

MOSES AND AARON EXCLUDED FROM CANAAN

BIBLE TEXT : Numbers 20:1-13, 22-29

LESSON 107 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Hebrews 4:1).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Numbers 20:1-13 (KJV)

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.

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

³ And the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD!

⁴ And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there?

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.

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.

⁷ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

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.

⁹ And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Strife at the Waters of Meribah

1 Israel, while at the waters of Meribah, was in an hour of strife and contention against God, Numbers 20:1-5;

Exodus 17:2-7 (KJV)

² Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?

³ And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore *is* this *that* thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?

⁴ And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.

⁵ And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go.

⁶ Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

⁷ And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?

Deuteronomy 33:8 (KJV)

⁸ And of Levi he said, *Let* thy Thummim and thy Urim *be* with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, *and* with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah;

Psalms 81:7 (KJV)

⁷ Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.

Hebrews 3:7-19 (KJV)

⁷ Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

⁸ Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

⁹ When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

¹⁰ Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways.

¹¹ So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

¹² Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

¹³ But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

¹⁴ For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

¹⁵ While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

¹⁶ For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

¹⁷ But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

¹⁸ And to whom sware he that they should not enter into

commanded him.

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?

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*.

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.

¹³ This *is* the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the LORD, and he was sanctified in them.

Numbers 20:22-29 (KJV)

²² And the children of Israel, *even* the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh, and came unto mount Hor.

²³ And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying,

²⁴ Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah.

²⁵ Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor:

²⁶ And strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered *unto his people*, and shall die there.

²⁷ And Moses did as the LORD commanded: and they went up into mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation.

²⁸ And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon

his rest, but to them that believed not?

¹⁹ So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Hebrews 4:1-11 (KJV)

¹ Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left *us* of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

² For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*.

³ For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

⁴ For he spake in a certain place of the seventh *day* on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

⁵ And in this *place* again, If they shall enter into my rest.

⁶ Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

⁷ Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

⁸ For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

⁹ There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

¹⁰ For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.

¹¹ Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

2 God often uses circumstances similar to this one at the waters of Meribah as a testing place for His people, Numbers 20:13;

Deuteronomy 8:1-20 (KJV)

¹ All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers.

² And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, *and* to prove thee, to know what *was* in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

³ And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

⁴ Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.

⁵ Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee.

⁶ Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.

⁷ For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills;

⁸ A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey;

⁹ A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any *thing* in it; a land whose stones *are* iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.

¹⁰ When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee.

¹¹ Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day:

¹² Lest *when* thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built

Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there in the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount.

²⁹ And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, *even* all the house of Israel.

goodly houses, and dwelt *therein*;

¹³ And *when* thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied;

¹⁴ Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;

¹⁵ Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, *wherein were* fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where *there was* no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;

¹⁶ Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;

¹⁷ And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of *mine* hand hath gotten me this wealth.

¹⁸ But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for *it is* he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as *it is* this day.

¹⁹ And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.

²⁰ As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.

Matthew 6:25-34 (KJV)

²⁵ Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

²⁶ Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

²⁷ Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

²⁸ And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

²⁹ And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

³⁰ Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

³¹ Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

³² (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

³³ But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

³⁴ Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

Hebrews 12:5-11 (KJV)

⁵ And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

⁶ For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

⁷ If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

⁸ But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

⁹ Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not

much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

¹⁰ For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness.

¹¹ Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Hebrews 12:25 (KJV)

²⁵ See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not we escape*, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven:

Psalm 95:8 (KJV)

⁸ Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, *and as in* the day of temptation in the wilderness:

3 The problems of acquiring the necessities of life, such as food and water, without the assistance of God, often has brought great troubles, (read all of Psalm 78) ;

Psalm 78:19-20 (KJV)

¹⁹ Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?

²⁰ Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?

Numbers 11:1-9 (KJV)

¹ And *when* the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard *it*; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed *them that were* in the uttermost parts of the camp.

² And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched.

³ And he called the name of the place Taberah: because the fire of the LORD burnt among them.

