

**Into the Promised Land**  
**Joshua's Story**  
**Lesson #23 – “Moses & the New Leader”**  
**•HANDOUT•**

► The issue of women being allowed to inherit represents some of Moses' final duties as a leader. The scripture passage which follows begins with God stating that Moses' time on earth has come to an end and it is time to appoint a new leader. This scripture has moments so bittersweet that it renders the reader almost incapable of fathoming what God is doing.

Numbers 27:12-14 • Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go up this mountain in the Abarim range and see the land I have given the Israelites.

After you have seen it, you too will be gathered to your people, as your brother Aaron was, for when the community rebelled at the waters in the Desert of Zin, both of you disobeyed my command to honor me as holy before their eyes." (These were the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Desert of Zin.)

Q: Because of the incident at the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Desert of Zin, the LORD has determined that Moses will see the Promised Land, but he won't be allowed to even step foot into it. The LORD originally told him why and he reiterates that reason to Moses here. What reason does the LORD give?

Here is the parallel passage in Deuteronomy, which confirms the reason given in Numbers:

Deuteronomy 32:48-52 • On that same day the Lord told Moses, "Go up into the Abarim Range to Mount Nebo in Moab, across from Jericho, and view Canaan, the land I am giving the Israelites as their own possession. There on the mountain that you have climbed you will die and be gathered to your people, just as your brother Aaron died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people. This is because both of you broke faith with me in the presence of the Israelites at the waters of Meribah Kadesh in the Desert of Zin and because you did not uphold my holiness among the Israelites. Therefore, you will see the land only from a distance; you will not enter the land I am giving to the people of Israel."

**To remind ourselves about what Moses & Aaron did that caused them  
not to regard the Lord as Holy before Israel,  
we need to look back to Chapter 20 [Lesson #18]  
From that narrative, this is what we know:**

► Israel was in their last year of wilderness judgment. By the time they reached the Desert of Zin they were out of water. The people, once again, began to rebel against Moses and Aaron, throwing vile accusations against them. Moses and Aaron responded by going to the tent of meeting to ask for help, prostrating themselves before God. God answered and told them to gather all of Israel at the rock of Meribah. God told Moses to speak to the rock and water would come forth.

But Moses was fed up with the people's attitude and instead of speaking to the rock, doing as the Lord commanded, he spoke to the people: "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" Then Moses struck the rock twice with his staff. Water did come forth, just as God promised. But Moses crossed the line with his actions, both verbally and physically. Not only did he disobey God's instructions, but he took credit for the miracle of the water.

The LORD's response was immediate: Moses' and Aaron's actions failed to honor the LORD as holy. Once they publicly took credit for the miracle of the water, God could not let the situation slide. If He did, Israel would never come to fully respect God's holiness. *[No one can claim to do what only God can do and then not expect the Lord to respond.]*

We do know from the parallel passage in Deuteronomy 3:23-26, that Moses pleaded with the LORD for an opportunity to at least walk through the Land. But God refused to listen. In fact He forbade Moses from speaking about the issue again.

What is truly amazing is that Moses continued to faithfully lead the people after Meribah, even knowing that all he did to get the people to the Promised Land would not change his future: he would see the land but he would never walk on it.

But we can take heart: we can see that Moses' failure at the rock did not negate or break his relationship with God.

Remember, it was Moses and Elijah who were standing with the transfigured Jesus. The two of them could see what Messiah Jesus was about to do and what it would accomplish for eternity, and they were thrilled.

[Matthew 17:1-13; Luke 9:28-36; Mark 9:2-13]

### **Moses' response to the news of his impending death shows us the mettle of the man.**

Numbers 27:15-17 • Moses said to the LORD, "May the LORD, the God of the spirits of all mankind, appoint a man over this community to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the LORD's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd."

Q; What is meant by the title: "the LORD, the God of the spirits of all mankind?"

Q: How would you compare this current Moses, with the Moses who struck the rock at Meribah?

Numbers 27:18-21 • So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua, son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand on him. Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and the entire assembly and commission him in their presence. Give him some of your authority so the whole Israelite community will obey him. He is to stand before Eleazar the priest, who will obtain decisions for him by inquiring of the Urim before the LORD. At his command he and the entire community of the Israelites will go out, and at his command they will come in."

Q: How did the Lord respond to Moses' plea?

Q: Why would the LORD pick Joshua? Why not Caleb? Both were God's heroes in the darkest day of Israel's apostasy?

Q: Regarding the statement: Joshua is "a man in whom is the spirit." To what does the word "spirit" refer?

Q: How is Moses to go about giving Joshua some of his authority so Israel will obey him?

Q: Was the entire purpose of Moses laying hands on Joshua to give Joshua authority?

Q: Why does God tell Moses to give Joshua “some” his authority? Why not transfer his whole leadership?

Q: Why did God instruct Moses to involve Eleazar with this shift in leadership? Why not wait until after Moses was gone and then just anoint Joshua like one would a King?

Q: What is this comment about Urim all about?

Q: Wasn't this command structure for Joshua quite different than what Moses' leadership was like?

Numbers 27:22-23 • Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole assembly. Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, as the LORD instructed through Moses.

Q: What stands out to you about Moses at this point in time?

► Joshua now has partial command. The next three chapters [#28 thru #30] serve as an interruption in the narrative flow. Chapter 28 & 29 reflects the LORD giving Moses instructions which represent God setting up an exact time-table for the various sacrifices, offerings and feasts. Chapter 30, which will be covered in the following lesson and reflects a detailed discourse on the making and keeping of vows.

The instructions for the various sacrifices, offerings and feasts include instructions for the morning and evening offerings, the Sabbath offering, the monthly “new moon” offering, the offerings at Passover, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. There were offerings for the Feast of Trumpets, the offerings on the Day of Atonement and the offerings at the Feast of Tabernacles.

These offerings, feasts and special occasions were all previously commanded, but, here, they are repeated in more detail, and with an added strict time-table. In fact, God warned Moses to tell the people that “they shall be careful to offer to Me at their appointed time.”

God left nothing to the discretion of the people; God instructs specifically what to offer and how much to offer of each item.

**Here is an example of the very detailed instructions for just the New Moon offering:**

Two young bulls, one ram, seven yearling lambs without blemish, three-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, for each bull; two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, for the one ram; and one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour, mixed with oil, as a grain offering for each lamb, as a burnt offering of sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the Lord.

Their drink offering shall be half a hin of wine for a bull, one-third of a hin for a ram, and one-fourth of a hin for a lamb; this is the burnt offering for each month throughout the months of the year. Also one kid of the goats as a sin offering to the LORD shall be offered, besides the regular burnt offering and its drink offering.

Q: What was the purpose of all these sacrifices, offerings and feasts?

Q: If Israel obeyed what God commanded in these two chapters, every year the priests would have sacrificed at least 1,086 lambs, 113 bulls, 32 rams, used more than a ton of flour and about 1,000 bottles of oil and wine. What was the predominant animal of sacrifice and is that significant?

**This completes the first two of the three discourses that interrupted the narrative flow.  
The third part will focus the issues of making and keeping vows.  
This is where we begin next time.**



Next Time • Lesson #24  
“Keeping Vows ”

