

Into the Promised Land
Joshua's Story
Lesson #18 – “Beginning the Last Year”
•HANDOUT•

▶ Lesson #18 now moves us forward in time to the beginning of the Last Year of Israel's Wandering. They have been forced to wander for 40 years because they rejected God's commands and rebelled against God's chosen leadership over them. God has told them that by the end of their wandering every Israelite twenty years and older will have died of natural causes. God stated that He would only bring the second generation of Israelites into the Promised Land. The two exceptions are Caleb and Joshua. They have been exempted from the death sentence because they alone stood faithful to God when all the others rebelled.

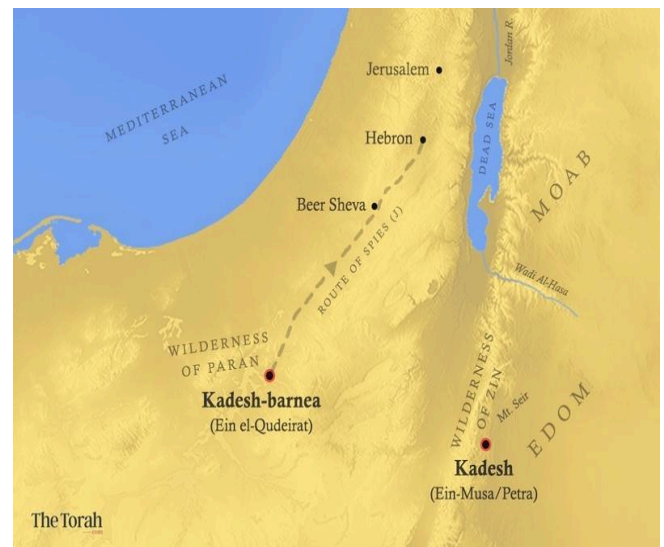
We have now reached that 40 year-point in their journey. By the time we finish with the events of this year, those under sentence of death will have died. But in spite of this death sentence, God has been faithful to provide for their needs during the 40 years. They have received the Divine gift of manna to eat, they have drank the miracle water from the rock, and none of their clothing and shoes have worn out.

▶ This lesson will feature a significant death and a surprising rebellion.

Number 20:1 • In the first month [Nisan] the whole Israelite community arrived at the Desert of Zin, and they stayed at Kadesh.

There Miriam died and was buried.

Q: When Israel was at the edge of the Promised Land before sending in the 12 scout-spies to evaluate the land, they were camped in the Desert of Paran at a place called Kadesh-barnea. Now they have arrived at the Desert of Zin and have made camp at Kadesh. Are they back where they started their wilderness wanderings?



Q: Why is the fact that Miriam died at Kadesh significant? She is certainly not the first, nor the last, to die.

Hear We Go Again ... Quarreling Breaks Out against Moses & Aaron ...

Numbers 20:2-6 • Now there was no water for the community, and the people gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron. They quarreled with Moses and said, "If only we had died when our brothers fell dead before the Lord! Why did you bring the Lord's community into this desert, that we and our livestock should die here? Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to this terrible place? It has no grain or figs, grapevines or pomegranates. And there is no water to drink!"

Moses and Aaron went from the assembly to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and fell facedown, and the Glory of the Lord appeared to them.

Q: This passage describes a legitimate concern: no water for either them or their livestock. By this time, how should we expect Israel to respond to this reoccurring problem?

Q: How, in reality, did they respond?

Q: Why do Moses and Aaron respond by falling face down in front of the entrance of the Tent of Meeting?

The LORD is faithful and He Meets with Moses & Aaron at the Tent of Meeting ...

Numbers 20:7-8 • The Lord said to Moses, "Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink."

Q: What does the LORD instruct Moses to do?

Q: This is not the first time the Lord told Moses to bring forth water from the rock. Moses was told to do this at Mount Sinai as well. But, what was the difference between the instruction at Mount Sinai and here at Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin?

Numbers 20:9-11 [NIV & NLT] • So Moses took the staff from the Lord's presence, just as he commanded him. He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?"

Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the entire community and their livestock drank their fill.

Q: What did Moses do to go about fulfilling God's command to him?

Q: Who are the "we" in his question Moses asked of Israel: "must we bring you water...?"

Q: Why did the rock give out water when it was struck if, in fact, it was struck in disobedience? [Additional cross-reference: I Corinthians 10]

The LORD immediately responds to the actions of Moses and Aaron ...

Numbers 20:12 [ESV] • And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them."

Q: The Lord said Moses' and Aaron's sin was not believing the Lord enough to demonstrate His holiness to the people of Israel. In what way was striking the rock an act of unbelief?

Q: Did Moses misunderstand God or did he strike the rock on purpose?

Q: Why would Moses and Aaron do such a thing?

Q: What was God specifically referring to when He charged Moses & Aaron of failing to uphold Him as Holy before the people?

► Though scripture isn't specific, Moses & Aaron did 3 things which could explain God's statement:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Q: What were the consequences for Moses and Aaron?

Q: What is ironic about this whole, sad situation?

Q: Doesn't God's judgment in this situation seem to be an unreasonably harsh punishment? [Additional references: Malachi 2:1-9; James 3:1; I Timothy 3:1-10].

Numbers 20:13 [ESV] • These are the waters of Meribah, where the people of Israel quarreled with the Lord, and through them He showed Himself Holy.

Q: What is significant about Israel naming the place of this event “Meribah?”

Q: How did God show Himself as Holy in this event?

The scripture passage which follows the events at Meribah begins the final events of the Journey to Canaan. It opens with Moses sending a message to the King of Edom requesting permission for Israel to pass through Edom. This is where we will pick up the story next time.



Next Time • Lesson #19
“The Arrogance of Edom”

