's work.*

3. *And these things happened in the sight of the Israelites. This was no private sin. It was a public sin.*

NOTE:

*The rock represents Jesus Christ, who only needed to be struck once for our sins once and for ALL time. And Moses broke the resemblance or parallel by striking the rock twice.

SUMMARY:

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) 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, Moses only saw the Promised Land from a distance and even visited it fourteen centuries after his death (Mat. 17:3); but would not see the promise fulfilled at that time.

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 this great responsibility to His people. Disobeying God's **direct command** and dishonoring Him in the presence of His people was not to be taken lightly. He calls us to be obedient. Any compromise with sin is an erosion of character.

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 not do so before it is too late? Great sins can be forgiven, and we can still enter heaven, if we repent.

APPLICATION:

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 said do, then you're being God, 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, honor, 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, you're fulfilling your own word, law, or rule, and God is not in it. 'If God be for you, who can be against you!' (Rom.8:31)

Whatever God is doing in your life, remember, it is God working through you. And if it were not you, He would work through someone else. The lessons God teaches us are to impel, thrust, and compel us to the True Savior where there are no regrets.