

# Numbers 20 - Wilderness Wanderings: 37 Years Later...; Water from the Rock; Moses' Disobedience, Punishment

II. Failure of the first generation (Num 11:1—25:18)

(3) Failure in the wilderness in and around Kadesh Barnea (Num 15:1—20:13)

(E) Moses' failure at Meribah (20:1-13)

(4) Failure en route from Kadesh to Moab (Num 20:14—21:35)

(A) Edom refuses to allow Israel passage (20:14-21)

(B) Death of Aaron at Mount Hor (20:22-29)

Num 14-20 are the only chapters covering the 38 years of Wilderness Wanderings. A few incidents, glossing over the wasted years. There is an interval of 37 years between 19:22 and 20:1.

## Numbers 20

(E) Moses' failure at Meribah (20:1-13)

**1** Then the sons of Israel, the whole congregation, came to the wilderness of Zin in the first month; and the people stayed at Kadesh. Now Miriam died there and was buried there.

**1** Then the sons of Israel, the whole congregation, came to the wilderness of Zin in the first month; and the people stayed at Kadesh. Now Miriam died there and was buried there.

**1** The entire community of the Israelites entered the Zin wilderness during the first month. The people stayed in Kadesh. Miriam died and was buried there.

**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** There was no water for the congregation, and they assembled against Moses and Aaron.

**2** There was no water for the congregation, and they assembled themselves against Moses and Aaron.

**2** But there was no water for the community, so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron.

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

3 Then the people argued with Moses and spoke, saying, "If only we had perished when our brothers perished before the LORD!

3 The people thus contended with Moses and spoke, saying, "If only we had perished when our brothers perished before the LORD!

3 As the people argued with Moses, they told him, "We wish that we had died when our relatives died in the LORD's presence!

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

- The seventh murmuring...

4 Why then have you brought the LORD'S assembly into this wilderness, for us and our livestock to die here?

4 Why then have you brought the LORD's assembly into this wilderness, for us and our beasts to die here?

4 Why did you bring the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness? So we and our cattle could die here?

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

5 Why did you make us come up from Egypt, to bring us into this wretched place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, nor is there water to drink!"

5 Why have you made us come up from Egypt, to bring us in to this wretched place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, nor is there water to drink."

5 Why did you take us out of Egypt and bring us to this terrible place? There's no place to plant seeds, fig trees, vines, or pomegranates! And there's no water to drink!"

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 Then Moses and Aaron came in from the presence of the assembly to the entrance of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. And the glory of the LORD appeared to them;

6 Then Moses and Aaron came in from the presence of the assembly to the doorway of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to them;

6 Then Moses and Aaron went into the presence of the community at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and fell on their faces. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to them.

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 then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

7 and the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

7 The LORD told Moses,

7 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

8 "Take the staff; and you and your brother Aaron assemble the congregation and speak to the rock before their eyes, that it shall yield its water. So you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and have the congregation and their livestock drink."

8 "Take the rod; and you and your brother Aaron assemble the congregation and speak to the rock before their eyes, that it may yield its water. You shall thus bring forth water for them out of the rock and let the congregation and their beasts drink."

8 "Take the rod, gather the community together, and then you and your brother Aaron are to speak to the rock right before their eyes. It will release water. As you bring water to them from the rock, the community and the cattle will be able to drink."

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 So Moses took the staff from before the LORD, just as He had commanded him;

9 So Moses took the rod from before the LORD, just as He had commanded him;

9 So Moses took the rod in the LORD's presence, just as he had commanded.

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

10 and Moses and Aaron summoned the assembly in front of the rock. And he said to them, "Listen now, you rebels; shall we bring water for you out of this rock?"

10 and Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly before the rock. And he said to them, "Listen now, you rebels; shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock?"

10 Then Moses and Aaron gathered the community together in front of the rock. "Pay attention, you rebels!" Moses told them. "Are we to bring you water from this rock?"

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 Then Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with his staff; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their livestock drank.

11 Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation and their beasts drank.

11 Then Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod. Lots of water gushed out, and both the community and their cattle were able to drink.

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 But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Since you did not trust in Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, for that reason you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."

