

Moses Disobeys

Key Verse: *“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

Selected Scripture:
Numbers 20:1-13

on’s rod that budded—gather the assembly of people together, and speak to the rock, and it would bring forth water for the congregation and the animals to drink.—vs. 8

On a previous occasion, about thirty-eight years before near Mount Sinai, the Israelities had similarly complained to Moses about the lack of water for themselves and their cattle. At that time, God instructed Moses to smite the rock and water gushed forth to remedy the situation.—Exod. 17:1-6

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THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

had resided in the wilderness for nearly forty years and, after the death of Moses’ sister Miriam, the people were preparing to enter Canaan. At this time, there was a shortage of water and once again the congregation murmured against Moses as well as Aaron.—Num. 20:1-5

The burden of these complaints prompted Moses and Aaron to seek Divine counsel, and “the glory of the LORD appeared unto them.”—vs. 6

They were instructed to take the rod—in all probability Aaron’s

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before the rock, Moses said, “Here now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?” (vs. 10) Moses then lifted his hands and with the rod he smote the rock twice and water gushed forth. (vs. 11) Our Key Verse indicates God’s displeasure with Moses’ disobedience in smiting the rock and declared that neither he nor his brother Aaron would enter Canaan.

This narrative provides important lessons for the Lord’s people today. The smitten rock was symbolic in that it represented Christ. “They [Israel] drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.” (I Cor. 10:4) The earlier smiting of the rock by Moses, which God authorized, shows the necessity of Christ being smitten in death in order to redeem the fallen human race.—Isa. 53:5,6

A sobering application of Moses’ sin in smiting the rock a second time is suggested in the New Testament. For any truly consecrated believers to repudiate the value of the ransom sacrifice, or to engage in willful sin, would seem to signify a crucifying afresh and putting Christ to open shame. Those who have been enlightened and have tasted the heavenly gift of the Holy Spirit and of the blessings to come would demonstrate a lack of worthiness for a place in the kingdom.—Heb. 6:4-7

Moses, as the meekest man “upon the face of the earth” (Num. 12:3), disobeyed God’s instructions and allowed a little self-exultation to enter into his heart by rebuking the Israelites when they had no water, and taking the credit as though it was his own miracle of bringing it forth in an unauthorized manner.

Let us never boast but always give God the glory for anything he permits us to do in the cause of his service. “Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?—I Cor. 4:7 ■