⁴ And the mixt multitude that *was* among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?

⁵ We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick:

⁶ But now our soul *is* dried away: *there is* nothing at all, beside this manna, *before* our eyes.

⁷ And the manna *was* as coriander seed, and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium.

⁸ *And* the people went about, and gathered *it*, and ground *it* in mills, or beat *it* in a mortar, and baked *it* in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil.

⁹ And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it.

II Israel Once Again in the Hour of Trial

1 The failure of Israel at the waters of Meribah was a repetition of their fathers' and their own disbelief, Numbers 20:1-5;

Numbers 14:2-10 (KJV)

² And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!

³ And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?

⁴ And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

⁵ Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

⁶ And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of

Jephunneh, *which were* of them that searched the land, rent their clothes:

⁷ And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, *is* an exceeding good land.

⁸ If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey.

⁹ Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they *are* bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD *is* with us: fear them not.

¹⁰ But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.

Hebrews 3:7-19 (KJV)

⁷ Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

⁸ Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

⁹ When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

¹⁰ Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways.

¹¹ So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

¹² Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

¹³ But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

¹⁴ For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

¹⁵ While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

¹⁶ For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

¹⁷ But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

¹⁸ And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

¹⁹ So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Hebrews 4:1-16 (KJV)

¹ Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left *us* of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

² For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*.

³ For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

⁴ For he spake in a certain place of the seventh *day* on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

⁵ And in this *place* again, If they shall enter into my rest.

⁶ Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

⁷ Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

⁸ For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

⁹ There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

¹⁰ For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased

from his own works, as God *did* from his.

¹¹ Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

¹² For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

¹³ Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession.

¹⁵ For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin.

¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

2 The failure of Moses and Aaron was in not glorifying God in all their actions, Numbers 20:10-12;

Numbers 27:14 (KJV)

¹⁴ For ye rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me at the water before their eyes: that *is* the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.

Deuteronomy 33:8 (KJV)

⁸ And of Levi he said, *Let* thy Thummim and thy Urim *be* with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, *and with* whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah;

3 Moses and Aaron, as leaders of God's people, were to be examples of godly graces and virtues, as every true child of God is, regardless of any circumstance or provocation,

Titus 2:7-8 (KJV)

⁷ In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *showing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

⁸ Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

Titus 3:2 (KJV)

² To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

2 Corinthians 3:1-18 (KJV)

¹ Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some *others*, epistles of commendation to you, or *letters* of commendation from you?

² Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:

³ *Forasmuch as ye are* manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

⁴ And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward:

⁵ Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency *is* of God;

⁶ Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

⁷ But if the ministration of death, written *and* engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which *glory* was to be done away:

⁸ How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?

⁹ For if the ministration of condemnation *be* glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

¹⁰ For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.

¹¹ For if that which is done away *was* glorious, much more

that which remaineth *is* glorious.

¹² Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:

¹³ And not as Moses, *which* put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

¹⁴ But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which *veil* is done away in Christ.

¹⁵ But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.

¹⁶ Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

¹⁷ Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty.

¹⁸ But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Romans 2:17-29 (KJV)

¹⁷ Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,

¹⁸ And knowest *his* will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;

¹⁹ And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,

²⁰ An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

²¹ Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?

²² Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

²³ Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?

²⁴ For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

²⁵ For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.

²⁶ Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?

²⁷ And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

²⁸ For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

²⁹ But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

Philippians 3:17 (KJV)

¹⁷ Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

Philippians 4:9 (KJV)

⁹ Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

1 Corinthians 11:1 (KJV)

¹ Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.

III The Harvest of Failure and Disobedience

1 Moses and Aaron were both forbidden entrance into the Promised Land for their disobedience, and both died before the Children of Israel crossed into the land, Numbers 20:12, 22-29;

Deuteronomy 32:49-52 (KJV)

⁴⁹ Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, *unto* mount Nebo, which *is* in the land of Moab, that *is* over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession:

⁵⁰ And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people:

⁵¹ Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel.