12 But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."

12 But the LORD rebuked Moses and Aaron, telling Moses: "Because you both didn't believe me, because you didn't consecrate me as holy in the presence of the Israelis, you won't be the ones to bring this congregation into the land that I'm about to give them."

**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 Those *were called* the waters of **Meribah**, because the sons of Israel argued with the LORD, and He proved Himself holy among them.

13 Those *were* the waters of Meribah, because the sons of Israel contended with the LORD, and He proved Himself holy among them.

13 Because the Israelis argued with the LORD and he was set apart among them, this place was called the Meribah Springs.

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

- "...Meribah" - the word "Kadesh" is added to it in Deut 32:51 to distinguish it from the other Meribah (Ex 17:7)

### **Water from Rocks Twice**

- Rephidim (Ex 17)
  - Strikes the Rock; water flows
- Meribah (Num 20)
  - Directed to *speak* to the Rock
  - *Strikes* the Rock instead
  - Consequence: denied entry into Promised Land

(4) Failure en route from Kadesh to Moab (Num 20:14—21:35)

(A) Edom refuses to allow Israel passage (20:14-21)

**14** From Kadesh Moses then sent messengers to the king of Edom to say, "This is what your brother Israel has said: 'You know all the hardship that has overtaken us;

**14** From Kadesh Moses then sent messengers to the king of Edom: "Thus your brother Israel has said, 'You know all the hardship that has befallen us;

**14** Later, Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom with this message: "This is what your relative Israel says: 'You know all the hardships we've encountered.

**14** And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us:

15 that our fathers went down to Egypt, and we stayed in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians treated us and our fathers badly.

15 that our fathers went down to Egypt, and we stayed in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians treated us and our fathers badly.

15 Our ancestors went down to Egypt, where we lived for many years. But the Egyptians treated us and our ancestors viciously.

15 How our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians vexed us, and our fathers:

- He requested permission from the king of Edom to take the famous king's highway, a route that passed from the Red Sea (Gulf of Aqabah) north to Damascus via the Edomite city of Sela (later known as Petra)

- Moses appealed to Edom as a brother [Edomites were descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother (Gen 36:6-8)]

- Moses then reviewed Israel's history from the time of Jacob's descent to Egypt to the present moment (Cf. Obadiah's prophecies on Edom's destiny.)

16 But when we cried out to the LORD, He heard our voice and sent an angel, and brought us out from Egypt; now behold, we are at Kadesh, a town on the edge of your territory.

16 But when we cried out to the LORD, He heard our voice and sent an angel and brought us out from Egypt; now behold, we are at Kadesh, a town on the edge of your territory.

16 Then we cried to the LORD and he heard our voice, sending us a messenger who brought us out of Egypt. Now look! We've arrived in Kadesh, a city at the extreme end of your territory.

16 And when we cried unto the LORD, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt: and, behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border:

17 Please let us pass through your land. We will not pass through field or vineyard; we will not even drink water from a well. We will go along the king's road, not turning to the right or left, until we pass through your territory."

17 Please let us pass through your land. We will not pass through field or through vineyard; we will not even drink water from a well. We will go along the king's highway, not turning to the right or left, until we pass through your territory."

17 Permit us now to pass through your land. We won't pass through your fields or vineyards, and we won't drink water from your wells. We'll keep to the King's Highway without turning either right or left until we have passed through your territory."

17 Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king's high way, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders.

**18** Edom, however, said to him, "You shall not pass through us, or I will come out with the sword against you."

**18** Edom, however, said to him, "You shall not pass through us, or I will come out with the sword against you."

**18** But Edom replied, "You are not to pass through my land. If you do, I'll come out and start a war with you."

**18** And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword.

19 Again, the sons of Israel said to him, "We will go up by the road, and if I and my livestock do drink any of your water, then I will pay its price. Let me only pass through on my feet, nothing *more*."

19 Again, the sons of Israel said to him, "We will go up by the highway, and if I and my livestock do drink any of your water, then I will pay its price. Let me only pass through on my feet, nothing *else*."

19 Then the Israelis replied, "Permit us to travel on the highway. If we and our cattle drink your water, we'll pay the price you ask. Only please let us walk through, and nothing more."

