



Moses' Blunder

October 13, 2018

Notes

Numbers 20:1-13 (NKJV)

¹ Then the children of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the Wilderness of Zin in **the first month**, and the people stayed in Kadesh; and **Miriam died there** and was buried there.

² Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron. ³ And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying: "If only we had died when our brethren died before the LORD! ⁴ Why have you brought up the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here? ⁵ And why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? It *is* not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates; nor *is* there any water to drink." ⁶ So Moses and Aaron **went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of meeting**, and they **fell on their faces**. And the **glory of the LORD appeared to them**.

⁷ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ⁸ "**Take the rod**; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. **Speak to the rock** before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals." ⁹ So Moses **took the rod** from before the LORD **as He commanded him**.

¹⁰ And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "**Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?**" ¹¹ Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.

¹² Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to **hallow Me** in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore **you shall not bring this assembly into the land** which I have given them."

¹³ This was the water of **Meribah**, because the children of Israel **contended** with the LORD, and He was hallowed among them.

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I. Moses does enter the Promised Land on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt. 17:1-8).

II. The timing of the incident in Numbers 20.

A. This is probably Israel's 40th year in the wilderness.

Numbers 33:38 (NKJV) – Then Aaron the priest went up to Mount Hor at the command of the LORD, and **died there in the fortieth year** after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, on the **first day of the fifth month**.

Numbers 20:22-28 (NKJV) – ²² **Now the children of Israel, the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh and came to Mount Hor....** ²⁵ Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up to Mount Hor; ... ²⁸ Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; and **Aaron died there on the top of the mountain**.

B. It is the new moon (*Rosh Chodesh*).

- Colossians 2:16-17 – "...let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a **new moon** or sabbaths..."
- Numbers 28:11-15. Jesus died for the new moon. It must matter to Him.

C. It is on the heels of Miriam's death (Num. 20:1).

D. It is the second time that Moses is instructed to bring water out of the rock (Exod. 17:1-7).

Exodus 17:5-6 (NKJV) – 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 strike 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.

God told Moses to bring the rod and strike the rock with it.

III. Why is Moses disciplined?

Reasons Jewish commentators suggest Moses is disciplined.

1. **Some people blame it on Moses' character** (but, Num. 20:12 & 24; 31:14).

Numbers 20:24 (NKJV) – “Aaron shall be gathered to his people, for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the children of Israel, **because you rebelled against My word** at the water of Meribah.

Numbers 31:14 (NKJV) – But Moses was angry with the officers of the army, *with* the captains over thousands and captains over hundreds, who had come from the battle.

2. **Some suggest that Moses is actually acting like a coward in this incident** (Num. 20:6).

- **At the Red Sea; Exodus 14:15-16.**
- **When they only had bitter water; Exodus 15:22-25.**
- **The first time that Moses had to draw water from the rock; Exodus 17:1-4 (NKJV)** – ¹ Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but *there was* no water for the people to drink. ² Therefore **the people contended with Moses, and said, “Give us water, that we may drink.” So Moses said to them, “Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?”** ³ And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, “Why *is* it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” ⁴ **So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!”**
- **When Israel believed the evil report from the 10 spies; Numbers 14:1-5.**
- **At the Korah Rebellion; Numbers 16:1-7.**

3. **Some Jewish commentators say that is because Moses was being callous after the death of Miriam** (Num. 20:1; but, Num. 12:13-16).
4. **Moses was rejected because he doubted. He is failing to believe God** (Num. 20:10).

5. Moses was rejected for calling Israel a “rebels” (Num. 20:10).
6. One Jewish text says the issue was that Moses chose one particular rock while the people wanted another rock.
7. There is an interesting Jewish tradition that says the reason is that Moses struck the rock twice instead of only once (Num. 20:11).
8. There is an interesting Jewish tradition that says that Moses was disciplined because he struck the rock once instead of speaking to it (Num. 20:8 & 11).

Moses was commanded to take the staff. If God commanded Moses to bring the staff, then it makes sense to think that God wanted Moses to use the staff. That’s “stewarding” the staff. “Use what you have.

Exodus 4:2 (NKJV)

So the LORD said to him, “What *is* that in your hand?”
He said, “A rod.”

Numbers 20:8 (NKJV) – “Take [נִקֵּחַ – an imperative] the rod....”

At the First Plague; Exodus 7:17-20 (NKJV) – ¹⁷ Thus says the LORD: “By this you shall know that I *am* the LORD. Behold, I will strike the waters which *are* in the river with the rod that *is* in my hand, and they shall be turned to blood. ¹⁸ And the fish that *are* in the river shall die, the river shall stink, and the Egyptians will loathe to drink the water of the river.” ’ ”

¹⁹ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Take [the same imperative – נִקֵּחַ] your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in *buckets of wood* and *pitchers of stone*.’ ” ²⁰ And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the LORD commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that *were* in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters that *were* in the river were turned to blood.

The First Time Water is Drawn From the Rock; Exodus 17:5-6 (NKJV) – ⁵ And the LORD said to Moses, “Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also **take [the same imperative – נִקֵּץ] 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.”

9. The strongest Jewish tradition: Moses failed to sanctify God (Num. 20:12; 27:14; Deut. 32:51).

Numbers 27:14 (NKJV) – For in the Wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation, you **rebelled against My command to hallow Me** at the waters before their eyes.” (These are the waters of Meribah, at Kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin.)

Deuteronomy 32:51 (NKJV) – because you trespassed against Me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Wilderness of Zin, because **you did not hallow Me** in the midst of the children of Israel.

Moses lifted himself to same level as the Lord ☹ .

- *notsi* – We shall draw forth” (Num. 20:10)
- Not *yotsi* – This would be “he shall draw forth”

Previously, Moses habit was to pray & perform miracles in seclusion – giving all the credit to God

- **Prayer to remove the Plague of Frogs; Exodus 8:12 (NKJV)** – Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh. And Moses cried out to the LORD concerning the frogs which He had brought against Pharaoh.
- **Moses refuses the compromise of Israel offering their sacrifices publicly; Exodus 8:26 (NKJV)** – Moses said, “It is not right to do so, for we would be sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God. If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, then will they not stone us?”
- **Prayer to end the hail; Exodus 9:33 (NKJV)** – So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh and spread out his hands to

the LORD; then the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain was not poured on the earth.

- **Prayer to remove the locusts; Exodus 10:18 (NKJV)** - ¹So he went out from Pharaoh and entreated the LORD.
- **Before the First Plague; Exodus 5:22 (NKJV)** – So Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people? Why *is* it You have sent me?”
- **After the Golden Calf; Exodus 32:30-31 (NKJV)** – Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold!”
- **Moses had a private place of prayer; Exodus 33:7 (NKJV)** – **Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of meeting.**

Conclusion:

Ecclesiastes 3:13 (NKJV) – ¹²I know that nothing *is* better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, ¹³ and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—**it is the gift of God.**

Please mark your calendars

Please mark your calendar for **Havdalah**:

- Oct. 20 – Balaam’s Blunder, Num. 22-25 – Pastor Greg.
- Oct. 27 – What Does the Bible Teach Us About Vows?, Num. 30 – Pastor Greg.
- Nov. 3 – Good Women: Zelophehad’s Story , Num. 27 & 36 – Rebecca Kopplin (Jewish Ministries, Ministry Coordinator).
- Nov. 10 – Good Men: Joshua’s Arises – Rabbi Aharon Mendez.
- Nov. 17 – Cities of Refuge, Num. 35:9-34 – Pastor Greg.

Havdalah email
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(for prayers and questions)