⁵² Yet thou shalt see the land before *thee*; but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel.

Deuteronomy 34:1-12 (KJV)

¹ And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that *is* over against Jericho. And the LORD shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan,

² And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea,

³ And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar.

⁴ And the LORD said unto him, This *is* the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see *it* with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.

⁵ So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.

⁶ And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

⁷ And Moses *was* an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

⁸ And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping *and* mourning for Moses were ended.

⁹ And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.

¹⁰ And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,

¹¹ In all the signs and the wonders, which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land,

¹² And in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel.

2 Moses prayed that God would allow him to enter the Promised Land, but God refused his request,

Deuteronomy 3:23-29 (KJV)

²³ And I besought the LORD at that time, saying,

²⁴ O Lord GOD, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God *is there* in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might?

²⁵ I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that *is* beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon.

²⁶ But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter.

²⁷ Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold *it* with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan.

²⁸ But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see.

²⁹ So we abode in the valley over against Bethpeor.

NOTES:

The Waters of Meribah

We find the Children of Israel nearing the end of their wilderness wanderings and at last approaching the Promised Land. It is at the waters of Meribah, a stopping place on their journey, that we have the recorded instance of Numbers 20. Meribah means waters of strife or contention. The Israelites, in their wanderings through the wilderness for nearly forty years, should have learned that the God who was leading them with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, who was feeding them with manna from Heaven (angels' food) every day, and who was keeping their clothes and shoes from wearing out, was also able to provide water for them as He had in the past. Yet if one fails to learn a lesson he must face it again and again until it is learned. The Bible tells us we shall all be taught of God (**Isaiah 54:13** ¹³ And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children. **John 6:45** ⁴⁵ It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me). Many times the lack of the simple necessities of life brings to us our hardest battles.

It is often hard for man to trust God for health, food, raiment, and housing, as well as for salvation. The fact that he does not desire to trust God shows the extent of depravity of the natural man and the sinful condition of his heart. Whenever man finds himself contending with God over these matters, he also is, spiritually, at the waters of Meribah, as were the Israelites, who were our examples many years ago. (**1 Corinthians 10:1-15** ¹ Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; ² And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; ³ And did all eat the same spiritual meat; ⁴ And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. ⁵ But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. ⁶ Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. ⁷ Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. ⁸ Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. ⁹ Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. ¹⁰ Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. ¹¹ Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. ¹² Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. ¹³ There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. ¹⁴ Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. ¹⁵ I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.)

God later said, "I proved thee at the waters of Meribah" (Psalm 81:7), and again: "And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.... Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end" (Deuteronomy 8:2, 15, 16).

It is one of the great fundamental truths of the Gospel that all who love God must pass through times of trial and testing of their faith. This is the grand lesson Job left to the world. We must all face these times, for it is in these places of testing that we become perfected so we shall be fit companions to dwell with God in

eternity.

Moses, the Teacher of Grace

We now see Moses, not only as the leader of the people of God **but** as the embodiment of many godly graces. God has always used human instrumentalities to represent the Gospel, and He always will. Moses was the instrument through whom God gave the Law, which was in itself a great upward step in God's revelation to mankind. But Moses was more than a mere messenger to bring the letter of the Law. He was a man so qualified and acquainted with God, living so close to God, that he exemplified in his daily life divine graces, as few men have done in the world's history.

This is just what the Lord intended him and us to do. It was through Moses that the people saw the virtues of God. His face shone so brightly on one occasion when he had been in contact with God, that the Children of Israel could not look at him, and he had to wear a veil over his face. Moses was the meekest man on earth (**Numbers 12:3** ³ (Now the man Moses *was* very meek, above all the men which *were* upon the face of the earth.)). He was not self-seeking, but several times demonstrated his genuinely unselfish spirit by reminding God of the promises He had made concerning Israel and of the glory of His own name.

The Israelites saw the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, and had seen the glory of God come down and fill the Tabernacle until even Moses could not minister because of it. Yet it was through Moses, and his personal life, that the people really saw and felt the divine graces of God.