**19** And the children of Israel said unto him, We will go by the high way: and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it: I will only, without doing any thing else, go through on my feet.

20 But he said, "You shall not pass through." And Edom came out against him with a heavy force and a strong hand.

20 But he said, "You shall not pass through." And Edom came out against him with a heavy force and with a strong hand.

20 But still he replied, "No. You're not to pass through." Then Edom went out to meet Moses with a vast army and a lot of military might.

**20** And he said, Thou shalt not go through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand.

21 So Edom refused to allow Israel to pass through his territory; then Israel turned away from him.

21 Thus Edom refused to allow Israel to pass through his territory; so Israel turned away from him.

21 That's how Edom refused Israel passage through their territory. So Israel turned away from there.

21 Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border: wherefore Israel turned away from him.

- See Num 21:4; Deut 2:4; and Judges 11:18; see also 1 Sam 14:47 and 2 Sam 8:14, which describe the retribution that was taken

## **Edom**

- Refused Israel passage by the King's Highway (Num 20:14-21; 21:4; Judges 11:17-18)
- Israel forbidden to abhor his Edomite brother (Deut 23:7-8)
- Balaam predicted the conquest of Edom (Num 24:18)
- Assyrian inscriptions show that Edom became a vassal-state of Assyria after 736 BC
- After the fall of Judah, Edom rejoiced (Ps 137:7)
- The prophets foretold judgment on Edom for her bitter hatred (Jer 49:7-22; Lam 4:21-22; Ezek 25:12-14; 35:15; Joel 3:19; Amos 9:12; Obadiah)

At the time of the Exodus, Israel sought permission to travel by the King's Highway, but was refused. Notwithstanding this discourtesy, Israel was forbidden to abhor his Edomite brother. In those days Balaam predicted the conquest of Edom.

### (B) Death of Aaron at Mount Hor (20:22-29)

**22** Now when they set out from Kadesh, the sons of Israel, the whole congregation, came to Mount Hor.

**22** Now when they set out from Kadesh, the sons of Israel, the whole congregation, came to Mount Hor.

**22** They traveled from Kadesh, and then the entire community of the Israelis arrived at Mount Hor.

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

23 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor by the border of the land of Edom, saying,

23 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor by the border of the land of Edom, saying,

23 Then the LORD told Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor, near the territory of Edom,

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

24 "Aaron will be gathered to his people; for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the sons of Israel, because you rebelled against My command at the waters of Meribah.

24 "Aaron will be gathered to his people; for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the sons of Israel, because you rebelled against My command at the waters of Meribah.

24 "Aaron is to be gathered to his people, since he is not to enter the land that I'm about to give the Israelis. After all, you both rebelled against my command at the Meribah Springs.

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 his son Eleazar, and bring them up to Mount Hor.

25 Take Aaron and his son Eleazar and bring them up to Mount Hor;

25 So take Aaron and his son Eleazar and ascend Mount Hor.

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

26 Then strip Aaron of his garments and put them on his son Eleazar. So Aaron will be gathered *to his people* and will die there."

26 and strip Aaron of his garments and put them on his son Eleazar. So Aaron will be gathered *to his people*, and will die there."

26 Remove Aaron's vestments and place them on his son Eleazar, because Aaron is to be gathered to his people and die there."

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 So Moses did just as the LORD had commanded, and they went up to Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation.

27 So Moses did just as the LORD had commanded, and they went up to Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation.

27 So Moses did just what the LORD had commanded. They ascended Mount Hor right in front of the entire community.

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

28 And after Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on his son Eleazar, Aaron died there on the mountain top. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain.

28 After Moses had stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on his son Eleazar, Aaron died there on the mountain top. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain.

28 As Moses was stripping Aaron's garments from him and clothing Aaron's son Eleazar with them, Aaron died there on top of the mountain. Afterwards, Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain.

28 And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there in the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount.

29 When all the congregation saw that Aaron had died, the whole house of Israel wept for Aaron for thirty days.

29 When all the congregation saw that Aaron had died, all the house of Israel wept for Aaron thirty days.

29 When the entire community saw that Aaron had died, they mourned in memory of Aaron for 30 days.

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

- Moses did reach the Promised Land eventually: he appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration with Christ