As the Law was a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ, so undoubtedly Moses showed forth divine graces, as every child of God must do today, to show men how God would have them live. That is the business of a Christian. Paul tells us: "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned... . To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men" (Titus 2:7, 8; 3:2).

Moses preached the Law, the mere letter of which could save no one, nor make anything perfect. (**Hebrews 7:19** ¹⁹ For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God) Yet he preached the spirit of the Gospel with his life.

The Lesson Not Learned

This one time, Moses, as the leader and teacher of righteousness, in an hour of trial and provocation, failed to show forth the virtues and the image of Christ, who was to come. The indictment of God against him was, "Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel.... "(Numbers 20:12). Moses had always been jealous of the glory due God's name. By pleading to God that He consider the honor due His name Moses had before been able to intercede for the sin of the Israelites, and obtain mercy for them from the judgments of God. Moses had appealed to God with the reasoning that if He destroyed the Israelites in the wilderness, the heathen nations would say that He was unable to bring them into the Promised Land, and His name would suffer ridicule. Yet it was this same Moses, who had always been so zealous Or the prestige of God, who failed at Meribah to consider the glory due God.

Moses in the past had always had his eyes *set* upon nothing but God and His glory. This time it seemed that he saw nothing but the rebellion and unbelief of the congregation. No matter what our responsibilities or position in life might be, when we look at the actions of men, and not at the Lord, trouble soon

arrives. It was so here. Moses became so perturbed at their chiding, which was directed at him because of their situation, that he spoke unadvisedly with his lips. "They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes" (Psalm 106:32). God said to him: "Ye rebelled against my commandment" (Numbers 27:14). Moses smote the rock twice instead of speaking to it, as God had told him to do, and said, "Ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" He ignored the Lord completely. Moses and Aaron by implying they were providing water for the people glorified themselves and not God.

The Penalty of a Lesson Not Learned

"Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour" (Ecclesiastes 10:1). This was the case of Moses and Aaron. Brash and hasty speech has no place in the life of a saint of God. Wherever it exists the condemnation of God will follow. Moses and Aaron were forbidden entrance into the Promised Land — the fulfillment of all they had worked for all their lives.

At the threshold of complete victory they failed. They did not fail to go to Heaven, but the capsheaf of their reward was lost, irrevocably lost. The sweetest blessing of their life's work on earth was gone. The very thing for which Moses and Aaron had prayed so many years, had plodded through years of desert wanderings, had patiently endured immeasurable heartaches and tears to attain, was now at hand. Aaron did not even see it. Moses saw it, but — he could not have it!

Moses prayed that God would reconsider and let him enter the Promised Land. God did not do so, and told Moses to speak no more of the matter, but to go and see the Promised Land from the top of Mount Pisgah.

We learn from the lesson of Moses and Aaron that we may serve God faithfully all the days of our lives, but in a moment of indiscretion, looking away from God to the lives of ungodly men and women and taking matters in our own hands, we can lose a great deal. We can lose the very thing we have spent our lives striving for. We can lose the very capsheaf of the blessing and God's best for us. We can do even worse: we can disobey God, sin, and lose our salvation; and if we do not repent we will be forever lost.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Relate another incident similar to the happening at the waters of Meribah.
- 2 What experience did the Children of Israel have that should have taught them that God could and would provide them with Water?
- 3 What did God command Moses and Aaron to do to provide water for the people?
- 4 How did Moses and Aaron fail to do what God commanded them to do?
- 5 How did the actions of Moses at the rock violate the command of God?
- 6 What was the offense Moses and Aaron were guilty of?
- 7 What did God tell Moses and Aaron would be the penalty for their disobedience?
- 8 Did either Moses or Aaron ever see the Promised Land?
- 9 When did Moses and Aaron die?
- 10 Were the Children of Israel at all to blame for the disobedience of Moses?